

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 14-16

COMMITTEE DATE: December 3, 2013

BOARD DATE: December 10, 2013

APPLICATION OF MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS TO OFFER THE MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of **MGH Institute of Health Professions** to offer the **Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.

Contact: Dr. Shelley Tinkham, Assistant Commissioner for Academic, P-16 and Veterans Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

December 2013

Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions Master of Physician Assistant Studies

INTENT

Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions (MGH-IHP), a New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)-accredited independent graduate school of health sciences, located in Boston, MA, is seeking approval to offer the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS). The purpose of the MPAS program is to prepare physician assistants (PAs) for entry into medical care in primary care and specialty settings under the supervision of a licensed physician.

According to the American Academy of Physician Assistants, PAs perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret lab tests, perform procedures, assist in surgery, provide patient education and counseling and make rounds in hospitals and nursing homes. The demand for physician assistants is on the rise, especially in Massachusetts. The MA Health Care Cost-Control Law mandates that health plans allow patients to choose a PA as a primary care provider. The Massachusetts Medical Society has documented a critical shortage of physicians in family medicine, internal medicine, and general surgery among others. Nationally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects a greater need for primary care providers, as more physicians enter specialty areas of practice. The BLS also notes that roles for PAs are expected to increase because they are less costly to employ than physicians, and because clinics have shown shorter wait times and good patient outcomes using PAs.

The proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies was developed in consultation with academic administration and department chairs of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, where the program will be housed. It was approved by MGH-IHP faculty governance and then by the Massachusetts General Hospital Board of Trustees on December 21, 2012.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

MGH Institute of Health Professions was founded in 1977 and incorporated as a subsidiary of Massachusetts General Hospital in 1985. The Institute's mission is to "prepare health professionals and advance care for a diverse society through leadership in education, clinical practice, research and scholarship, professional service, and community engagement". The Institute offers doctoral and master's degrees, certificates of advanced study and continuing education to practicing professionals as well as to baccalaureate-educated individuals entering health care from another field. MGH Institute of Health Professions has the authority in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to grant the Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy, Nursing; the Master of Science in Dietetics, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Speech Pathology, Clinical Investigation, Rehabilitation Sciences and Health Profession Education; as well as the Doctor of Nursing Practice, the Doctor of Physical Therapy, the Doctor of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Sciences and the Doctor of Occupational Therapy.

The institution now requests approval to offer the Master of Physician Assistant Studies.

ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS

Curriculum (Attachment A)

Students must complete a total of 80 credit hours over 28 months of full-time study. The proposed program is composed of two phases, a first year of didactic work, and second year of clinical rotations. First year course content will cover clinical medicine, physiology, lab medicine, diagnostic imaging, clinical skills, and pharmacology related to each body system. Each semester includes a seminar that will facilitate case discussions using the knowledge across all courses in that semester and that will involve interprofessional activities with students from other institute programs. Year 2 follows with ten clinical rotations over 16 months. Rotations will cover different populations and practice settings, and provide opportunities for elective experiences. Assignment to clinical rotations will be made by the Director of Clinical Education in consultation with faculty advisors. Each rotation will last 4 to 8 weeks and will be supervised by PAs and physicians who are board certified in their respective fields of practice. A capstone project will be completed across the second year. The topic and scope of the capstone will be negotiated with a faculty advisor. Students will return to the Institute three times during year 2 for two weeks, following each 16 weeks of clinical rotation, to review for the licensing examination, discuss professional issues and take objective structured clinical examinations, which will provide a summative assessment of each student's progress in their clinical knowledge and skills.

Students who successfully complete the Institute's MPAS program will:

- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to care for patients in a variety of health care settings.
- Develop effective communication skills and provider-patient relationships, attending to the whole patient in body, mind and spirit.
- Provide competent, evidence based and compassionate healthcare to diverse populations.
- Engage in life-long learning and self-reflective practice.
- Foster wellness and promote healthy lifestyles in patients and in the community.
- Develop self-awareness to make appropriate socially responsible, ethical and moral choices in the practice of medicine.
- Value service to communities and contributions to underserved populations.
- Embrace the physician assistant's role in the health care team and collaborate effectively with team members for the benefit of patients.

Admission Requirements

To be considered for acceptance into the MGH-IHP MPAS program the candidate must meet the following admission criteria:

1. The candidate must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.0. Degrees in progress will be considered as long as there are no more than two outstanding courses at the time of admission. Official transcripts are required.
2. The candidate must complete and submit the official results of the GRE (verbal, quantitative, and analytical section scores). GRE scores must be earned within the last 5 years.
3. All candidates must show satisfactory completion of the following pre-requisites at the college level: a semester of biology (with lab), two semesters of chemistry (with

- lab), one semester each of anatomy and physiology (with lab) (may be one year of Anatomy and Physiology combined), and statistics.
4. The candidate must complete at least 500 hours of hands on direct patient care experience, either as an employee or volunteer. The experience may occur within any healthcare setting. Applicants will be asked to describe and verify these experiences in their application.
 5. A personal statement by the applicant.
 6. The candidate must submit three letters of recommendation. One of these letters must be from an individual in the health or education sector. Letters should address the candidate's potential for graduate education/scholarly study and the candidate's qualifications for work as a health professional.
 7. Personal interviews will be required in the admissions process. Qualified applicants will be invited for an onsite interview with a faculty member.
 8. International applicants must complete the TOEFL with a score of at least 233 (computer test).

If the candidate is accepted into the MPAS program, he or she will be required to submit results of a criminal background check (CORI).

Tuition and Fees

The cost for a credit hour is \$1,082; the estimated total cost for the program is \$86,560 plus student fees.

Projected Enrollment

MGH-IHP MPAS program will begin with 30 students in the first year and expects to grow to a class size of 50 students over three years.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT PROJECTION

	# of Students Year 1	# of Students Year 2	# of Students Year 3	# of Students Year 4
New Full Time	30	40	50	50
Continuing Full Time		30	40	50
New Part Time				
Continuing Part Time				
Totals	30	70	90	100

RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Faculty and Staff

The proposed Master of Physician Assistant Studies will be housed within the School for Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. To date, MGH-IHP has appointed one full-time faculty member, who has an appropriate terminal degree and will serve as the program director, and plans to utilize two of the MGH's existing full-time faculty members of other Institute programs. When

fully staffed, the program will have 5 full time and 5 part-time faculty members to deliver the curriculum. In January, the Institute will begin searching for faculty members and plans to have all positions filled by summer 2014, in anticipation for a May 2015 program start date. All full-time faculty members will hold a MPAS and be licensed physician assistants. The program has a department chair, and plans to hire an academic coordinator/associate program director, and a director of clinical education over the next few months.

Library Resources

MGH-IHP provides students, faculty, and staff access to a universal set of learning, information, and technology resources in addition to resources specific to each academic program. Treadwell Library provides resources and services to the MGH-IHP community. Its collection covers a broad range of clinical and research areas, and most of the collection is easily accessible online from any location. Access includes all but two of the library's online databases and 99% of 1,400 periodical titles to which the library subscribes. The library also offers access to several thousand more electronic journals through database subscriptions. Interlibrary loan for journal articles is available to all students and faculty regardless of location and is available for book loan to onsite students and faculty. Access to other libraries, such as the medical library of Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and Harvard Medical School's Countway Library, is also available. In addition, students, faculty, and staff who are Massachusetts residents have access to the Boston Public Library.

Physical and Information Technology Resources

The MGH Institute of Health Professions is located in the Charlestown Navy Yard in the city of Boston. The primary academic facility is located in the Catherine Filene Shouse Building at 36 First Avenue. The 62,000 square foot Shouse building houses classrooms and faculty offices, as well as academic support offices. Key learning areas within the Shouse Building include the Nursing Skills Laboratory, a Clinical Simulation Center for home care and acute care, and the Ruth Sleeper Learning Center, a 10 station Health Assessment Unit that resembles an outpatient clinic space. All of the institutes classrooms and labs are equipped with white boards and SMART boards, multimedia capability, DVD and desktop/laptop computer connections.

MGH-IHP is a member of the Partners Information Systems, which maintains and supports an enterprise-wide data network with Internet connectivity, secured data centers for server and network resources management, and a 24/7 help desk. Each student, faculty and staff member may access learning, information and clinical resources onsite at the Institute and at any Partners entity location.

Licensure

Physician assistants are regulated in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. In order to obtain licensure, individuals must graduate from a PA program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission for Physician Assistant Education (ARC-PA) and pass the national certification examination. A letter of intent has been filed with the ARC-PA and the MGH-IHP currently has applicant status.

The MGH Institute of Health Professions has applied for Accreditation-Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The Institute anticipates matriculating its first class in May of 2015, pending achieving Accreditation-Provisional status at the September 2014 ARC-PA meeting. Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status for a new PA program that, at the time of its initial accreditation review, demonstrated its preparedness to initiate a program in accordance with the accreditation

Standards. If Accreditation-Provisional is not awarded at the September 2014 ARC-PA meeting, ARC-PA will not permit the Institute to enroll its first class.

Qualified graduates of the proposed program will be eligible for certification through the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) and licensure in all national jurisdictions.

Budget (Attachment B)

A multi-year budget projection has been developed for the proposed program.

EVALUATION

External Review

The proposal was reviewed by Patrick Auth, PhD, MS, PA-C, Drexel University; and Thomas White, PA-C, JD, University of New England. Documentation that informed the Visiting Committee report was the MGH paper application, supplemental information and the online Faculty Handbook (approved 2010). A conference call among the reviewers supplemented the paper review of the proposal.

After reviewing this information, the reviewers made the following recommendations:

- The program should identify and secure formal agreements with clinical sites, emergency departments and urgent care sites in the near future to meet the needs of the entering class.
- The program should develop syllabi that include the lecture schedule and instructional objectives for each lecture.
- Program objectives should be vetted and approved by the PA Program Curriculum Committee.
- Develop and submit a timeline for recruiting and hiring core faculty for the program.
- MGH-IHP should conduct a support-staff review to address potential gaps in its support services to non-traditional students.
- Insure that adequate bandwidth exists to accommodate the additional students to online use of library resources.

In response, the Institute is currently working to include physician assistant students in the 300 existing formal agreements that they have with clinical sites, emergency departments and urgent care sites in Massachusetts and beyond. As core faculty are hired and identified, the existing syllabi will be updated to include lecture schedules and more detailed instructional objectives. The program objectives will be reviewed, revised as needed, and approved by the MPAS Program Curriculum Committee, again, as core faculty have been put in place. MGH-IHP provided a timeline for hiring that was considered satisfactory to the review team which outlines that faculty recruiting will begin in January 2014 and that hiring will be completed by no later than summer 2014. The School of Health and Rehabilitation Services has a fulltime academic support counselor available to conduct sessions in study habits, test-taking, stress and time management, and reading/writing skills. An audit was done recently to address this staff member's availability to support more students and found that there was room for their caseload to expand. The Institute has expressed increasing support staff if it is necessary. The Institute has a 100/1000GB connection to the Partner's data network and within the next year they plan to build a new \$100 million data center to expand this network even further.

After reviewing the institution's response, the evaluators felt that the institution had responded adequately to its recommendations and the program demonstrated meeting minimal standards for Board approval.

PUBLIC HEARING

The required public hearing was held on December 2, 2013 at the Department of Higher Education, located at One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts. No objections to the petition were presented.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

The institution anticipates enrolling its first class in 2015, pending approval from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) in September 2014. If Accreditation-Provisional is not awarded at the September 2014 ARC-PA meeting, the Institute will not be permitted to enroll its first class. The Department expects for the institution to communicate this fact to potential applicants.

After a thorough evaluation of all documentation submitted, staff is satisfied that the proposal of **MGH Institute of Health Professions** to award the **Master of Physician Assistant Studies** degree meets the requirements for NEASC-accredited institutions outlined in 610 CMR 2.08. Recommendation is for approval.

Attachment A: Curriculum Outline**Graduate Program Curriculum Outline****MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
Physician Assistant Studies Program**

Major Required (Core) Courses (Total # of courses required = 33)		
YEAR 1- Didactic		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
PA601	Clinical Medicine 1	3
PA602	Clinical Medicine 2	5
PA603	Clinical Medicine 3	5
PA611	Foundations of Medicine 1	3
PA612	Foundations of Medicine 2	3
PA613	Foundations of Medicine 3	3
PA620	Human Anatomy	5
PA621	Clinical Skills 1	2
PA622	Clinical Skills 2	1
PA623	Clinical Skills 3	2
PA631	Pharmacology 1	2
PA632	Pharmacology 2	2
PA633	Pharmacology 3	2
PA640	Research Methods and Evidence-Based Practice	2
PA641	Professional Issues	1
PA642	Population Health and Prevention	1
PA651	Integrated Seminar 1	1
PA652	Integrated Seminar 2	1
PA661	Clinical Practicum 1	1
PA662	Clinical Practicum 2	1
PA663	Clinical Practicum 3	1
PA791	Master's Capstone Project	4
HP818	Introduction to Interprofessional Practice	1
HP819	Interprofessional Project	1
HP820	Ethical Issues in Health Care	1

Attachment B: Budget

One Time/ Start Up Costs – FY14	Planning Year	Cost Categories	Annual Expenses			
			FY15 - Year 1	FY- 16 Year 2	FY17 - Year 3	FY-18 Year 4
\$353,600		Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	\$821,683	\$937,167	\$973,197	\$1,002,383
\$80,720		Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	\$115,886	\$119,135	\$122,457	\$125,890
0		Staff	\$63,036	\$64,928	\$66,875	\$68,881
\$227,792		General Administrative Costs	\$694,526	\$748,728	\$755,068	\$776,743
0		Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	0	0	0	0
\$312,734		Facilities/ Space/ Equipment	\$516,716	\$499,237	\$453,041	\$466,046
0		Field & Clinical Resources	0	0	0	0
\$10,000		Marketing	\$10,300	\$10,609	\$10,927	\$11,255
\$24,000		Other (Specify) – Supplies and Other Expenses	\$151,870	\$679,485	\$699,394	\$703,851
\$11,500		Outside Consultants/ Reviews	0	0	0	0
\$1,020,346		TOTALS	\$2,370,017	\$3,059,289	\$3,080,959	\$3,155,049

One Time/Start-Up Support	Revenue Sources	Annual Income			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Grants	0	\$200,000*	\$200,000*	\$200,000*
	Tuition	\$590,280	\$1,782,740	\$2,956,630	\$3,657,277
	Fees	\$41,180	\$108,087	\$164,503	\$219,437
	Departmental	0	0	0	0
\$1,020,346	Reallocated Funds	\$1,830,119	\$1,242,632	\$212,390	0
	Other (specify) – Voucher Tuition Discount	(\$18,944)	(\$56,725)	(\$93,634)	(\$114,653)
	Other (specify) - Financial Aid Tuition Discount	(\$72,618)	(\$217,445)	(\$358,930)	(\$439,505)
	Gifts	0	0	0	0
\$1,020,346	TOTALS	\$2,370,017	\$3,059,289	\$3,080,959	\$3,522,556

** Note: Grant funds are projected only. If these monies are not secured, the Institute will cover any shortfall through additional reallocated funds.*