

# Primary Care Physician Shadowing (PCPS) Program

## Program Overview

The Primary Care Physician Shadowing (PCPS) Program is sponsored by the Brody School of Medicine and the Center for Pre-Professional Advising. The PCPS Program exposes students to five areas of primary care medicine (providing the student's schedule allows) by pairing them with primary care physicians up to five different clinical locations over the course of six weeks.

Many of today's primary care physicians state that primary care experiences early in their premedical education affected their decisions to pursue careers in primary care. The PCPS Program supports the mission of the Brody School of Medicine which includes promoting primary care physicians, and it provides experiences for the students participating in the program that may help them clarify their future career paths.

Additionally, medical schools are increasingly looking for evidence that applicants have a realistic understanding of the various roles of physicians through shadowing and volunteer experiences in a clinical or hospital setting. Clinical exposure opportunities can be difficult to find and intimidating for students; however, the PCPS Program will provide clinical exposure opportunities in scheduled weekly rotations. By participating in the PCPS Program, students will experience a work environment where timeliness, professionalism, and customer service are important elements in the life of a physician.

## Goals of the Program

The shadowing experience includes but is not limited to the following:

- Observation in the treatment of patients
- Observation of office/hospital functions and management
- Observation of diagnostic procedures and use of medical equipment
- Observation of healthcare teams

## Student Learning Goals/Objectives

1. The student will gain awareness of current healthcare issues and needs in eastern North Carolina.
2. The student will understand the daily activities of primary care physicians.
3. The student will observe physician/patient interactions and problem-solving skills.
4. The student will develop an understanding of and adhere to professional ethics, etiquette, communication, and patient confidentiality.
5. The student will develop an appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the healthcare team.

## The Student

1. Gathers information about the program and makes sure that he or she meets the eligibility requirements before applying.
2. Completes and submits the application to **Pre-Professional Advising Center by e-mail: [ppac@ecu.edu](mailto:ppac@ecu.edu), or in person at 2500 Old Cafeteria Complex.**
3. Receives notification of acceptance or denial.

### Eligibility

1. You must be enrolled as a full-time student at East Carolina University.
2. You must be a Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Second Degree, or Graduate grade level student at East Carolina University. Priority goes to undergraduates.
3. You must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.3 at East Carolina University at the time of selection as well as during the semester you shadow.
4. You must have completed at least one biology or chemistry prerequisite course with lab, with a grade of C or higher.
5. You must be available one day each week (not including Friday) to begin shadowing from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the six-week session you are assigned.
6. Your application, all paperwork, and immunization requirements must be completed by the stated deadline, which will be after the shadowing orientation (see timeline).
7. Students are only allowed to participate in this program one time.

### The Selection Process

Only students meeting the eligibility requirements listed above will be considered for the PCPS Program. If at any time a student does not meet the criteria, he or she may be dropped from the program.

If we have too many eligible applicants for the number of spots available, students will be selected in the following order:

1. Early Assurance students (must still meet 3.3 GPA and not be classified as Freshman grade level status or 1-29 semester hours credit at ECU).
2. Eligible Seniors, Juniors and Sophomores
3. Second degree or current Graduate students

**NOTE: If more students apply than can be accepted, the Director of Pre-Professional Advising will determine who is selected.**

### Students Who Are Selected to Participate

1. Attend a MANDATORY orientation meeting.
2. Complete and submit all paperwork and immunization requirements by the mandatory orientation date. All documents are to be submitted to **Pre-Professional Advising Center by e-mail to [ppac@ecu.edu](mailto:ppac@ecu.edu), or in person at 2500 Old Cafeteria Complex** either at the orientation meeting or prior to their first day of shadowing.

***These requirements must be completed without exception and include:***

- a. *Full series Covid-19 vaccination*
- b. *Current season Flu vaccination and Tdap vaccination*
- c. *Tuberculin (TB) skin test with negative results*
- d. *Full series of Varicella, MMR (or individual Rubella, Rubeola, Mumps), or positive titers.*
- e. *BSOM Student User Agreement and Confidentiality Statement (e-h) will be given to you at the shadowing orientation)*
- f. *Vidant Medical Center Confidentiality Agreement*
- g. *BSOM Code of Conduct Attestation Statement*
- h. *ECU Health Shadowing Agreement/Release/Waiver from Liability Form*
- i. *Copy of certificate of insurance or health insurance card as proof of current health insurance coverage*
- j. *Immunization Record (a copy can be obtained from ECU Student Health Services)*

- k. *HIPAA Privacy Training (training and test in Canvas)*
  - l. *Submission of typed journal and signed evaluation sheets (this will be turned in at the end of the program)*
3. Participate in the shadowing session to which they have been assigned.
  4. Have an observational role only (are not able to provide direct patient care).
  5. Rotate through up to five medical departments over the five- or six-week period.
  6. Maintain professional standards including:
    - Representing ECU in a positive manner
    - Following the Brody School of Medicine’s policies and procedures
    - Complying with the professional dress code
    - Wearing a name badge at all times
    - Arriving on time
    - Following directions
    - Maintaining confidentiality
  7. Ask the physician preceptor to sign an evaluation sheet each week to verify attendance and provide feedback.
  8. Write weekly journal entries describing shadowing experiences and personal reactions to those experiences. Failure to submit a typed journal and signed evaluation sheets will result in a negative final evaluation which automatically excludes students from any future participation in the PCPS Program and includes a recommendation to deny a student’s request for a committee interview with the East Carolina University Health Professions Committee.
  9. Submit journals and evaluation sheets to **Pre-Professional Advising Center by e-mail: [ppac@ecu.edu](mailto:ppac@ecu.edu), or at 2500 Old Cafeteria Complex**, by the stated deadline (see timeline).
  - 10.

### **Confidentiality**

“Confidential” means private or not to be disclosed. Confidential information is information that if disclosed could create bias against someone or be detrimental to someone’s well-being. Examples are sharing a patient’s treatment or diagnosis or telling someone about a person seeking treatment. Students should be mindful not to discuss any patient related information with anyone. Confidentiality will be discussed in further detail at orientation.

### **Professional Office Etiquette**

As mentioned earlier, students in the program are representing ECU; more importantly, they are representing themselves. The impressions made through behavior are long-lasting. It is in the student’s best interest to maintain appropriate behavior and be responsible for his or her own actions. Here are some basic guidelines:

- Address office personnel as Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Doctor unless asked to do otherwise.
- Do not chew gum or smoke.
- Do not use profanity.
- Do not have friends visit you during your sessions.
- Do not accept or make personal phone calls.
- Do not use your cell phone for any reason while shadowing at your clinical site.

### **Professional Dress**

One's personal appearance makes an impression on others. During the program, students should always present a professional appearance which does **not** include jeans, shorts, T-Shirts, halter or tank tops, flip flops, or open-toed shoes. Guidelines for professional dress will be discussed in further detail at the orientation meeting. Visit this link for specific details, <https://medicine.ecu.edu/generalist-programs/shadowing/dresscode/>.

### **Making the Most of the Shadowing Experience**

Students will be asked to create a journal highlighting their impressions and new knowledge. Keeping a journal will provide an avenue for the students to reflect on their interactions, experiences, and likes/dislikes. Students are also encouraged to get to know the physicians with whom they work to learn from their experiences, and if given the opportunity, students may want to ask the physicians about the healthcare profession and to explore the possibility of long-term shadowing on an individual basis.

### **Expectations of Physicians**

1. The physician will provide opportunities for the students to observe his or her daily activities and interactions with patients. However, please note that not all of the students' time must be spent in direct observation. The physician may decide what the experience will include, with whom the students will work, and then provide information on the proper procedure for that particular experience.
2. Although discussed at the program orientation meeting, the physician is strongly encouraged to review patient confidentiality rules and regulations with the student participants.
3. The physician or a clinical staff member will determine other healthcare-related activities suitable for the students' observation and/or participation.
4. The physician will offer opportunities to address issues raised by either student or physician relative to medical matters and/or patient interactions. The physician has the right to establish appropriate protocol and is empowered to control situations in which it might be best for the students not to be present in the examination room.