

## Chapter 4

# ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ROLES, PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

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## Introduction

As Army medicine continues to evolve to meet the needs of the warfighter, physician assistants (PAs) are more essential than ever in meeting the Army and Army Medical Department (AMEDD) mission. Army medicine's professional education programs are integral to developing future leaders and providing qualified officers to man the generating and operational force.<sup>1</sup> These professional education programs are also vital to the continuum of care for service members and their families by expanding access to emergent and surgical services. This chapter reviews the roles and relationships of officers involved in professional education and discusses broadening opportunities available to the military PA. The attachment at the end of the chapter provides additional operational, medical, predeployment, and leadership training resources.

## Education and Training Support Structure

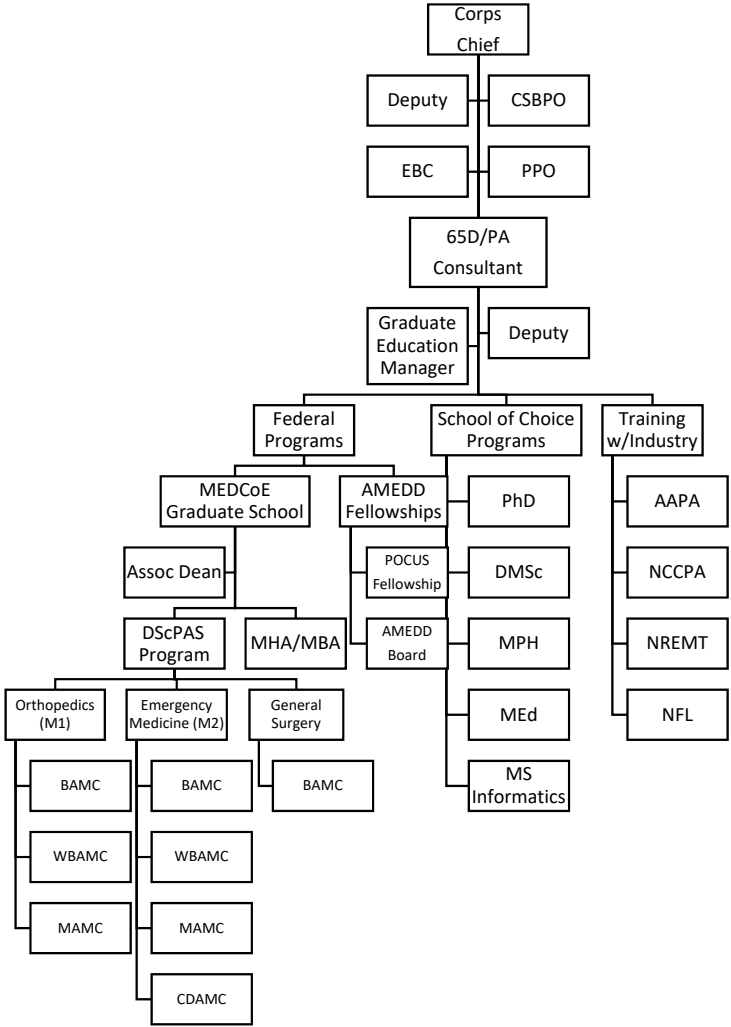
Professional education initiatives specific to PAs are the responsibility of the Specialist Corps (SP) Office and are primarily managed by the PA consultant. The PA consultant leverages corps and PA academic leadership to perform these duties and manage the programs on a routine

basis. The following key academic leaders influence PA education: corps-specific branch proponent officer (CSBPO) and personnel proponent officer, Army Medicine Personnel Proponent Directorate (APPD); education branch chief (EBC), Professional Education and Training Department (PETD); PA capability manager, Capability Development Integration Directorate (CDID); graduate education manager (GEM), an additional duty historically assigned to a US Army Medical Center of Excellence (MEDCoE) officer; associate dean, MEDCoE Graduate School; and program chairpersons and directors of PA education. These leaders synergize PA educational initiatives through multiple working groups and committees, including the SP Strategic Advisory Board, SP Education Committee, SP Research Committee, PA Senior Executive Committee, and PA Committee on Combat Medicine and Medical Readiness/Sustainment.

All programs go through an annual validation process that includes the review and approval of the six AMEDD Corps proponent offices. Secondary to the reorganization of the MEDCoE under US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in 2019, training and education program service quota validation will be transitioned to the MEDCoE Training Programs Management Division of the Directorate of Training/Doctrine (DOTD), using the Army Program for Individual Training model described in Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*,<sup>2</sup> and the TRADOC Training Requirements Analysis System methodology, including the structure manning decision review (SMDR) and training resource arbitration panel (TRAP) processes. Services request training requirements 3 years out (reevaluated at 2 years) through the SMDR, then the TRAP determines what is supportable based on resources and priorities for the execution year.

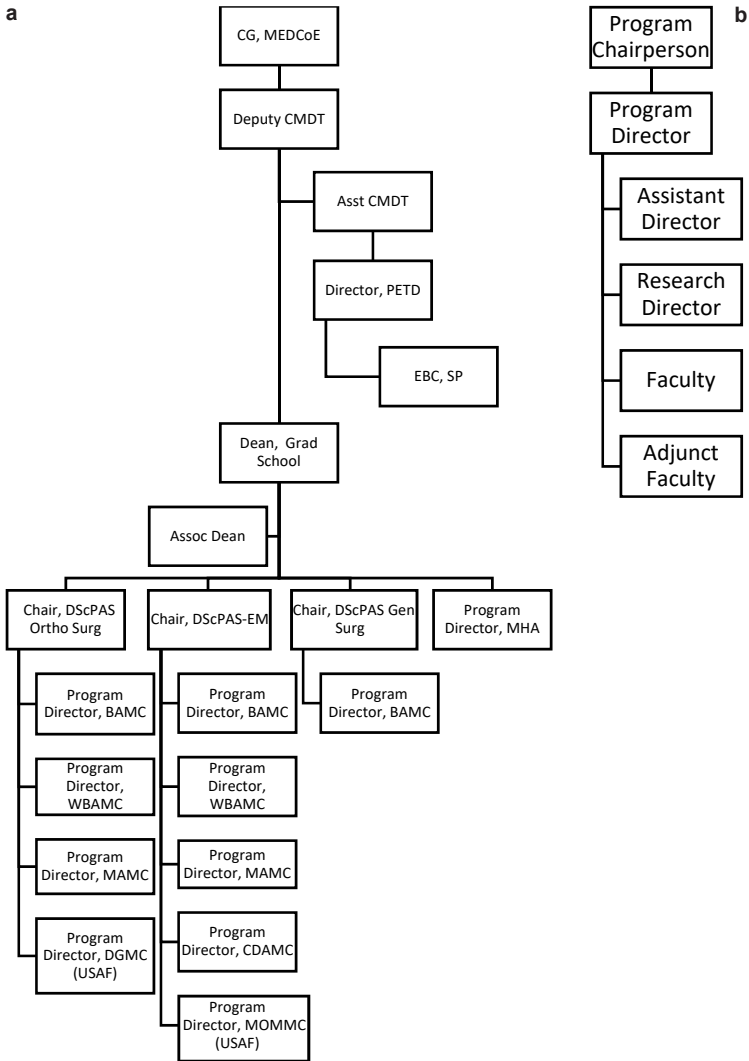
## **Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Leaders**

This section provides an overview on the different roles and responsibilities, command and control relationships, and support structures of the education programs for PAs. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 show the relationships of these leaders within the education structure. Figures 4-3 through 4-5 represent the annual planning cycles discussed in this section.



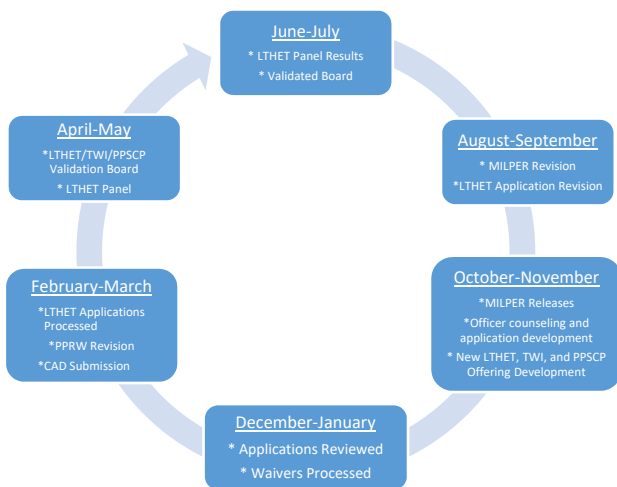
**Figure 4-1.** The education infrastructure for physician assistant postgraduate education programs and US Army Specialist Corps leadership.

AAPA: American Academy of Physician Assistants; AMEDD: Army Medical Department; BAMC: Brooke Army Medical Center; CDAMC: Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center; CSBPO: corps-specific branch proponent officer; EBC: education branch chief; MAMC: Madigan Army Medical Center; MEDCoE: Medical Center of Excellence; NCCPA: National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants; NFL: National Football League; NREMT: National Registry for Emergency Medicine Technicians; POCUS: Point-of-Care Ultrasound; PPO: personnel proponent officer; WBAMC: William Beaumont Army Medical Center



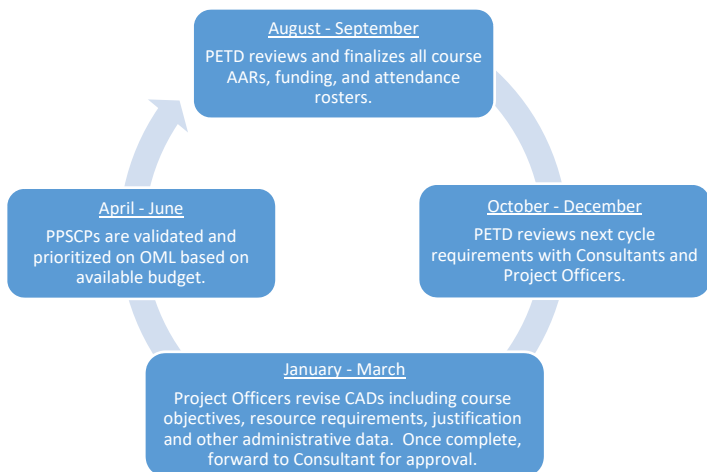
**Figure 4-2. (a)** The academic infrastructure for federal programs that reside under the Medical Center of Excellence Graduate School; **(b)** DScPAS program infrastructure and faculty organization.

BAMC: Brooke Army Medical Center; CG: commanding general; CDAMC: Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center; CDMT: commandant; DGMC: David Grant Medical Center; EBC: education branch chief; EM: Emergency Medicine; MAMC: Madigan Army Medical Center; MOMMC: Mike O’Callaghan Military Medical Center; PETD: Professional Education and Training Department; Ortho: Orthopedic Surgery; Surg: General Surgery; USAF: US Air Force



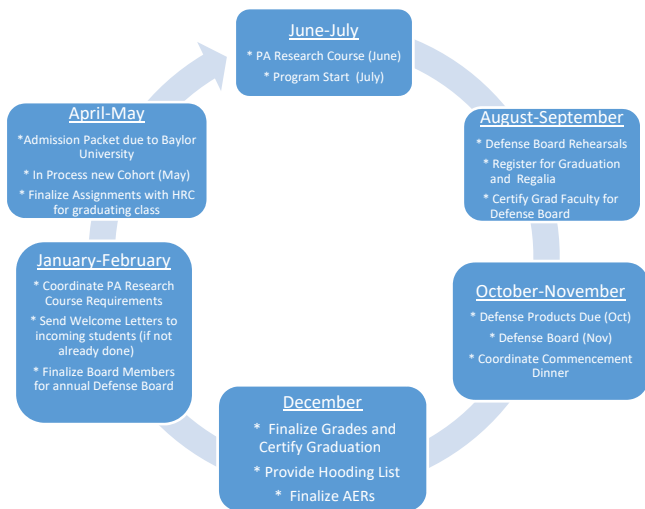
**Figure 4-3.** Professional Education and Training annual planning cycle.

CAD: course administrative data sheet; LTHET: long-term health education and training; MILPER: military personnel; PA: physician assistant; PPRW: program and positions requirement worksheet; PPSCP: post-professional short course program; TWI: training with industry



**Figure 4-4.** Post-professional short course program annual planning cycle.

AAR: after-action review; CAD: course administrative data sheet; LTHET: long-term health education and training; OML: order-of-merit list; PA: physician assistant; PETD: Professional Education and Training Department; PPRW: program and positions requirement worksheet; TWI: training with industry



**Figure 4-5.** DScPAS program annual planning cycle.

AER: academic evaluation report; GEM: graduate education manager; HRC: Human Resources Command; LTHET: long-term health education and training; PA: physician assistant; PPRW: program and positions requirement worksheet

### ***PA Consultant***

The SP chief and PA consultant are ultimately responsible for coordinating, validating, and executing education for PAs. The consultant serves the following management roles in professional education:

- Coordinates and provides justification of new courses and programs, facilitated by the SP Education Committee. Each new program must undergo a multi-department analysis that identifies: capability requirement, training platform with a training agreement (PETD), and a validated utilization tour (APPD). This typically occurs during late fall and must be finalized prior to populating the program and position requirements worksheet (PPRW) and the annual validation cycle.
- Validates program and course offerings on an annual basis and provides updated program justification, narrative, and funding requirements on the PPRW.

- Provides academic oversight, validation of graduation requirements, and program accountability for officers enrolled in long-term health education and training (LTHET), training with industry (TWI), and the post-professional short course program (PPSCP).
- Reviews LTHET applications and provides consultation to the SP chief for officer waivers.

### ***Education Branch Chief***

The EBC is a 65X (branch immaterial) position responsible for coordinating all staff functions of professional education for the SP Corps. Multiple PAs have served in this role, most recently Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Pamela Roof and Lieutenant Colonel Ben Kocher. This position has been repurposed under DOTD in 2020 with the reorganization of the AMEDD Center and School into the MEDCoE. Significant duties and responsibilities include:

- Coordinates AMEDD and DOD professional education initiatives with corps leadership including the GEM, consultants to the surgeon general, CSBPO, Human Resources Command (HRC), and SP Chief.
- Serves as vice-chair of the SP Education Committee, managing agenda and staffing products for the CSBPO (the committee chair). In conjunction with the consultant and GEM, provides updates to students enrolled in education programs such as LTHET and PPSCP. Coordinates new program requirements for presentations at board meetings.
- Assists the PA consultant and GEM in providing academic oversight to education programs through reviewing degree plans and coordinating student actions with program leadership.
- Validates graduation and funding requirements with the consultant and the GEM.
- Processes documentation that directs payment of tuition and execution fees. Also processes officer reimbursement requests with MEDCoE G8 (budget) staff.
- Facilitates staffing requirements of the annual validation process with key stakeholders. Reviews PPRWs with the CSBPO, PA consultant, GEM, APPD, and PETD director to ensure an accurate and comprehensive staffing product. Provides training to new leaders as required.

- Markets and recruits LTHET programs during junior officer leadership programs (Basic Officer Leader Course and Captains Career Course), professional conferences, and graduate school officer professional development events.

### ***Graduation Education Manager***

The GEM is the linchpin that synergizes PA education by interfacing with all key stakeholders and coordinating programmatic requirements at the direction of the PA consultant. This role is an additional duty. The GEM is appointed by the SP Corps office, with endorsement by the PA consultant, to serve as the consultant's principal advisor on PA education and training programs. It has historically been assigned to either a previous program chair or director of one of the Doctor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (DScPAS) programs at Brooke Army Medical Center ("DSc" is used as the degree designation in signature blocks). The SP established the additional duty in 2006 due to the expansion of programs and increased requirements for student oversight. Previous officers filling this role include Colonel Rick Villarreal, Major (Retired) Paul Allen, Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Rosser, Colonel Brian Burk, Lieutenant Colonel Ben Kocher, Lieutenant Colonel James Jones, and Major Kerri Van Arnem. Significant duties and responsibilities include:

- Coordinates with CDID and APPD to project force management requirements to inform the annual validation board. Publishes the 5-year plan based on these projected requirements to synchronize program starts and utilization requirements.
- Member of the SP Education Committee, SP Research Committee, and PA Committee on Combat Medicine and Medical Readiness/Sustainment.
- Appointed to the graduate faculty of MEDCoE graduate programs. Eligible to serve as chair or member of doctoral defense boards for the DScPAS program.
- Assists in developing the annual LTHET guidance by advising on issues such as numbers needed to train and necessary selection qualifications of PAs for postgraduate training.
- Responsible for managing the LTHET application process for PAs, including recruitment, the application process, and post-selection placement, working closely with PETD, HRC, and SP leadership throughout the application and selection process.



- Provides updates to the SP Research Committee on research efforts within the postgraduate programs; works closely with the program directors to align research efforts and track scholarly and research activities.
- Advises the PA consultant on student actions. If a student in a postgraduate program does not meet standards and requires discipline, remediation, probation, or release from the program, the GEM works closely with program leadership and the SP Education Committee to ensure the student receives due process.

Requirements for the GEM additional duty include:

- Terminal (professional or research) doctorate degree.
- Rank of lieutenant colonel (preferred).
- Intermediate Level Education graduate.
- Must meet requirements to be appointed to the graduate faculty of MEDCoE Graduate School affiliated universities.

Desired skills and attributes for the GEM additional duty include:

- Prior experience in an academic leadership position in a graduate program.
- Must be an excellent role model with the desire to mentor others.
- Comprehensive leadership, administrative, and academic skills.
- Strategic vision for future education and training requirements.

### ***Associate Dean, Graduate School***

The associate dean is a 65D (PA) position serving as the principal advisor to the dean on hospital-based training programs, which include all branch programs under the MEDCoE Graduate School. Specifically for PAs, these programs include Doctor of Science degrees and Phase 2 (hospital-based/clinical phase) of the Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP). Previous officers filling this role include Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Rosser, Lieutenant Colonel Randolph “Scott” Harrison, and Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Douglas. Significant duties and responsibilities include:

- Manages accreditation requirements for programs under the Graduate School; primary liaison to the supporting institution’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

- Responsible for providing organizational oversight and program standardization of DScPAS programs and other hospital-based training programs.
- Coordinates admissions process and other student in-processing requirements with the degree-granting university programs.
- Coordinates graduate faculty, professorial rank, and adjunct faculty appointments. Publishes the standard operating procedure for the process and ensures standardization of appointments.
- Coordinates graduate activities including student in-processing, faculty development, football events, and commencement activities.
- Manages graduation certification and filing requirements. Maintains student records in accordance with accreditation standards.
- Appointed graduate faculty for affiliated institutions. Eligible to serve as a chairperson or member of defense boards for the DScPAS program.
- Member of the SP Education Committee, SP Research Committee, and PA Committee on Combat Medicine and Medical Readiness/Sustainment.

Requirements for the associate dean include:

- Terminal (professional or research) doctorate degree.
- Rank of lieutenant colonel.
- Intermediate Level Education graduate.
- Must meet requirements to be appointed graduate faculty of MEDCoE Graduate School affiliated universities.

Desired skills and attributes for the associate dean include:

- Prior experience in an academic leadership position in a graduate program.
- Must be an excellent role model with the desire to mentor others.
- Solid leadership, administrative, and academic skills; strategic vision for future education and training requirements.

## **Duty Descriptions for the Doctor of Science Programs**

The positions below (program chairperson, program director, assistant program director, research director, and Specialized Interservice

Physician Assistant Program Instructor) apply to DSc programs for orthopedic surgery (see Chapter 5), emergency medicine (see Chapter 6), and general surgery (see Chapter 7), with similar roles and responsibilities. All PAs in these positions must be appointed in a professorial rank of assistant professor and above, maintain appointment to the graduate faculty of the degree-granting university, and serve as staff providers for their discipline.

### ***Program Chairperson***

Each discipline (orthopedic surgery, emergency medicine, and general surgery) has a program chairperson who is responsible for synergizing and orchestrating the training within their program across all training sites. The chairperson manages the accreditation requirements of the program and ensures standardization for the program and discipline. They are the primary liaison for the program with Army leadership, including the MEDCoE Graduate School, SP Office, PA consultant, and collaborative specialty consultants. Additionally, they serve the following functions:

- Provides academic leadership and oversight to the program directors by ensuring the entrusted professional attributes, program milestones, and procedural competencies are assessed and validated at each training site in accordance with governing policies and regulations. Ensures training is relevant to possible future capability gaps across the Department of Defense (DOD).
- Publishes and revises their program manual, policies, faculty handbook, and resident handbook to provide guidance to program faculty and matriculating students.
- Recommends faculty appointments in accordance with Graduate School policy and provides professional development and mentorship to program staff.
- Principal advisor to the specialty consultant to the Army surgeon general, the PA consultant to the Army surgeon general, and the SP chief. Responsible for identifying capability gaps within the specialty and providing recommendations on the use and placement of PAs within the profession throughout the services. Synchronizes education and research initiatives with the SP Education Committee, SP Research Committee, and other executive steering committees.

### ***Program Directors (Site-Specific)***

Each discipline assigns a program director for each training site. The directors are responsible for managing the program's accreditation requirements and ensuring compliance at their site. They are the primary liaison between the program and their site. They interface regularly with supporting Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) programs and other graduate professional education programs. Additionally, they serve the following functions:

- Serves as graduate faculty at the degree-granting university, responsible for managing all grade reporting, rotation evaluations, and doctoral defense preparation and coordination with the MEDCoE Graduate School.
- Ensures all programmatic policies are followed and objectives achieved by the matriculating officers.
- Responsible for managing the degree plan, coordinating medical-related rotations and training affiliation agreements. Also performs didactic instruction and mentors residents in clinical research.
- Coordinates academic requirements and student actions with the supporting graduate medical education committee or the institution's executive committee that governs professional education.
- Manages research initiatives and performance improvement projects for the programs, which includes performing research approved by the institutional review board (IRB), as well as assigning it to students and faculty and assisting them in completing it. Ensures that research initiatives support the SP Corps lines of research.
- Coordinates institutional support and serves as a preceptor for other graduate professional education programs such as the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, IPAP, and nurse practitioner programs.

### ***Assistant Program Director (Site-Specific)***

Each site director assigns an assistant to support the residency site. The assistant directors are responsible for helping the director manage the accreditation requirements of the program and ensure compliance at their individual site. They are the alternative liaison between the program and their site. Assistant program directors interface regularly

with supporting ACGME programs and other graduate professional education programs. Additionally, the assistant program director has the following functions:

- Serves as program director in their absence or when required.
- May be assigned additional administrative duties, including as research director.
- Ensures all faculty members are compliant with productivity requirements based on duty description and additional duties.
- May serve as an IPAP Phase 2 coordinator.

### ***Program Research Director***

Each program assigns a research director to coordinate research activities and synchronize efforts for the students and faculty. The assigned faculty member will align efforts with the SP research program. Additionally, the research director serves the following functions:

- Responsible for tracking and assisting ongoing research efforts including publications, podium presentations in front of an audience, and poster presentations. Coordinates with the SP Education and Research Committee and with the program chairperson to establish a collaborative research effort within the SP.
- Ensures that all IRB-approved research projects are tracked and reported to the program chairperson, directors, the GEM, and the SP Education and Research Committee.
- Maintains a list of preproposal research projects within the established lines of research and task areas and provides immediate coordination of proposal ideas to collaborators within the SP Corps.
- Ensures that each student's research question has scientific merit (is novel and relevant) and is feasible to answer during the DSc program.
- Assists students in developing their protocol (study design as well as the IRB process) and makes sure the students follow the research timeline and submit quarterly counseling comments to the program director at each residency site.
- Conducts individual written performance counseling as needed.
- Monitors the participation of staff mentors in students' research; intervenes as needed to ensure ongoing mentorship.

- Reviews or coordinates mentor review for all students' manuscripts and offers comments.
- Organizes and conducts the defense of doctoral research projects and arranges practice for the defense. Performs as the main point of contact for DSc site program research.
- Serves as a 0.50 FTE (full-time equivalent) clinical provider.
- May serve as an IPAP Phase 2 coordinator.
- May be assigned additional administrative duties.

### ***Specialized Interservice Physician Assistant Program Instructor***

The IPAP (refer to Chapter 38 in this handbook) instructors for emergency medicine, orthopedics, and general surgery serve as associate professors for the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program and as their specialty expert for the IPAP at the MEDCoE. They also serve as guest providers in their specialty, maintaining a minimum of 40 patient care hours per year, along with additional requirements by the credentialing and privileging facility. The specialized PA (in either emergency medicine, orthopedics, or general surgery) assigned to IPAP:

- is responsible for providing over 80 hours of instruction to Department of Defense PA students in their specialty;
- provides didactic instruction on anatomy and physiology, differential diagnosis, emergent evaluation and stabilization, appropriate ancillary studies, and patient management in their specialty;
- provides clinical practicums on their specialty's procedures, point-of-care stabilization, wound care and suturing, and bedside clinical and trauma procedures in accordance with specialized guidelines;
- updates IPAP curriculum and policy as a key member of program committees;
- directly mentors Phase 1 (didactic phase) IPAP students through routine and situational counseling, master's thesis development, and professional development activities;
- performs or assists in IRB-approved research and performance improvement projects; and
- educates and trains consulting providers, PAs, nurses, and medics in the management and appropriate disposition of their specialty-care patients.

## **Corps-Specific Education and Training Opportunities**

There are three basic types of LTHET programs for SP officers. Each type is administered and funded differently, so it is important for PAs to understand how the programs are organized. The three types are:

- **School-of-choice programs.** Degree-granting or professional residencies sponsored by a civilian institution, including any of the programs conducted at an academic institution outside of the military. These programs typically result in master's degrees in public health (MPH), education (MEd), health administration (MHA), and informatics, as well as professional doctorates (DMSc) and research doctorates (DSc and PhD). Officers in these programs are assigned to the AMEDD Student Detachment (ASD) and funded through MEDCoE.
- **Federal programs.** Degree-granting, professional residencies or fellowships sponsored by the DOD or other government institution. Officers in these programs are assigned to their respective training academic medical centers and funded through their supporting organization. Examples include:
  - US Army MEDCoE Graduate School programs
    - ◆ MHA
    - ◆ DScPAS with specializations in:
      - Orthopedics (additional skill identifier [ASI] M1)
      - Emergency medicine (ASI M2)
      - General surgery and trauma (ASI M4-pending)
  - Federal training internships and fellowships
    - ◆ Point-of-Care Ultrasound Fellowship
    - ◆ Training and Evaluation Internship (with the AMEDD Board)
- **Training with industry.** Internships, residencies, or fellowships that are detailed to a civilian organization and sponsored by the Army (unlike LTHET offerings). However, AMEDD boards these programs as part of the LTHET validation process to fulfill Army requirements. There are quotas for these programs, and the SP Corps must provide an order-of-merit list if they request multiple TWI positions. Program requirements are typically funded through the civilian organization sponsoring the collaboration. Officers in these programs are assigned to the ASD and, if not funded by the sponsoring agency, the officer

may seek financial support through MEDCoE, based on availability of funds. The following are the programs that fall under TWI:

- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- NCCPA
- National Football League
- National Registry for Emergency Medicine Technicians

## ***Qualifications***

Qualifications for LTHET applicants are published in an annual military personnel (MILPER) message and are subject to change. Currently, prospective LTHET applicants must meet the following qualifications to be considered for an offering (all waiverable unless otherwise specified):

- be active duty, in the rank of captain to lieutenant colonel;
- be a graduate of the rank-appropriate military education level;
- have 5 to 13 years of active federal commissioned service, or be prior service and have less than 17 years active federal service;
- have completed 36 months of time on station (or 24 months with an HRC waiver) for stateside assignments prior to the start of the program;
- if assigned overseas, have completed the entire overseas tour, including any extension, without curtailment prior to the start of the program;
- be eligible for promotion (must not be in a non-select status);
- have not previously attended a funded equivalent-level LTHET degree program (if the applicant has completed a different degree at the level of the requested LTHET program, they must have completed the previous active duty service obligation prior to the start of the current program);
- have 3 years of clinical experience (2 years with an HRC waiver) at the start of the course<sup>3</sup>;
- have received a general subjects GRE score greater than 300 combined for all degree-granting programs (note: individual universities determine the qualifying GRE scores for school-of-choice programs, and essay component is university- and program-dependent); and



- have completed 40 clinical-shadowing hours in the desired specialty or DSc program-approved alternative (if a PA desires to apply to more than one DSc program, they must complete shadowing for all programs they are applying for; the shadowing form is typically included with the application).<sup>3</sup>

### ***Application Information***

All PAs who want to participate in LTHET must be selected by the HRC LTHET panel. The digital application is posted on the HRC LTHET portal<sup>3</sup> and annual application guidance is published through a MILPER message posted on the portal in October or November. An applicant checklist is also posted, containing specific directions, deadlines, and the GEM's contact information.

In addition to the documents listed above, applicants need to review and update their individual Army military human resource record and officer record brief (ORB). The final application submission deadline is given in the annual MILPER message, usually in mid-February. Once the applicant receives the application with HRC, PA consultant, and corps endorsement from the GEM, the applicant must submit the completed checklist, LTHET application, DA Form 3838, official (degree-conferring) school transcripts (if not already posted on the military human resource record), and official GRE scores to the LTHET team according to the date and directions provided in the MILPER message.

### ***Annual Planning Cycle***

Prospective applicants should review the LTHET MILPER for the previous cycle to their projected application (1 year in advance). Although there may be some changes in the future checklist, a year will provide adequate preparation time to meet any application requirements, such as the GRE and clinical shadowing. Once eligible, applicants must review the current application guidelines in the annual MILPER message, usually no later than early December. LTHET selection panel results are generally published in June or July, approximately 1 year prior to the program start dates. For example, applications received in February 2021 will have selection panel results published in June or July 2021 for programs starting in summer 2022.

## ***Utilization Tours***

Each LTHET program must have an identified use, otherwise known as utilization tours. These are dependent on the program of completion, and are predetermined as part of the validation process. Before applying for training, prospective applicants should discuss utilization tours with the current GEM, previously trained PAs in the desired specialty, and the PA consultant.

## **Post-Professional Short Course Program**

The PPSCP was developed to address military-unique medical training requirements and certification maintenance for AMEDD officers. These training opportunities were designed to align with deployment readiness requirements and later revised to train PAs on individual critical task lists. Due to the MEDCoE reorganization and alignment with TRADOC processes, responsibility for maintaining readiness has moved from the institutional to operational domains, and these programs have lost funding. However, some courses remain relevant and will continue to be sponsored.

## ***Annual Planning Cycle***

The PPSCP annual planning cycle mirrors the LTHET planning cycle. Each PPSCP has a course administrative data (CAD) document that is used to provide administrative information, course objectives, staffing requirements, funding requirements, and other resourcing information. Similar to LTHET, all new requests for training and courses occur in the late fall (October or November) and are due at the same time as the PPRW and populated in early spring. The PA consultant is responsible for assigning a project officer (course director) to each PPSCP offering to coordinate and execute the course. The project officer is responsible for development and coordination of the course's curriculum and required resources, and should be familiar with the PPSCP planning cycle, course curriculum, continuing medical education (CME) accrediting processes, and budgetary management.

PPSCPs are evaluated by the AMEDD corps offices using force development, health care delivery, and health readiness as key factors. Based on these factors, the courses are then prioritized on a four-point scale:

- Priority (highest). A program that meets regulatory requirements, such as training required for graduate professional education, GME, or dental graduate education. Programs that meet requirements for attaining an area of concentration or ASI are also considered priority.
- High priority. Programs that are directly tied to the surgeon general's priorities and lines of effort and have AMEDD relevance. Courses that maintain certification or licensure fall in this category as well.
- Moderate priority. Officer and leader development programs or training that provides education otherwise available at civilian institutions. The most common PPSCPs in this category are the Junior Leadership Course and Iron Majors Week Course.
- Low priority. Generalized institutional courses designed for federal employees and all service members.

Once prioritized, these courses are sequenced on an order-of-merit list and resourced based on available funding for the program.

## **Additional Educational Opportunities**

A multitude of additional professional development opportunities, in both medicine and officer professional education, are offered by centralized and decentralized programs. All education that improves an officer's fund of knowledge and increases capability from the tactical to strategic roles of the AMEDD is encouraged. With exceptions as identified by DOD instructions, Army regulations, or annual programs not aligned with AMEDD, PAs are recommended to pursue all available education that improves their ability to support soldiers and the AMEDD. The National War College education system and the Army War College (aligned with Army University) offer strategic course matter that may also improve the ability to expand into joint operational force management.

### ***Defense Strategy Course (Army War College)***

A foundational military education course from the Army War College is the Defense Strategy Course, a 4-month nonresident/distant learning course offered twice a year.<sup>4</sup> The course is intended to improve officers' understanding of the DOD's role in the development of the national security strategy, and the strategy's role in the international

environment.<sup>4</sup> The course is recommended for majors and lieutenant colonels, and enrollment is limited to 50 active duty, 25 reserve, and 25 National Guard officers.<sup>4</sup> The course is highly competitive and strongly recommended for senior PAs for several reasons: the training helps leaders develop critical thinking skills required for strategic-level decision-making; it presents the opportunity to attend various fellowships; and it provides an ASI (6Z) per DA Pamphlet 611-21, *Personnel Selection and Classification: Military Occupational Classification and Structure*.<sup>5</sup>

To be eligible, applicants must have credit for military education level 4, and they must not be enrolled in or have completed a Senior Service College program. Enrollment information is as follows:

- Review the course curriculum at <https://dde.carlisle.army.mil/curriculum.cfm>.<sup>4</sup>
- Notify your assignment manager of your interest in attending the course.
- Submit a DA Form 3838 to your assignment manager.
- In the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS), the school code is 217 and the course number is DSC.<sup>6</sup>

The Defense Strategy Course is divided into four sections with 13 lessons each. Each lesson requires approximately 7 to 10 hours to complete. As described on the course website, the sections are as follows:

**Section 1, Introduction:** introduces the student to the online format of the course and critical thinking concepts.

**Section 2, Strategic and Military Theory:** examines classical thinking about strategic theory, the military schools of strategic thought, the international system, strategy formulation frameworks, and states and strategy.<sup>4</sup>

**Section 3, The Department of Defense:** reviews the roles of the DOD, civil control of defense, the interagency framework, and homeland security.

**Section 4, Policy Development and Security Environment:** examines policy making, globalization and economic development, the current strategic environment based on both opportunities and

threats, cultural relations and dimensions, multinational operations, centers of gravity analysis, and strategy at the combatant command level.<sup>4</sup>

Graduates receive an Army War College certificate signed by the college's commandant. Although the course awards an ASI, recorded in the ORB under military education, it does not award a formal military education level, nor does it provide college course credits. There is no formal academic evaluation report, although PAs can apply CME (continuing medical education) category 2 credits for professional development to support their credentialing requirements (see Chapter 10, Maintaining Certification and the CME Categories, for further details). Graduates should provide the course completion certificate to their assignment officer to have the course and 6Z ASI added to their ORB.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Additional Professional Military Education***

Upon completion of the Defense Strategy Course, additional professional military education (PME) opportunities are available to PAs. The Defense Planners Course is a distant learning course focused on joint planning. The Army Force Management School has multiple course offerings in capability development and force management, including the "How the Army Runs" course (results in a 3R ASI). The US Navy has a robust online PME program; for example, the US Naval War College's College of Distance Education accepts applications from Army majors and above, as well as civilians in grades GS-11 and above, for some of its courses.<sup>7</sup> Additional offerings can be found through distance learning offered by the Air War College, the senior school in the Air Force PME system. The college's 44-week course for lieutenant colonels trains senior leaders for strategic-level employment of air, space, and cyberspace forces. The curriculum emphasizes coalition warfighting and national security, and includes seminars, simulation exercises, electives, international travel, and a national security symposium (contact the Air War College registrar directly for enrollment procedures).<sup>8</sup> The Joint Knowledge Online website also has multiple courses such as acute care provider modules and Military Health System course modules.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

Professional education is a key component for PAs to maintain critical wartime skills and meet the demands of future engagements. Understanding the roles of strategic academic leaders, professional education programs, and broadening training opportunities will assist PAs in managing their career and ensuring they are prepared for future deployments.

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## **Attachment: Long-Term Health Education and Training/Training with Industry (LTHET/TWI) Program Descriptions**

This attachment lists additional courses that PAs may attend to enhance their operational readiness, prepare for upcoming positions and new duties, and gain CME credit. Follow the directions below for the Army Training and Requirements Resources System (ATTRS) and Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute (DMRTI) courses:

- ATTRS (<https://www.atrrs.army.mil/>): Click on “Course Catalog” at the right of the screen and insert the course number into the search engine. This will bring up the course. Double click on the course, and the dates and locations, scope, and points of contact for the course will be shown. (To enroll, apply through your operations office or directly to the course point of contact.)
- DMRTI (<http://www.dmrti.army.mil/>): Click on “Courses” at the top of the screen. Tabs will appear for all DMRTI courses, providing contacts, dates, CME credits, training focus, and requirements for who can attend.

### ***Doctor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (DScPAS) with specialization in Orthopedics***

**Program Length:** 1.5 years      **ADSO:** 3.5 years

#### **Program Narrative**

The Doctor of Science of Physician Assistant Studies in Orthopedics (DScPAS-O) is an 18-month program of subspecialty rotations, formal didactic instruction, and clinical research. This graduate program prepares physician assistants (PAs) with the knowledge and expertise to provide perioperative care to a full spectrum of musculoskeletal injuries and conditions. Students matriculate at one of four academic medical centers: San Antonio Military Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; William Beaumont Army Medical Center, Fort Bliss, Texas; and David Grant Medical Center, Travis Air Force Base, California. Current graduates serve in expeditionary surgical teams and combat surgical hospitals to provide



stabilizing measures for battlefield injuries. This program results in a research doctorate degree and an M1 additional skill identifier.

***Doctor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (DScPAS) with specialization in Emergency Medicine***

**Program Length:** 1.5 years      **ADSO:** 3.5 years

**Program Narrative**

The Doctor of Science of Physician Assistant Studies in Emergency Medicine (DScPAS-EM) Residency is an 18-month program that incorporates a variety of clinical rotations, formal didactic instruction, and research. The Doctor of Science program is modeled after the 3-year Emergency Medicine Physician Residency and prepares the EMPA to perform clinical research and to evaluate, diagnose, and stabilize critically ill or injured patients. The overall mission is to produce postprofessional, emergency medicine-trained PAs who provide Military Health System (MHS) beneficiaries state-of-the-art, advanced care in emergency situations. This program provides a structured environment to facilitate learning, ensure competency, practice evidence-based medicine, and conduct clinical research to benefit the warfighter, MHS beneficiaries, the US Army Medical Department, and the PA profession.

***Doctor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (DScPAS) with specialization in General Surgery***

**Program Length:** 1.5 years      **ADSO:** 3.5 years

**Program Narrative**

The Doctor of Science Physician Assistant Studies in General Surgery (DScPAS-GS) is an 18-month program consisting of formal academic requirements, postprofessional research, and structured clinical and surgical training. Established to train postgraduate-level Army surgical PAs to become integral members of perioperative teams in both deployed and garrison environments. The DScPAS-GS graduate's purpose is to maximize the utilization of Army surgeons and their critical skills by safely assuming non-operative surgical responsibilities and procedures, and serve as surgical (multidisciplinary) first assistants. Also, the DScPA-GS is responsible for helping to improve health care and health care policy in battlefield trauma, trauma/critical care, and

surgical research. Applicants to the program must be available for Special Operations Command DScPA-GS positions, Expeditionary Resuscitation Surgical Team (ERST) forward surgical team missions, and civilian-military partnership opportunities. Graduates will be allocated to 528th Sustainment Brigade, hospitals inside and outside the United States, and Department of Defense level I trauma centers, and serve as faculty at the Army Institute of Surgical Research.

***Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Board Internship in Test and Evaluation (T&E)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

The Operational T&E Intern Program provides AMEDD officers with specialized training in the T&E acquisition career field and positions them as acquisition leaders. The training enables them to provide relevant data to acquisition program managers aimed at ensuring sound programmatic decisions and properly equipping operational elements to meet the Army's contingency mission requirements. T&E is described in Army Regulation 73-1, Department of Defense Instruction 5000.66, and the Defense Acquisition Guidebook as a major element of the acquisition process that provides state-of-the art medical and medical-related devices required to accomplish contingency missions. The objective of the internship is to provide the AMEDD with a pool of officers who are fully qualified to fill AMEDD T&E assignments. During the internship, students will receive hands-on practical experience in analysis, research, plan writing, report writing, oral briefings, policy development, and T&E procedures.

***Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

This 1-year Doctorate of Medical Science Program is a professional doctorate that directly supports readiness. Graduates of this program will support educational platforms for area of concentration (AOC) 65D and train to fill operational positions that support warfighters' readiness. Examples of these educational platforms are the Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP), Tactical Combat Medical Care Course, and

Brigade Combat Team Trauma Training (BCT3). The DMSc provides the requisite degree necessary for full academic faculty appointment status at affiliated universities, and is further necessary for PAs to assume leadership positions within the 65D educational programs and higher educational jobs (dean, vice provost, commandant).

***American Academy of Physician Assistant (AAPA) Fellowship (TWI)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

This training with industry (TWI) experience will provide in-depth training with the AAPA, the only national professional society for PAs in the United States. AAPA experiences include PA professional advocacy, state/federal governmental relations, health care policy analysis, professional education, and constituent organizational outreach. Additionally, the officer will have exposure to organizational governance, interagency coordination and communication, multidisciplinary professional outreach, information and technology affecting health care professionals, and transformations that optimize team-based medical practice.

***National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) Fellowship (TWI)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

This training with industry (TWI) experience will provide in-depth training with the NCCPA, the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States. This agency will provide exposure to the ever-changing world of PA certification. NCCPA experiences would include certification process/policy, exam writing, data collection, continuing medical education, current issues/problems with certification, and being part of the solution. The knowledge and skills learned in this TWI are directly applicable and invaluable to the military IPAP as well as for the subject matter expert for Army PA certification.

***National Registry for Emergency Medicine Technicians Fellowship (TWI)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

This training with industry (TWI) experience will provide the PA with in-depth training with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. This organization is the only national emergency medical services (EMS) certification organization that provides a valid, uniform process to assess the knowledge and skills required for competent practice by EMS professionals throughout their careers. The PA will be involved with the development of standardized EMS training, certification, and recertification process and policy.

***Executive Fellow, Corps Chiefs Office Fellowship (all AOCs, captains only)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 2 years

**Program Narrative**

The Office of the Chief, Army Medical Specialist Corps Fellowship Program offers Army Medical Specialist Corps (SP) officers the opportunity to actively participate in the strategic development, planning, and execution of SP-related policies, initiatives, and events. Fellows assist in formulating programs and actions that influence active and reserve component SP officers worldwide and support Army medicine strategic goals and objectives. Graduates of this broadening assignment are prepared to perform as primary staff officers within the Army Medical Command, Office of the Surgeon General, Defense Health Agency (DHA), and medical brigades.

***Master in Health Administration (executive track Intermediate Level Education graduates only)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 3 years

**Program Narrative**

The 1-year executive MHA program is for senior officers to gain business skills in data acquisition, business metrics, and analysis to understand and solve the most complex enterprise problems arising from the clinical, administrative, or training areas of the AMEDD and

DHA. Students will simultaneously engage in didactics and residency problems that combine the knowledge and application of lessons learned in the MHA program.

***Point-of-Care Ultrasound Fellowship (DScPAS graduates only)***

**Program Length:** 1 year **ADSO:** 2 years

**Program Narrative**

The Point-of-Care Ultrasound Fellowship is a 1-year program designed to enhance the evaluation, assessment, and treatment skills of medical providers who care for service members with injuries that could be detected using bedside ultrasound in clinic and in combat. Graduates of the Ultrasound Fellowship receive the same training as their emergency medicine physician counterparts, including program/course development, instructing students at the novice and advanced levels, research, and administration of ultrasound programs. Graduates become approved subject matter experts and certified trainers for other physicians, PAs, and medics within the force. Graduates will fill positions at the IPAP, Tactical Combat Medical Care Course, DSc program faculty, and major Forces Command installations to bring ultrasound training to the force.

