

# Common Course Outline

PAST 236

## Basics of Physical Diagnosis

2 Credits

### The Community College of Baltimore County

#### Description

**PAST 236 – Basics of Physical Diagnosis** introduces the diagnostic process focusing on the proper methods of obtaining, performing, recording, and presenting patient histories and physical examinations. This course emphasizes interpersonal communication skills and presents a system-by-system approach to performing the essential physical exam with an overview of common symptoms. Students are expected to serve as surrogate patients for other classmates in addition to practicing physical diagnostic techniques on their classmates in a supervised laboratory setting.

**2 Credits:** 5 lecture hours per week; 5 lab hours per week; 5-week course

**Prerequisites:** Admission to Physician Assistant Program

**Corequisites:** PAST 224

#### Overall Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. define and explain the diagnostic process;
2. conduct a patient medical interview;
3. demonstrate sound communication skills;
4. demonstrate empathetic responses to patients;
5. demonstrate sequencing and proper technique in performance of a patient's medical history;
6. demonstrate sequencing and proper technique in performance of the physical examination;
7. accurately and logically record a patient history using appropriate patient and medical terminology and current guidelines;
8. accurately and systematically record physical findings important for written documentation and communication;
9. provide written and oral presentations of patient history and physical findings; and

10. respect patient confidentiality in all communications in accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

**Major Topics:**

- I. Overview of the Diagnostic Process
  - A. Data collection
  - B. Date recording
  - C. Assessment and plan
- II. Medical Interviewing
  - A. Components of the complete history
    - i. Identifying data
    - ii. Chief complaint
    - iii. History of the present illness
    - iv. Past medical history
    - v. Family health history
    - vi. Psychosocial history
    - vii. Systems review
  - B. Interview Setting Specifics
    - i. Environment
    - ii. Patient comfort
    - iii. Interviewing skills
  - C. Clinician-Patient Relationship
    - i. Trust/Confidence/Respect
    - ii. Confidentiality
    - iii. Professionalism
- III. Physical Assessment
  - A. Overview of the physical exam
  - B. Vital Signs
  - C. Essential exams of the:
    - i. integument
    - ii. head & neck
    - iii. thorax & lungs
    - iv. cardiovascular system
    - v. abdomen
    - vi. musculoskeletal system
    - vii. neurologic system
      1. cranial nerves
      2. peripheral sensory & motor nerves
- IV. Written Documentation
  - A. Full history & physical exams

## B. Problem-focused patient encounters

### **Course Requirements:**

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

1. Mandatory attendance and participation in the classroom;
2. Mandatory attendance and participation in the laboratory;
3. Evaluation of database and progress note documentation;
4. Minimum of 3 written quizzes;
5. Minimum of 3 practical assessments; and,
6. Minimum of 1 written examination.

Written Assignments: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.

### **Other Course Information:**

Methods of instruction include lecture, demonstration, use of surrogate patients (students) for obtaining a history and performing a physical examination, patient role playing, and videos of physical examination techniques.

This course is a required core physician assistant course whose successful completion is required to progress through the designed curriculum sequence. The course is unique to the Physician Assistant curriculum; therefore, there are no “substitute” courses.