

# Introducing/Orienting a PA Student to your Practice

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1-PAGERS  
for  
PRECEPTORS

**Orientation facilitates a quicker transition in allowing the student to become a member of the medical team.** It also establishes a feeling of enthusiasm, and belonging to the team helps students develop the functional capacity to work more efficiently. Orientation should include several components:

- Preparing your **staff** to have a student
- Preparing your **patients** to have a student
- Orienting the student to your practice
- Giving an overview of the rotation/preceptor expectations
- Orienting the student to your community

If you plan to take students often, it may be easiest to create an Orientation Checklist or a Student Orientation Guide/Manual so that you are consistent each time. A more detailed description of each of these components is included below:

## Preparing your staff to have a student:

The staff of an office/hospital setting play a key role in ensuring that each student has a successful rotation. The preceptor should inform the staff about how the student will interact with them and with patients. Consider having a meeting or creating a memo with/for staff in advance of the student's arrival to discuss:

- Student's name and schedule
- Student's expected role in patient care
- Expected effect of the student on office operations

## Preparing your patients to have a student:

There are several ways for sites to notify patients that students will be participating in patient care:

- Post a sign at the check-in desk
- Nursing staff or preceptor notify patients directly (but not in front of the student)
- Preceptor identifies patients on the daily schedule that would be good cases for student participation

## Orienting the student to your practice:

On the first day of the student's clinical rotation have a dedicated time and place to:

- Introduce the student to the staff and other medical providers that you work with
- Ask the office manager/HR to provide the student with an ID badge and computer access, EMR training, and the office policies and procedures; also give the student a tour of the clinic/hospital
- Ask one of your nurses/staff to show the student the patient flow process
- Let the student know what to do in the case of an emergency in the office/hospital

## Overview of the rotation/preceptor expectations:

Within the first day or two of the student's clinical rotation, find time to discuss the following aspects of the rotation and your expectations of the student:

- The main things that you would like the student to learn/experience during the rotation
- The student's goals for the rotation (Help them to prioritize these)
- Roles and responsibilities of the student and interactions with the staff
- Student's schedule, hours worked, call, and extra opportunities (grand rounds, conferences, etc.)
- Medical documentation, oral presentations, and additional assignments
- Expected attire, medical equipment needed, and recommended texts/resources

## Orienting the student to your community:

Discuss with the student early in the rotation characteristics of your local community or patient population that affect patient care as well as available community resources that your practice uses on a regular basis.

\*Also be sure to take student and program feedback on your orientation process into consideration moving forward.

## REFERENCES

<http://paeaonline.org/publications/preceptor-handbook/>  
<https://www.med-ed.virginia.edu/courses/fm/precept/module1/index.htm>

