
STUDENT HANDBOOK

Including Program Policies and Procedures

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2.....
FOREWORD	8.....
INTRODUCTION	9.....
MISSION STATEMENT	9.....
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY	9.....
VISION STATEMENT	9.....
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	9.....
PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	10..
PROGRAM CURRICULUM	11.....
PHASE I — Didactic(16 months).....	11
PHASE II — Clinical (48 weeks).....	11
PHASE III – Summative Session(4 weeks).....	11
MSPAS PROGRAM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS	13..
GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION	13..
RE-ENTRY TO THE MSPAS PROGRAM.....	13
ADVANCE PLACEMENT AND TRANSFER OF CREDIT.....	13
CREDIT BY EXAMINATION	13
CREDIT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.....	13
PART-TIME STATUS.....	13.....
TRANSFER STUDENTS FROM OTHER PA PROGRAMS.....	13
DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT	13
DISABILITY SERVICES.....	14
TECHNICAL STANDARDS.....	14
Observation.....	14
Communication.....	15
Motor	15
Intellectual Conceptual Integrative and Quantitative Abilities	15
Behavioral and Social Attributes.....	15
MEDICAL RECORDS.....	16
Student Health Admission Requirements.....	16
Immunizations/Title Result Documentatio.....	-2 (i)3120 >>BDC 0 Tc 0 Tw ()Tj EMC /Ref

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....	46.....
MSPAS Program Requirements.....	46.....
PROFESSIONAL	

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Dominican University of California Physician Assistant Studies Program!

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures for students enrolled in the program and presents a collection of resources that you will find useful during your graduate studies at Dominican. In some instances the handbook will refer you to other documents that contain more detailed information, such as the Dominican University of California Student Handbook or the Dominican University of California Catalog, which can both be accessed online through the Dominican University of California website. Students in the Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) Program are bound by the policies in those documents. However, the policies in this handbook extend beyond the university policies and apply to MSPAS students at all locations- on campus or off-site, in lectures, at clinical rotations, at professional meetings/gatherings, or during service work. You should use this handbook and the Student Clinical Handbook as your primary reference resources throughout the time you're enrolled in the program.

We have attempted to make the material in this manual as up-to-date and useful as possible, but to improve it even more, we need your feedback. Please contact your advisor or the Program Director with your questions and comments concerning any of the material contained herein.

The MSPAS faculty are committed to providing you with a broad education of the basic and clinical medical sciences. Our desire is to impact positively thousands of patient lives through graduates, and we will direct you to the resources you will need to become well-prepared clinicians. It is our goal to help each student develop the skills necessary to be a self-directed learner, which starts with your reviewing the policies and expectations of the program. As a PA student, it is your responsibility to read and understand this handbook.

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The Dominican University of California Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies Program is a 28-month year-round program. This program has received Accreditation Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Dominican University of California Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies Program is to prepare PAs to provide compassionate, high quality, patient-centered care as members of interdisciplinary healthcare teams. To achieve this, the program provides an exemplary, active learning environment that integrates theoretical learning and inquiry skills with clinical practice promoting diversity and inclusion among the student body, faculty and staff. Our approach to teaching nurtures reflection, creativity, and critical thinking as core competencies of the profession. Graduates will demonstrate cultural humility and be committed to lifelong learning and their professional development. They will be prepared to make significant contributions to the diverse communities that they serve and to the advancement of the PA profession.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the University to admit qualified students irrespective of race, age, gender, color, creed, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. To be considered for admission to any program offered by the University, a student must possess the academic credentials and professional attributes deemed essential by the respective program admissions committee for selection to the program.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Dominican University of California MSPAS Program is to be a

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

ILO: Exploration and Acquisition of Knowledge

SLO1: Demonstrate core medical knowledge in biomedical and clinical sciences with its application to patient care across the lifespan.

SLO2: Employ the biopsychosocial model in patient centered care with patients across the lifespan.

ILO: Development of Intellectual, Professional Skills

SLO3: Demonstrate the ability to engage in critical analysis using the medical literature and other information resources for the purpose of self medical practice improvement.

SLO4: Demonstrate the commitment to life-long learning in the ongoing development of the ability

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The Dominican University of California Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies Dominican University

Course	MSPAS Program Didactic and Clinical Curriculum	Units
Semester1 - Didactic		
PA 5101	Current Topics in the PA Profession	1
PA/PAL 5111	Clinical Assessment	6
PA 5120	Foundations of Clinical Medicine	8
PA 5130	Medical Ethics and Professionalism	

MSPAS PROGRAM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

All physician assistant courses require prior admission to Dominican University of California and the Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies Program.

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Students should visit <http://www.dominican.edu/academics/resources/catalog> link to the General Academic Policies and Procedures content area of the Dominican University of California Academic Catalog. This section contains complete and detailed information relating to University academics, academic policies and procedures (including plagiarism), Academic Honesty, and the Academic Honor Code.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Dominican University of California is fully committed to compliance with Content area 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. As such, it is the policy of the University to provide an educational environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on disability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other university sponsored programs.

6 Dominican prohibits discrimination against any individual with a disability and further prohibits

During enrollment, the program's Academic Progress Committee will monitor students for continuing compliance with technical standards. The faculty of the MSPAS Program recognize this responsibility to assess each student's compliance with the technical standards in order to allow students to enter and continue in the program and to present candidates for the PA certificate who have the knowledge and skills to function in a wide variety of clinical situations and to render a broad spectrum of patient care.

MEDICAL RECORDS

Information provided by students at matriculation and periodically during their education at Dominican University (i.e., immunization and/or blood test documentation and tuberculosis clearance and screening forms) will be collected and retained in a secure environment in the MSPAS Program offices and/or by Exxat Approve, the online background screening and compliance tracking company used by the program. Immunization and tuberculosis clearance records are also kept by the program and/or by Exxat Approve submission to clinical training sites as requested. However, all students should retain a copy of all documents for their records since these records may be required by a variety of institutions as the student progresses through her/his professional career.

Student Health Admission Requirements

Students

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- Repeat tuberculosis screening to include 2-step PPD skin test AND QuantiFERON Gold blood test as required per clinical site (less than one repeat test per year).

Laptop computers provide students access to primary and supportive information to better prepare for and supplement the learning process. DU utilizes Moodle, an electronic learning tool that will be used as the central component of the “electronic classroom” employed throughout much of the curriculum. Assignments, course material, assessments, and other tools are available for each class through Moodle. Moodle is not resident on the laptop but is simply a web address to servers at Dominican. Because of this, students will be able to access materials from any location with web access. Additionally, the MSPAS Program utilizes computer-based examinations and survey t(e)-n PplapunD1.6 (om)-(t)-4.lapto se7 (p.8l8c1oithh6 (si)8.2a)2 (s)1

Students may purchase or rent books at the Dominican University of California campus bookstore or may purchase them online through the bookstore at

2. Academic work begins and ends on the days and at the times specified in the MSPAS Program calendar. It is particularly important that students attend classes immediately preceding and following vacation and/holiday periods.

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ete All required items are listed on the Exxat Approve portal, including mandatory forms that must be completed and submitted to the service The Immunization and Health Document Requirements (10.9.10)

11. Pregnant healthcare workers should strictly adhere to precautions to minimize the risk of HIV transmission.
12. All specimens must be contained in a leak-proof plastic bag labeled "bio-hazard."

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media refers to Internet-based tools designed to create a highly accessible information highway. These tools are a powerful and far-reaching means of communication that can have a significant impact on a student's professional reputation and status. Examples include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Snapchat, and Instagram.

Students are reliable for anything they post on social media sites, and the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines must be maintained as if they were interacting in person. The following guidelines have been developed to outline appropriate standards of conduct for the future of a student and the reputation of the MSPAS Program:

1. Students should behave responsibly and use good judgment.

10. Students may not communicate with a member of the media or an outside attempt to gather information regarding the MSPAS Program or the University through social networks. Students should refer all questions regarding program information, policies, and procedures to the Program Director.
11. For additional information regarding internet services and user-generated content policy, including social media, students should refer to the following locations on the University website:

www.dominican.edu/academics/resources/technology
<https://www.dominican.edu/socialmediaguide>

EVACUATION PROCEDURES IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- Choose the closest and safest evacuation route from the building.
- Evacuate immediately in silence, leaving lights on and doors open.
- Do not use elevators.
- Assist those with disabilities.
- Feel doors for heat. If cool, exit carefully. If hot, do not open the door. Find another exit or go to the window and call for help.
- If a room or passageway is filling with smoke, crawl rather than walk, since smoke rises.
- Assemble for roll call in silence at the designated assembly area.
- Be prepared to give the Check c (f)-4 ((bye391 P20.011 Tae98]TJ 0 Tc 0 Tw6

4. Completion of Health Insurance () 11 (y) 6.9 (a)-1 Td [t] Pr (t) (c (t) n B56 (d) 5Q BT B56 t) 7(t) 3 nbd) 5Q

MSPAS PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This content area contains policies and requirements that govern academic performance and professional conduct for all students who are enrolled in any phase of the ~~the~~ Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies Program. These policies are unique to the program and are designed to promote standards for academic competency, professional behavior and integrity, and personal responsibility necessary for practice as a physician assistant. They represent the parameters of achievement and behavior the program faculty expects of its students as future health practitioners who will be serving the public and consumer. It is the responsibility of all students to be knowledgeable about program policies. The policies will be applied to all aspects of the student's academic progress and conduct for as long as the student is enrolled in the program.

The MSPAS Program has a responsibility to safeguard the patient and public by educating competent physician assistant graduates. As such, the program maintains the right to refuse to matriculate or graduate a student, as well as the right to remove a student from a clinical experience or rotation who is deemed by the faculty to be academically, clinically, or professionally incompetent or otherwise unfit or unsuited for continued enrollment in the program. Additionally, students are required to undergo criminal background and toxicology screening during enrollment.

The MSPAS Program reserves the right to make changes at any time to the Handbook or to the requirements for admission, graduation, tuition, fees, and any other rules or regulations.

The MSPAS Program specific policies are in addition to and may be more stringent than the Dominican University of California policies. Students are expected to refer to these policies as needed.

BACKGROUND CHECKS/TOXICOLOGY SCREENS

The Program requires students to undergo background screenings prior to matriculation and periodically

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Program Administrative Manager who will add them to the student's file. The approval of each request by the Course Coordinator, Associate Program

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Use of Wireless Devices in the Classroom

Laptops, tablets/ iPads, and smart phones may be used in the classroom at the discretion of the Course Coordinator. Instructors will notify students if electronic equipment will be required for an in-class activity.

The following activities are considered disruptions:

- Texting
- Cell phone ringing
- Checking email

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Email is an effective and standard way to communicate quickly with Dominican faculty,

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The modalities listed below are used to evaluate student performance in the MSPAS Program.

1. Written examinations and quizzes
2. Class/lab/seminar assignments, papers, and oral presentations

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADED ACTIVITIES DURING DIDACTIC SEMESTERS

Requirements to Pass a Didactic Course

Please refer to individual course syllabi for requirements to pass the course. Failure to meet any of these syllabi requirements may result in a failure of the course.

Courses with OSCE Exams

All OSCE examinations must be passed according to the grading criteria outlined in the course syllabus.

Examination during Clinical Semesters

Students should refer to the MSPAS Student Clinical Year Handbook for further information regarding this.

Exam Review Process and Procedure

Students may review graded exams during designated course exam review sessions after exams have been completed, as delineated in the procedure set forth in individual course syllabi.

Retesting of Failed Examinations Limit

A student will be granted no more than three (3) retests for failed exams on first attempt during the didactic phase of the program. Should the student fail another exam on first attempt, that failed grade will be used in the calculation of the course grade as outlined in the syllabus. Remediation for failed exams will be outlined in individual syllabi.

Regarding EOR exams and retesting limitations in the clinical year, refer to the clinical handbook.

COURSE GRADING

Course grading is delineated in the individual course syllabi.

Grade Point Average

All students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better to progress in the MSPAS major at the completion of each semester. Students will not be awarded a graduate degree from DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA with a cumulative GPA below 3.0. Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 for one semester will be placed on academic probation. A second semester of a below 3.0 cumulative GPA may result in program dismissal.

Incomplete (INC)

An Incomplete (INC) grade indicates that a student has not been able to complete required work for issuance of a grade. An Incomplete is not counted in the grade point calculations until a final grade replaces it. An INC during the academic phase must be replaced before the student enters the clinical phase. Replacement of an Incomplete is under the direction of the Course Coordinator. If the required work is not completed within the specified time, the INC will be automatically converted to a failing grade (F). It is to the student's advantage to arrange to make up any incomplete work as soon as possible. Students who receive an INC grade are not eligible for financial aid in subsequent terms for completing the same course.

Incomplete or Failure (INC or F)

If the student fails an exam and is provided the opportunity to remediate by the Course Coordinator or the Director of Clinical Education, the student will receive a grade of incomplete (INC) until remediation is completed.

Note: Students must take at least six credits to be eligible for financial aid and should contact the Office of Financial Aid with any questions.

Withdrawal (W)

decisions should be reconsidered. The Dean will provide a formal response within 10 days of receiving the formal complaint. The decision of the Dean is final.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Students may present general grievances, concerns, or suggestions for improvement to the Program Director. If there is a concern from the class as a whole, then the student leaders are encouraged to meet with the Program Director to share these concerns in person. The purpose of these meetings is to encourage open communication between the students and program administration and to address student concerns. It is the program's goal to encourage feedback for the purpose of quality improvement. Students should voice their concerns in a thoughtful and constructive manner. Any situation involving specific faculty members, specific students, or an individual student's grades should be addressed in individual sessions as outlined below. The program will not take action based on a concern expressed anonymously (e.g., through note or email).

Complaints Against Professors, Classes or Programs

Grievances not including grade appeals with a specific faculty member should initially be addressed directly with the faculty member unless the nature of the complaint is such that the student feels uncomfortable doing so. Complaints should be expressed using a diplomatic, reasoned approach with the goal to reach quick, amicable conflict resolution, if possible. If the student feels uncomfortable approaching the involved faculty member for whatever reason, or if the student has not been successful at resolution of the conflict with the faculty member, he/she should register the grievance.

outlined on the Dominican University website regarding University policies and procedures:
<https://www.dominican.edu/campus/studenthandbookandpolicies>

Students who take a LOA prior to the completion of a semester or clinical block will not receive credit for that material/rotation unless the semester contained a modular course that was completed and passed prior to taking the leave.

Medical LOA

If a student takes a leave of absence for medical reasons, he/she will need a medical release in order to return. Once the student receives a medical release, he/she can petition to return to the program. During a LOA, a student is not permitted to take any PA courses. Petitions to return to class must be submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the term in which the student plans to return. If timing is such that the PA courses needing to be repeated are not offered, the student must wait until appropriate PA courses are available.

Students returning from a Medical Leave of Absence must be able to meet the Program Technical Standards and will be required to provide clearance to return to the program free

Students may work within the institution while participating in the Federal Work Study Program as long as such work will not interfere in their academic pursuits. However, MSPAS Program students are not required to, and do not work for the program in addition, students may not substitute for clinical or administrative staff during supervised clinical experiences. Students may also not serve as instructional or primary faculty for the program.

Student Service Work

In order to avoid practices that might conflict with the professional and education objectives of the MSPAS Program and to avoid practices in which students are substituted for regular staff, the following shall be in effect in regard to service work:

1. Students may not be hired as employees for any private or public practice, clinic or institution t

Professionalism is as important as, and holds equal importance to, academic progress. Students are expected to demonstrate the legal, moral and ethical standards required of a healthcare professional and display behavior that is consistent with these qualities. Professionalism and professional ethics are terms that signify certain scholastic, interpersonal, and behavioral expectations. Among the characteristics included in this context are the knowledge, competence, demeanor, attitude, appearance, mannerisms, integrity, and morals displayed by the students to faculty, staff, preceptors, peers, patients, colleagues in healthcare and other educational settings, and the public. The MSPAS Program expects nothing short of respect and professional demeanor at all times.

Professional Code of Conduct

Success in the physician assistant profession requires certain professional behavioral attributes in addition to content knowledge. Therefore, these professional behavioral attributes, to include empathy, respect, discipline, honesty, integrity, the ability to work effectively with others in a team environment, the ability to take and give constructive feedback, the ability to follow directions, and the ability to address a crisis or emergency situation in a composed manner, are considered to be a part of academic performance.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education 5th edition states, "The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills and the capacity to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. Essential attributes of the graduate PA include an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare." Adherence to these attributes requires that physician assistants

Integrity: Students are expected to follow all policies in the DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Student Handbook and the MSPAS Student Clinical Year Handbook, including those pertaining to academic honesty. Infractions such as forgery, plagiarism, stealing/copying tests, and cheating during examinations will not be tolerated. PA students are also expected to display the highest ethical standards commensurate with work as a healthcare professional. Some of these standards are outlined in the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession published by the American Academy of Physician Assistants and amended in 2024: <https://www.aapa.org/download/56983/?tmstv=1721857192>

Students are mandated to report any illegal or unethical activity to the Program Director or Clinical Coordinator. Students may not accept gifts or gratuities from patients or families. Breaches in confidentiality, falsification of records, misuse of medications, and sexual relationships with patients will not be tolerated.

- **Identification:** Students must always identify themselves as a “physician assistant student” to patients and clinical site staff and never present themselves as physicians, residents, medical students, or graduate physician assistants. Students must always wear their program-supplied name tag while at clinical sites. While in the program, students may not use previously earned titles (i.e., RN, MD, DC, Ph.D., etc.) for identification purposes.

- Attendance: Students must report to all classes, labs, seminars, Call Back Weeks and clinical sites at the scheduled time and remain for the entire session. Students should refer to the [Attendance content area](#) for further information.
- Timeliness: Students must submit all required assignments and forms by their designated due date. Timeliness is an important aspect of professional behavior. Repetitive delay in paperwork/assignment submission during any phase of the program may result in disciplinary action.

CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-ADHERENCE

All cases involving alleged misconduct (with the exception of those involving alleged academic dishonesty) will be processed solely under the guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct as stated in the Dominican University Student Handbook: <https://www.dominican.edu/campus/student-handbook-and-policies>

Failure to adhere to the professional standards and Professional Code of Conduct will result in the following consequences for unprofessional behavior:

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again. A place will be held for the student to return to the

7. Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptor or designees indicating that a student is not progressing academically and/or not demonstrating proficiency to a level where it may jeopardize patient safety
8. Verbal or written reports and/or evaluations from academic faculty, clinical preceptor or designees indicating that a student is not adhering to site regulations, site schedule, ethical standards of conduct, and/or the limitations of a student's role
9. Failure to follow and/or comply with requirements set forth by the MSPAS APC and Program Director

It is important to remember that some aspects of knowledge integration and clinical judgment cannot be adequately evaluated by examinations alone. Observations from academic and/or clinical faculty are crucial for evaluating these critical skills. Failure to achieve minimum competency in coursework, including clinical assignments and satisfactory progress in professional development, behaviors, and attitudes, may result in probation or dismissal. A pattern of documented evaluator concerns about performance may indicate unsatisfactory progress when the record is viewed as a whole, even though passing grades have been assigned. In such instances, if eligible, successful completion of a remediation plan is required to continue in the program.

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Remediation is the opportunity to correct unsatisfactory performance, progress, and/or professional conduct in the MSPAS Program. The offer of remediation is not automatic or guaranteed. Recommendations regarding remediation can be made by the individual Course Coordinator, and/or the MSPAS APC on an individual basis after considering all pertinent circumstances in each case and, in some individually determined cases with a final decision made by the Program Director. Students will be informed in writing of his or her options and next steps at all stages of poor performance. Any student placed on probation for academic or professionalism reasons and offered remediation must fulfill all the terms of the remediation contract within the designated time frame or face actions including, but not limited to, dismissal.

R

examinations OSCEs preceptor evaluations written assignments faculty observation of clinical skills/decision making, and site visits

12.

Students are advised to review their rights as stated on the University website at <https://www.dominican.edu/campus/studenthandbookandpolicies>

Appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs

This appeal request must be submitted in writing and received by the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs within seven days from the date on the appeal decision letter from the Dean. The request should be accompanied by a narrative explaining the basis for the appeal. The narrative should fully explain the student's situation and substantiate the reason(s) for advocating a reversal of the dismissal.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs may grant an appeal only on showing one of the following:

1. Bias of one or more of the members of the MSPAS APC, Program Director, or Dean
2. New, material, documented information not available to the committee, Program Director, or Dean at the time of its initial decision
3. Procedural error

The Vice President for Academic Affairs may choose any of the following options when an appeal to dismiss a student is under consideration:

1. Concur with recommendation of the Dean to dismiss
2. Amend the recommendation
3. Convene an ad hoc committee consisting of three members to review the Academic Progress Committee, Program Director, and Dean's recommendation and present its findings to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for consideration

The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is final.

and networking opportunities provided within these organizations are invaluable to students as they enter the profession. Proof of membership in CAPA and AAPA is required. Student benefits from membership in CAPA and AAPA include eligibility for scholarships, conference discounts, and access to online versions of professional journals. Most importantly, CAPA and AAPA advocate for the profession at the national and state levels. Online applications are available at the sites below.

California Academy of PAs
11870 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste 106580.
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (714) 427-0321
Email: capa@capanet.org

American Academy of Physician Assistants
2318 Mill Road Suite 1300
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 836-2722
Email : customercare@aapa.org

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY

Dominican is committed to maintaining a drug-free campus. The full text of the University's policy on drugs and alcohol, including procedures governing disciplinary actions, can be found in the DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Student Handbook: <https://www.dominican.edu/canife/studenthandbookandpolicies> As members of the Dominican community, students are advised that they will jeopardize their status at the University if they use, sell, or in any way make available to others any illegal drugs or alcohol.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

STUDENT
