



**PHSU**

PONCE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

· Tortola, BVI ·

**Catalogue**  
**Doctor of Medicine Degree Programme**  
**PHSU School of Medicine – British Virgin Islands**  
**AY 2025-2026**

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## Introduction

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This catalogue includes information about the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree programme offered at the newly developed Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine in the British Virgin Islands. Information in this catalogue is applicable for students in the school's charter class matriculating in July 2025. The MD degree is the only programmed of study offered at PHSU-SOM-BVI and English is the primary language of instruction.

## Academic Calendar

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Applicants accepted to the inaugural cohort of MD students at PHSU-SOM-BVI will be expected to attend a mandatory orientation on-site at the PHSU-SOM-BVI facilities in Tortola. A checklist of requirements will be provided to accepted applicants to ensure timely processing for international students arriving in the BVI. The PHSU-SOM-BVI MD programme aligns with the PHSU Academic Calendar, including US holidays, and will be adjusted as necessary for applicable holidays in the British Virgin Islands. The Academic Calendar includes two mandatory semesters. A summer session is provided to enable medical students to remediate deficiencies. The Academic Year starts on July 1 and ends on June 30 each year.

The academic calendar for preclinical phase (Years 1 and 2) of the MD degree programme are fully integrated with that of the PHSU campus in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The academic calendar for 2025-2026 is maintained by the PHSU Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The preliminary academic calendar provided below (**dates subject to change**).

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2025-2026

### FALL 2025

Orientation	7/9/2025 - 7/11/2025
First day of classes	7/28/2025
Last day to Add/Drop   Late enrollment	8/1/2025
Emancipation Days	8/4-8/6/2025
Institutional Recess	9/1/2025
Heroes and Forefathers Day	10/20/2025
Great March of 1949   Restoration Day	11/10/2025
Institutional Recess	11/27/2025 - 11/28/2025
Last day to withdraw	11/28/2025
Last day of classes	12/12/2025
Promotions Committee Meeting	12/18/2025
Winter Break	12/22/2025-1/11/2026

### SPRING 2026

First day of classes	1/12/2026
Last day to Add/Drop   Late enrollment	1/16/2026
Institutional Recess	1/19/2026
Institutional Recess	2/16/2026
Lavity Stoutt's Birthday (Observed)	3/6/2026
Easter Break	4/2/2026 - 4/6/2026
Institutional Recess	5/25/2026
Last day to withdraw	5/15/2026
Last day of classes	5/29/2026
Promotions Committee Meeting	6/4/2026

### SUMMER 2026 – Sessions A & B (4 weeks each)

First day of classes (A)	6/1/2026
Last day to add/drop (A)	6/5/2026
Last day to withdraw (A)	6/12/2026
First day of classes (B)	6/29/2026
Sovereigns Birthday	6/19/2026
Virgin Islands Day	7/1/2026
Institutional Recess	7/3/2026
Last day to add/drop (B)	7/6/2026
Last day to withdraw (B)	7/13/2026
Last day of classes (A & B)	7/24/2026

Dates may be subject to change due to weather-related events, emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances.

## REFUND POLICY AND DATES

Non-attendance and withdrawal after the add/drop period will be subject to the reimbursement policy established by PHSU; full details can be found in the Academic Catalog. Refund dates for the academic year 2025-2026 are as follows:

### REFUND CALENDAR

FALL 2025	
100% Refund	8/1/2025
75% Refund	8/8/2025
50% Refund	9/5/2025
25% Refund	10/3/2025
SPRING 2026	
100% Refund	1/16/2026
75% Refund	1/23/2026
50% Refund	2/20/2026
25% Refund	3/20/2026
SUMMER 2026: Sessions A & B (4 weeks each)	
100% Refund	6/5/2026 (A)   7/6/2026 (B)
50% Refund	6/12/2026 (A)   7/10/2026 (B)

### History of Ponce Health Sciences University

The Ponce Health Sciences University is a higher education institution of academic excellence located in Ponce, a city on the southern coast of the tropical island of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico (PR) is a territory of the United States (US) and is subject to PR and US regulations.

The institution was founded in 1977 by the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. Two years later, the University decided to phase out the barely established medical program. In January 1980, the Ponce Medical School Foundation, Inc., assumed responsibility for the school's operation. Ponce School of Medicine graduated its first class of twenty-three students in 1981. Since then, it has operated uninterrupted and has graduated more than 2,300 physicians and 1,200 other health professionals.

Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences was acquired by Arist Health Sciences University, Public Benefit Corporation, (Arist) on September 5, 2014, to operate Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU). The entity changed its name to Tiber Health, Public Benefit Corporation in 2017. Unique in its mission but global in its vision, Tiber Health is developing a global network of affiliated health sciences universities and related institutions that are driven by a common and unrelenting commitment to superior student preparation that leads to excellent patient care and discoveries that improve the human condition.

Aligned with its mission, and to strengthen the research mission of the university, the PHSU affiliated with the Ponce Research Institute (PRI), an entity established by the Ponce Medical School Foundation, Inc., with the mission “to make a difference by solving health disparities through groundbreaking, innovative and relevant research that has a global impact in health care.” The PRI research teams are led by faculty members of the PHSU dedicated to ongoing research in the Basic, Behavioral, Public Health, and Clinical Sciences. The Ambulatory Center for Medical Research (CAIMED in Spanish) was initiated in 2001 and is participating in multiple clinical studies aimed at improving the quality of healthcare being offered to our population. Affiliations with prestigious educational and scientific institutions, training programs, and healthcare services (both in the continental U.S. and in Puerto Rico) have also been established. PHSU has an additional location in San Juan, the San Juan University Center, and a branch campus in Saint Louis, Missouri.

PHSU has five schools and one programme: (1) the newly developed PHSU School of Medicine in the British Virgin Islands (PHSU-SOM-BVI), (2) the longstanding School of Medicine operating in Puerto Rico and the continental US (PHSU-SOM), (3) the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, (4) the School of Nursing, (5) the School of Dental Medicine, and (6) the Public Health programme.

### **Development of the PHSU School of Medicine in the British Virgin Islands**

PHSU-SOM-BVI is proud to be the first medical school in the British Virgin Islands. The school offers a 4-year medical education programme leading to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree, with an emphasis on primary care.

The MD programme curriculum is the same for both PHSU Schools of Medicine, with comparable methods of delivery and a total of 164 weeks of instruction. The programme consists of a preclinical phase conducted in the British Islands followed by a clinical phase conducted in the US.

The preclinical phase comprises two years of courses in basic science and clinical integration. During the first year, basic science courses focus on the core disciplines of Gross Anatomy, Biochemistry, Histology and Cell Biology, Microbiology/ Immunology, Neurosciences, Pathology, Pharmacology, and Physiology. During the second year, the organ-system approach is used to integrate the basic science curriculum content. The majority of basic science courses are delivered synchronously with the PHSU-SOM campus in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, offering a dynamic learning experience enhanced by diversity, state-of-the-art technology, and the PHSU’s proprietary predictive learning analytics. The international students at PHSU-SOM-BVI benefit from the experienced PHSU faculty leadership and student support services in the US, while receiving personalized instruction and support from PHSU faculty and staff on-site in the rapidly evolving PHSU-SOM-BVI educational facilities in Tortola.

The preclinical years provide integration of clinical content and early clinical experiences through Introduction to Clinical Skills, Pathophysiology, Behavioral Sciences, and Basic Psychiatry. Longitudinal programs in Community Medicine, Problem-Based Learning, Geriatrics, and Medical Ethics are integrated into the educational programme during the first two years, preparing students for the clinical phase of the curriculum.

The third year includes core clinical clerkships in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Surgery. The fourth year complements these core clinical experiences with advanced rotations in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, and a Primary Care Selective. Twenty-four weeks of elective rotations provide additional clinical experiences, enabling students to explore their interests and focus on their chosen specialties.

### **Contact Information**

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Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine British Virgin Islands Campus

Phone: TBD

Mailing Address: CCFC+GQR Paraquita Bay, Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Physical Address: CCFC+GQR Paraquita Bay, Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Ponce Health Sciences University Main Campus

Phone: 787-840-2575

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7004 Dr. Ana Dolores Pérez Marchand St. Ponce, PR 00732

Physical Address: 388 Zona Industrial Reparada 2 Ponce, PR 00716

Ponce Health Sciences University San Juan Campus

Phone: 787-787-728-2134

Mailing Address: Po Box 7004, Ponce, PR 00732-7004

Physical Address: Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, Calle Rosales, Esq. San Antonio, Parada 26.5, Santurce, San Juan, PR 00914



## Licensure

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### British Virgin Islands License:

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) School of Medicine – British Virgin Islands (PHSU-SOM-BVI) is provisionally licensed by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports to operate in the British Virgin Islands.

#### Contact information:

Ms. Sharlene Smith, Secretary, Higher Education Licensing Board  
 Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports  
 Government of the Virgin Islands  
 Road Town, TORTOLA VG1110, Virgin Islands  
 Tel: (284) 468-2151, Email: [higheredulicboard@gov.vg](mailto:higheredulicboard@gov.vg)  
 Website: <http://www.bvi.gov.vg>

### Puerto Rico State License:

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) is licensed by the Board of Postsecondary Institutions (Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias-JIP) to operate in Puerto Rico. The license was renewed until April 28, 2029.

#### Contact information:

Junta de Instituciones Postsecundarias (JIP)  
 Calle San José, Esq. San Francisco  
 Viejo San Juan, PO Box 9023271  
 San Juan, PR 00902-3271  
 Phone: (787) 722-2121  
 Web: <https://www.estado.pr.gov>

### Missouri State License:

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) is licensed by the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

#### Contact information:

Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development  
 PO Box 1469  
 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102  
 Phone: (573) 751-2361  
 Web: [dhe.mo.gov](http://dhe.mo.gov)

## Programmatic Accreditations

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Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCCM) conferred preliminary accreditation to Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree programme on March 1, 2024. The next accreditation evaluation will occur during AY 26-27 before the charter class enters the clinical phase of the educational programme. Complaints concerning the school's compliance with standards should be addressed to the PHSU-SOM-BVI Dean. Unresolved complaints may be directed to the ACCM at the address below.

**Contact Information:**

Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine  
 6-9 Trinity Street  
 Dublin D02 EY47, Ireland  
 Email: info@accredmed.org  
 Phone: +353 1 209 1996

PHSU-SOM-BVI operates as a school within its parent university PHSU. The university is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is a global institutional accreditor recognized by the United States Secretary of Education since 1952. . The next accreditation site visit is scheduled for 2026-27.

**Contact Information:**

Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
 1007 North Orange Street  
 4th Floor, MB #166  
 Wilmington, DE 19801  
 Phone: 267-284-5000  
 Fax: 215-662-5501  
 Web: msche.org

**Governance****Board of Trustees of PHSU-SOM-BVI**

Voting Members	Ex Officio Nonvoting Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> <li>• TBA</li> <li>• TBA</li> <li>• TBA</li> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Lenihan, PhD, CEO of Tiber Health</li> <li>• Gino Natalicchio, PhD, President of PHSU</li> <li>• Anne Petersen MD, MSc</li> </ul>

TBA: to be appointed

**Administration****Principal Administrators – SOM-BVI**

Ponce Health Sciences University President..... Gino Natalicchio, Ph.D.  
 Campus Director.....J. Daniel Pérez MD, MBA,  
 MSc  
 Chief Financial Officer .....Alejandro Ramirez, MBA  
 Dean, Medicine .....Anne Petersen MD, MSc  
 Associate Dean, Academic Affairs..... Under Recruitment  
 Associate Dean, Enrollment Management & Student Services ..... Under Recruitment  
 Director, Accreditation and Quality..... Under Recruitment

**Centralized Support Administrators**

Vice President of Academic Affairs ..... Elizabeth Rivera-Mateo, Ed.D.

Vice President of Student Affairs .....	Elisandra Rodríguez-Moreno, MS
Vice President for Medical Affairs.....	Olga Rodriguez de Arzola, MD
Vice President of Research and President of Ponce Research Institute.....	Kenira Thompson, PhD
Vice President for Marketing and Enrollment .....	Emsley Vázquez-Colón, MS
Vice President of Campus Expansion and Facilities .....	Carlos Solís Ramírez, MEM
Controller .....	Carlos A. Ramírez, MBA
Chief Compliance Officer .....	Waleska Murphy, JD
Registrar .....	Ivette Oliveras, MBA
Director, Educational Technology & Online Division.....	Carlos Sellas, PsyD
Accreditation Liaison Officer.....	Donna Viens, PhD
Associate Dean for Medical Education .....	Georgina Aguirre, MD
Associate Dean for Faculty and Clinical Affairs .....	Norma Arciniegas, MD
Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Career Development.....	Orlando Torres, MD

## Departments

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Basic Science Director .....	TBA
Basic Sciences Coordinators	
Anatomy.....	TBA
Biochemistry .....	TBA
Microbiology.....	TBA
Pathology .....	TBA
Physiology .....	TBA
Pharmacology/Toxicology.....	TBA
Clinical Sciences Directors	
Emergency Medicine .....	TBA
Family and Community Medicine .....	TBA
Medicine .....	TBA
Obstetrics-Gynecology.....	TBA
Pediatrics.....	TBA
Psychiatry.....	TBA
Surgery .....	TBA
Inter Departmental Programs/Divisions Coordinators	
Medical Ethics.....	TBA
Introduction to Clinical Skills.....	TBA
Fundamental Pathophysiology for Clinical Medicine .....	TBA
Clinical Correlation- Problem-Based Learning .....	TBA
Standardized Patients Division .....	TBA
Community and Geriatric Division.....	TBA

## Affiliated Institutions

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Ponce Health Sciences University is affiliated with multiple hospitals, health care facilities, and organizations that provide a network of learning environments for medical student clinical training. Affiliation agreements with clinical facilities in the United States will be structure to ensure PHSU-SOM-BVI sufficient exposure to the types of patients and clinical conditions that medical students are required

to encounter to enable them to develop clinical competence and achieve the objectives of the medical education programme.

## **PHSU Institutional Mission, Vision, and Goals**

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### **PHSU Mission**

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The mission of Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) is to provide a world-class, culturally competent, health sciences education to the population we serve, through innovative adaptive learning environments focused on the success of its students to become ethical practitioner's and scientists.

### **PHSU Vision**

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The PHSU vision is to build upon its reputation as a prestigious academic and research leader by continuing to educate underrepresented diverse populations while focusing research efforts on solving health disparities.

### **PHSU Goals**

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1. To continue its commitment to excellence in educational achievement by recruiting outstanding diverse students and faculty and providing the appropriate resources for the development of high-quality academic programs.
2. To expand its academic and professional educational offerings to include other health related fields.
3. To enhance recognition of the institution's commitment to excellence in basic and clinical research, scholarship, and creative pursuits, supporting existing investigators and recruiting new highly qualified researchers.
4. To expand and improve its high quality medical, mental health, diagnostic and therapeutic services.
5. To continue to be an institution that prepares ethical professionals and scientists that contribute to society in general and to Puerto Rico in particular.

## **PHSU-SOM-BVI Mission, Vision, and Goals**

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### **PHSU-SOM-BVI Mission**

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To educate ethical professionals who provide compassionate, culturally competent health care and generate high-impact research to reduce health disparities in the populations we serve.

### **PHSU-SOM-BVI Vision**

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To be recognized as a world leader in delivering culturally competent medical sciences and research education.

### **PHSU-SOM-BVI Goals**

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1. Sponsor a Doctor of Medicine degree programme in which English is the principle language of instruction and assessment and which fulfils the requirements outlined in the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) Standards of Accreditation for Schools of Medicine.
2. Assure all stakeholders including students, parents, patients, postgraduate training directors, licensing authorities, government regulators, and society, that accredited programmes meet commonly accepted standards for professional education and serve the public interest.
3. Graduate individuals who have acquired the critical knowledge, skills and professional attitudes of a physician expected by the academic community and society.
4. Graduate individuals who are qualified to advance to and complete post-graduate training, secure licensure, provide quality health care and continue a habit of lifelong learning.
5. Enhance the academic experience of students by providing services that support their academic, personal, and professional progress.
6. Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty for teaching, research, and service, and support them in their mission to improve educational and health outcomes.
7. Increase clinical capacity and enhance current clinical sites for the augmenting class size.

### **Doctor of Medicine (MD) Degree Programme Description**

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#### **Overview of the Four-Year Curriculum**

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##### **Preclinical Phase: Years 1 and 2**

The preclinical phase comprises two years of coursework at the PHSU-SOM-BVI campus in Tortola, British Virgin Islands. Year one introduces students to the core basic science disciplines of Gross Anatomy, Histology and Cell Biology, Biochemistry, Physiology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Microbiology/Immunology, and Neurosciences. Year two features integration of clinical content and early clinical experiences through Pathophysiology, Introduction to Clinical Skills, Behavioral Sciences, Basic Psychiatry, Community Medicine & Geriatrics, Community Medicine & Health Promotion, Family & Community Medicine, Clinical Correlation (Problem-Based Learning), Interprofessional Perspectives on Health Disparities, Medical Ethics, and Epidemiology & Biostatistics. The preclinical curriculum emphasizes active learning modalities using a flipped classroom model. Case discussions allow students to apply knowledge to real clinical situations, and the classroom interactive response system (iClickers) provides the opportunity for formative assessment of students' understanding of core concepts.

##### **Clinical Phase: Years 3 and 4**

Year three comprises the core clerkships in Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, and Surgery. Also, during year three, longitudinal

courses in Radiology and Professional Development expose students to general education and humanism topics, including the history of medicine, translational research, medical practice, and preparation for residency programs are offered. The year four clinical phase curriculum comprises other core clinical experiences in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Primary Care (Selective), and six four-week elective rotations (including at least 4 weeks in surgery or a surgical subspecialty) that provide additional clinical experiences to prepare students for the next level of training.

### **Medical Education Programme Objectives**

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**Medical Knowledge:** Medical students must demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, and socio-behavioral sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Explain the normal structure and function of the body and each of its major organ systems, as well as the molecular, biochemical, and cellular mechanisms that are important in maintaining the body's homeostasis.
2. Explain the genetic, developmental, metabolic, toxic, microbiologic, autoimmune, neoplastic, degenerative, and traumatic causes of disease states and their pathogenesis.
3. Identify epidemiological and other factors that place individuals at risk for disease or injury, select appropriate tests for detecting threats, and determine preventive strategies for responding appropriately.
4. Interpret the results of commonly used diagnostic studies.
5. Formulate appropriate management strategies in the care of patients with common conditions, both acute and chronic, including pain and rehabilitation.
6. Describe the mechanisms by which therapeutic agents work and apply the principles of pharmacology in patient care.

**Patient Care:** Students must be able to provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the promotion of health and the treatment of health problems.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
2. Obtain a complete and accurate medical history that covers all the essential aspects of the history taking in a patient-centered interview. Identify health issues and correlate with patient's age, gender, cultural, spiritual beliefs, psychological and socioeconomic status.
3. Perform a comprehensive and/or a problem-focused physical examination, including a mental status examination and accurately interpret the findings.
4. Formulate, using clinical reasoning an initial diagnostic impression and differential diagnosis.
5. Recommend appropriate diagnostic studies and therapeutic management plan based on patient information and preferences, current scientific evidence, and clinical judgment.

6. Perform or assist during routine technical procedures, including but not limited to venous and arterial puncture, placement of an intravenous line, transurethral and nasogastric catheters and suturing of simple wounds.
7. Recognize patients with life threatening conditions, with serious physical and or mental acute/chronic conditions in need of critical care and institute appropriate initial therapy.
8. Counsel and educate patients care givers and families about patient's condition and aspects of health promotion and prevention.
9. Solve clinical problems in the context of culture, psychological, socioeconomic status and the spiritual-health beliefs and needs of the patient.

**Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** Students must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective interchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families and health professionals.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Develop a team relationship with patients and their families to provide patient centered care.
2. Use a patient centered approach with effective listening and communication skills during the medical interview.
3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in English, with patients, their families and health professionals.
4. Document patient information in a comprehensive, timely and legible electronic or written medical record.
5. Demonstrate leadership skills as a member of a health care team and other professional groups.
6. Demonstrate effective interaction with colleagues and health care professionals to provide patient-centered care.

**Practice-based Learning and Improvement:** Students must be able to investigate and evaluate their care of patients, appraise, and assimilate scientific evidence and continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Demonstrate capacity to accept personal limitations and continuously improve one's medical knowledge and clinical skills.
2. Identify the information resources and tools available to support life-long learning and self-improvement.
3. Review and incorporate the most current and relevant evidence-based information in the diagnosis and management of patients.
4. Explain how to conduct clinical and translational research, its scientific and ethical principles and apply the results and evidence derived from those studies to patient care.

**Systems-based Practice:** Students must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Work effectively in various health care delivery systems.
2. Deliver patient care according to the regulations and resources of health care systems.
3. Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities.
4. Promote cost-effective health care and optimal resources allocation.
5. Formulate appropriate management strategies for patients with clinical conditions that require short and long-term rehabilitation.
6. Identify and assess factors that place a patient's safety at risk and select appropriate interventions to minimize them.
7. Collaborate with colleagues, health care providers and other professionals to assess and coordinate patient care.

**Professionalism:** Students must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to a diverse patient population.

*By the time of graduation, students are expected to:*

1. Recognize ethical and legal dilemmas in medicine and demonstrate commitment to ethical principles.
2. Demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of patient population, including, but not limited to differences in culture, social status, gender, sexual orientation, and health beliefs.
3. Demonstrate understanding of and respect for the roles of other health care professionals.
4. Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and respectful behavior in all interactions with patients and families, peers, preceptors, members of the healthcare team and others.
5. Demonstrate compassionate treatment of patients, respect and sensitivity for their privacy and dignity.
6. Recognize the threats posed by conflicts of interest and advocate for patients' interest over one's own
7. Demonstrate respect for patient's autonomy in decision-making.



## Curriculum

### PRECLINICAL CURRICULUM

FIRST YEAR: 40 weeks

#### FIRST SEMESTER

#### SECOND SEMESTER

Code	Preclinical Courses	Credits	Code	Preclinical Courses	Credits
ANA 601	Gross Anatomy, Embryo. & Imaging	9	PHY 602	Neuroscience	5
BCH 612	Medical Biochemistry I	5	BCH 614	Medical Biochemistry II	5
ANA 605	Histology & Cell Biology	4	PSY 610	Behavioral Science	3
MED 630	Clinical Correlation I	2	MED 631	Clinical Correlation II	1
PHY 692	Physiology I	4	PHY 694	Physiology II	4
FCM 719	Community Medicine & Geriatrics	2	FCM 720	Community Medicine And Health Promotion	2
IHD 919	Interprofessional Perspectives In Health Disparities	1	MIC 642	Microbiology I	4
	-----		MED 635	Medical Ethics	2
	Total Credits	27		Total Credits	26

Total Credits: 53

SECOND YEAR: 40 weeks

#### FIRST SEMESTER

#### SECOND SEMESTER

Code	Preclinical Courses	Credits	Code	Preclinical Courses	Credits
PHA 781	Pharmacology I	5	PHA 782	Pharmacology II	3
PSY 713	Basic Psychiatry I	2	PSY 714	Basic Psychiatry II	2
MIC 643	Infectious Diseases I	4	MIC 644	Infectious Diseases II	2
MED 732	Introduction To Clinical Skills I	4	MED 733	Introduction To Clinical Skills II	1
FCM 721	Family & Community Medicine	2	FCM 722	Epidemiology And Biostatistics	2
MED 734	Fundamental Pathophysiology For Clinical Medicine I	3	MED 735	Fundamental Pathophysiology For Clinical Medicine II	3
PAT 761	Pathology I	5	PAT 762	Pathology II	4
			ICP 080	Introduction To Clinical Practice	2
			SKD 090	Skills Development	1
	Total Credits	25		Total Credits	20

Total Credits: 45

## CLINICAL CURRICULUM

THIRD YEAR: 40 weeks and FOURTH YEAR: 44 weeks (5 weeks summer break)

Code		Clinical Curriculum	Weeks	Credits
Typical semesters 1 and 2 (Year 3)				
PED	872	Pediatrics	8	10
OB/G	852	Obstetrics Gynecology	8	10
MED	833	Internal Medicine	8	10
SUR	816	Surgery	8	10
PSY	813	Clinical Psychiatry	4	5
FCM	822	Family Medicine	4	5
PDV	918/919	Professional Development I & II	40	2
RAD	902	Radiology	40	1
Typical Semesters 3 And 4** (Year 4)				
MED	934	General Internal Medicine	4	5
MED	973	Emergency Medicine	4	5
MED	974	Primary Care Selective in Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine or Ob-Gyn	4	5
ELE	976	Electives -2- or 4-Weeks Electives**	24	30
		Maximum Unscheduled Time	8	10

Total clinical curriculum credits 108

Total credits medical education programme: 206

\*All required rotations must be taken in Ponce Health Sciences University clinical sites or affiliated institutions.

\*\*All off-campus electives must have the approval of the corresponding Department Chair and the Clinical Coordination Office. A minimum of 4 weeks of elective time must be in surgery or a surgical subspecialty.

Code		Remedial Courses	Weeks	Credits
SKD	091	Remedial: Basic Sciences Review	20	3

## Course Descriptions

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### Department of Basic Sciences

#### *Anatomical Sciences*

ANA 601 Human Gross Anatomy, Embryology, and Imaging

The Human Gross Anatomy, Embryology & Imaging course consists of a detailed study of the human body's normal structure, development, and organization. This course takes a regional approach rather than a systemic approach. Human Gross Anatomy, Embryology & Imaging content is distributed into three blocks. Anatomical structures are studied using visual 3-D Anatomy software and a dry anatomy laboratory with anatomic models.

The radiology component of Gross Anatomy serves as the introduction to radiology and prepares the student for further development. Lectures stress the contribution of developmental events to a gross anatomical organization and the correlation of this organization with clinically relevant conditions.

**ANA 605 Histology and Cell Biology**

Study the different aspects of the human body's internal structure of cells, tissues, and organs, presenting a comprehensive survey of many complex interrelationships through lectures, clinical correlations, and laboratory sessions.

**PHY 602 Neuroscience**

The Neuroscience course is designed for first-year students in graduate-level health professions programs. The course emphasizes the essential principles of neurological function, from cellular and molecular mechanisms to sensory and motor systems and higher cognitive function. The general objective of the course is to give students a knowledge base of the human central nervous system that they will use when learning how to diagnose and treat neurological disorders. The course provides students with the essential principles of neurological function, from the cellular and molecular mechanisms of neural communication to the organization and function of sensory and motor systems and higher cognitive function. Clinical correlations and the neurological exam reinforce the knowledge of brain structure and strengthen skills to understand the human nervous system.

***Biochemistry*****BCH 612/614 Medical Biochemistry I & II**

The Medical Biochemistry courses are presented to medical and graduate students in their first year. The courses are divided into the following units: Structural and functional relationships of proteins, Energy generation and storage from carbohydrate metabolism, Energy Generation and storage from lipid metabolism, Nitrogen metabolism, Gene expression and control, and Medical Genetics. These courses emphasize medical aspects to build up the necessary background for future application in other basic sciences and clinical courses. The courses are delivered as recorded lectures with accompanying in-class sessions using the flipped classroom model and small-group discussions of clinical cases. One of the main intentions of the small group discussions is for the medical students to apply the biochemical concepts learned in lectures to understand the molecular basis of disease. On the other hand, Ph.D. students will be required to attend and participate in the discussions of research papers in relevant areas of modern Biochemistry.

***Microbiology*****MIC 642 General Microbiology**

During the first year, medical students learn about the most common pathogens involved in infectious diseases and their characteristics. It includes basic concepts of Immunology, Virology, Mycology, Bacteriology, and Parasitology.

**MIC 643/644 Infectious Diseases I & II**

In the second year, students learn clinical manifestations, laboratory diagnosis, and therapeutic alternatives for treating infectious diseases. Our purpose is to teach the basic knowledge of infectious diseases, which is a very important part of the education of medical students and future physicians.

### ***Pathology***

#### **PAT 761/762 Pathology I & II**

The Pathology Courses at the second-year level consist of video lectures, laboratory periods, and large/small group discussions. The first weeks introduce the student to the study of disease. Emphasis is given to basic and general pathologic reactions to noxious stimuli. Then follows the part known as Systemic Pathology. In this portion, the subjects taught are coordinated with didactic presentations of the basic sciences, clinical departments, and Pathophysiology. Clinical Laboratory Diagnosis is integrated with Systemic Pathology. This affords the opportunity for a close correlation in the teaching of disease entities.

### ***Pharmacology***

#### **PHA 781/782 Pharmacology I & II**

These two courses, one semester long each, have interactive classroom sessions and small group discussions designed to provide students with a basic understanding of drug actions to ensure appropriate clinical utilization of pharmacological agents. Drugs are organized into classifications according to their primary clinical usage to facilitate study. The study of each class of drugs includes the pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, clinical uses, and toxicities. Each educational activity topic is provided with learning objectives that have been developed with reference to the nationally generated learning objectives. Small group discussion sessions and a patient-oriented problem-solving presentation are utilized to enhance problem-solving and independent learning skills.

### ***Physiology***

#### **PHY 692/694 Physiology I & II**

These are two courses, one semester long each, presented to medical students in their first year. The courses consist of recorded lectures, in-class sessions using audience response systems, self-directed learning, small group discussions, and labs. The content is designed for medical students. Areas covered include cell and muscle, cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, acid-base balance, gastrointestinal, endocrinology, and reproduction. Clinical examples that illustrate the physiological principles are given.

### **Department of Emergency Medicine**

#### **MED 973 Emergency Medicine – Fourth Year**

This rotation aims to learn the principles of addressing the undifferentiated emergency patient, acquiring the skills to recognize truly ill patients requiring further inpatient management from those who can be treated and discharged. The course will familiarize the student with emergency and admission room procedures consisting of history, physical examination, diagnostic measures, treatment when needed (emergency or otherwise), and disposition of cases (home, hospitalization, outpatient clinics, office care). Prerequisite: 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Clinical Clerkship, Duration: 4 weeks

### **Department of Family and Community Medicine**

**FCM 719/720 Community Medicine & Geriatrics & Community Medicine and Health Promotion**  
The courses are offered during the first year of the medical curriculum. The didactic component includes basic topics in community medicine and concepts of gerontology and geriatrics. Students are introduced to medical history-taking and communication skills in preparation for the Primary Care Office Visits. The students interview a standardized patient and receive feedback from a faculty member. The students are exposed to primary care physicians in their practice sites in the community. All medical students are assigned to a primary care physician's office with a family practitioner, internist, or pediatrician (Primary Care Office Visits or PCOV) once each semester. In addition, they perform a medical history of a healthy elder in the community.

**FCM 721 Family and Community Medicine I**

This course is offered in the first semester of the second year. It includes a series of didactic activities in Geriatrics, Health Promotion & Prevention, Professionalism, and Communication Skills. In addition to the regular didactic activities and small group discussions, the students perform a needs assessment of a community and design a community project. All medical students are assigned to a primary care physician's office with a family practitioner, internist, or pediatrician (Primary Care Office Visits or PCOV) at least once.

**FCM 722 Epidemiology & Biostatistics**

This course exposes the students to the disciplines of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and how they may be used as the foundation to be applied in the field of Preventive Medicine and in the understanding of scientific medical literature. Participation in scientific paper discussions is required.

**FCM 822 Third-Year Family Medicine Clerkship**

The Family Medicine Clerkship is designed to introduce students to the role and identity of the family physician and demonstrate the family practice approach to the comprehensive care of common health problems. Duration: Four weeks' block rotation throughout the year.

**FCM 974 Primary Care Selective in Family Practice**

The Primary Care Selective in Family Practice is a four-week rotation in the fourth year where the student chooses the working site from a varied selection of primary care physicians in the community. The purpose of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to enhance their clinical skills in primary care and practice health care delivery in the office and/or hospital. This clinical rotation allows additional opportunity for the student to work in the ambulatory and/or inpatient service under the direct supervision of a Primary Care Physician. Students can select from diverse clinical practice sites in urban, suburban, and rural settings. At each site, students will see patients under the supervision of one or more clinical preceptors. Each student, however, will be assigned a principal preceptor who is responsible for overseeing the student's learning experience and coordinating the evaluation. The student is expected to participate with a preceptor in all daily practice-related activities in the ambulatory, hospital, or other community settings. Clinical activities during the rotation may also involve assessing patients in various other healthcare settings, including private homes, schools, nursing homes, shelters, and emergency rooms. Duration: Four weeks' block rotation throughout the year

## Department of Internal Medicine

### ICP 080 Introduction to Clinical Practice (Second Year)

This is a required learning experience for medical students before starting clinical rotations. The purpose is to give medical students the basis of clinical practice, including record management, universal precautions, legal aspects of the practice of medicine, and progress note writing, among others. The students will learn the principles of evidence-based medicine and practice literature searching, critical appraisal of medical literature, and its clinical applications. An intensive course in electrocardiography is offered, at the end of which the student is to have basic electrocardiograph knowledge that will help him in his clinical experiences and future growth in this field. Learning activities are didactic presentations and workshops, hands-on experiences, and independent study.

### MED 833 Third-Year Internal Medicine Clerkship

The Resident or Attending Physician directly supervises each student. The student's work will be corrected, and progress notes written by the student must be countersigned by residents or attending before being official. Duration: 8 weeks' rotation at two different sites.

### MED 934 Fourth Year Internal Medicine Clerkship

Students will be assigned to one of the Health Care Teaching Units of the affiliated hospitals, where he/she will perform as an intern under the direct supervision of a medical resident and attending physician. Duration: 4 weeks

### MED 974 Primary Care Selective in Internal Medicine

Students are assigned to general internist clinical practices where they experience continuity of care for internal medicine patients. The student is exposed to health care systems (managed care), office management concepts, and practice guidelines with an emphasis on the clinical application of disease prevention. Emphasis is placed on evidence-based medicine and its application to clinical practice. Duration: 4 Weeks

## Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

### OBG 852 Obstetrics and Gynecology Clerkship-3rd Year

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology is composed of a core group of clinicians who are members of the academic staff of the medical school, in private practice. The principal goal of the department is to provide the students with the core knowledge and skills in Obstetrics and Gynecology that are essential to every primary care physician. Duration: Eight Weeks Rotation

### OBG 974 Primary Care Selective in OB-GYN

The fourth-year selective in OB-GYN has been designed to provide the students with additional exposure to clinical knowledge and skills in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Students are exposed to additional clinical material and are expected to work extensively with the department's staff in each location.

## Department of Pediatrics

**PED 872 Third-Year Pediatric Clerkship**

This clerkship aims to provide a solid core of pediatric knowledge and skills, an appreciation of the spectrum of growth and development, and a logical approach to the care of children in both illness and health, which can be applied in whatever field of medicine you enter. The care of individual patients requires the application of all these skills. The student is expected to recognize and manage common pediatric acute and chronic health problems. Also, skills in recording documentation and writing prescriptions must be developed. A student must have well-developed interpersonal skills that facilitate communication and demonstrate attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that promote the patient's best interest. Duration: Four Weeks

**PED 974 Primary Care Selective in Pediatrics**

This elective allows the student to participate in caring for pediatric patients in a setting where primary care pediatrics is practiced. Students will assume the care of pediatric patients in the ambulatory and inpatient settings of primary and secondary community hospitals under the supervision of an academic physician. Health promotion and disease prevention strategies are emphasized. Experiences in the care of acute and chronic problems provide opportunities for continuity of care between inpatient and outpatient hospital settings. The elective also provides opportunities to perform pediatric procedures such as venipunctures, suprapubic taps, and lumbar punctures. Duration: Four Weeks

**Department of Psychiatry****PSY 610 Human Behavior**

This course is designed to teach medical students the basic principles of behavioral and social science as these relate to the physician's professional role. It provides medical students with the opportunity to perceive individuals holistically, with an emphasis on the different areas of behavior.

**PSY 713/714 Basic Psychiatry I & II**

The student will build on the knowledge acquired in the first-year course of Behavioral Sciences and amplify his/her knowledge integrating psychopathology, classification of psychiatric disorders, diagnosis, and therapeutic options. The major psychiatric syndromes, including neurodevelopmental, disruptive, psychotic, mood, and personality, are discussed through lectures and group activities. Diagnostic criteria, epidemiology, signs, symptoms, treatment, and prognosis are reviewed along with biological and psychosocial knowledge of each psychiatric syndrome.

**PSY 813 Clerkship Psychiatry**

The student will integrate previously learned material and skills in a clinical setting and participate actively in evaluating and treating patients during their 4-week rotation. Prerequisites: Behavioral Science (610) and Basic Psychiatry (713). Duration: 4 Week

**Department of Surgery**

**SUR 816 Clinical Clerkship in Surgery**

The clinical clerkship in surgery offers educational experiences and clinical encounters with hospitalized and ambulatory patients. Each student is assigned to a member of the teaching staff. The tertiary and/or secondary hospital setting will provide the student with inpatient and outpatient clinical encounters necessary to develop data gathering, technical, case presentation, and clinical problem-solving skills. Each student will complete a history and physical examination, an assessment, and a treatment plan for at least two (2) new patients per week.

Interpersonal skills, professional attitudes, and educational attitudes will be developed and evaluated through direct student observation by the proctor in the hospital and ambulatory settings and in the classroom.

**Interdisciplinary Courses****MED 630/631 Clinical Correlation I & II (Problem-Based Learning)**

These are two courses, one semester each, using Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as the instructional method. The facilitator gives a problem (a clinical case) to a small group of students who engage in discussion over two sessions. As the students discover the limits of their knowledge, they identify learning issues that they cannot answer from their fund of knowledge. Between meetings, the learners research their learning issues and share results with their peers and supervisors at the next meeting receiving feedback on their information-seeking skills. The students increase their knowledge and understanding of clinical problems. They also develop desirable attributes such as communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving, independent responsibility for learning, sharing information, and respect for others. The facilitator provides supportive guidance for the students.

**MED 734/735 Fundamental Pathophysiology for Clinical Medicine I & II**

These courses aim to bridge the gap between the preclinical and clinical courses, between normal and abnormal physiology and derangement that constitute pathologic states. These courses are offered during the second year. The course is integrated with Pathology, Microbiology, Pharmacology, and Introduction to Clinical Skills.

**IHD 919 Interprofessional Perspectives in Health Disparities**

This course is designed to provide a general overview of gaps in health outcomes associated with health disparities. Emphasis is given to the social determinants of health, such as race/ethnicity, social class, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, nationality, and migration status. The course will focus on the impact of health disparities at multiple system levels (e.g., individual, patient-clinician, healthcare system, etc.).

**MED 732 Introduction to Clinical Skills I/MED733 Introduction to Clinical Skills II**

Introduction to Clinical Skills (ICS) is an interdisciplinary course composed of two closely related and interdependent courses, ICS I and ICS II. ICS is designed to introduce the student to the art of medicine and to facilitate the development of those basic clinical skills that all physicians need to be effective in medical practice. In these courses, all sciences essential to the practice of medicine are integrated with practical experiences, including real and simulated patient encounters. ICS, I course (first semester) is specifically designed to teach medical history taking, patient-doctor



communication and interpersonal skills, physical examination skills, and clinical reasoning. ICS II Course (second semester) provides real and standardized patient care activities in which the student uses the skills acquired in ICS I in different clinical scenarios.

#### MED 635 Medical Ethics

These courses are scheduled as a block of 25 contact hours during the first year. The goal is to provide didactic experiences for medical students in specific areas of medical ethics. The need for these experiences stems from recognizing that ethical dilemmas are inherent in medical care. The students will develop an understanding of the principles of medical ethics and a system of ethical reasoning that will result in consistent decisions. The didactic activities will include presentations of clinical cases selected to represent ethical dilemmas like those encountered in real life. Activities include a combination of lectures, assigned readings, and small group case discussions covering different subjects within the four main areas of medical ethics: ethical issues of scientific research, ethical issues of the doctor-patient relationship, beginning-of-life, and end-of-life ethical issues.

#### PDV 918/919 Professional Development

These courses are designed to enhance the educational experiences of medical students during the first clinical year. It reinforces professionalism, cultural competence, and civic development. It helps the student develop the skills necessary to compete successfully for positions in medical residency programs, participate in research projects, and be exposed to the health system requirements to develop a successful medical practice.

#### SKD 090 Skills Development

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) requires that all medical students take and pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination Step 1 (USMLE Step 1) to be promoted to the first clinical year. To help the students to meet this requirement, PHSU has established the Skills Development Course (SKD). The SKD provides the students with a protected time, at the end of the second semester of the second year of medical studies, for independent study in preparation for taking and passing the USMLE Step 1.

#### SKD 091 Basic Science Review I Course:

Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine (PHSU SOM BVI) requires all medical students to take and pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination Step 1 (USMLE Step 1). The medical program offers the **Basic Sciences Review I-Remedial Course** to support students who have not taken or passed this examination, helping them progress within the academic program. This semester's course involves independent study and review sessions scheduled by tutors to prepare students to take and pass the USMLE Step 1.

## Tuition, Fees, and Other Expenses

Tuition (students admitted in AY 2025-2026)

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$63,654	\$63,654

Fees (students admitted in AY 2025-2026)

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
	\$ 5,793	\$ 3,193	\$ 3,193	\$ 3,193

Fees exclude mandatory health insurance. Year 1 includes laboratory fees.

ALL TUITION AND FEES ARE PAYABLE UPON REGISTRATION (DEADLINE SPECIFIED IN THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR).

The Student Skills Development program is a protected and guided time that every student must have to ensure the success in USMLE tests.

Student Development (SKD) fees

USMLE Skills Development	Applicable to MD program students who must take Skills Development SKD091- 1st attempt	\$16,000
	Applicable to MD program students who must take Skills Development SKD091- 2nd attempt (and for each attempt thereafter).	\$9,000
	Development Review- Course II: Applicable to MD students who received a No Pass after initiating mandatory 3 <sup>rd</sup> year rotations and must be removed from rotations after 8 weeks. Skills Development SKD 092	\$7,262
Remedial Courses	Independent Course for Students of Medicine who fail a course in the first or second year. Faculty guidance and re-exam included.	\$2,030

**(Fees subject to change)**

Refunds following withdrawal from the medical education programme shall be subject to the following:

- The Enrollment Deposit Fee guaranteeing registration is non-refundable.
- Students withdrawing prior to the start of classes will receive a complete refund for tuition and fees.
- Fees are non-refundable once the term has commenced.
- Students withdrawing on or before the Friday of the second week of classes will receive a 75% refund of tuition.
- Students withdrawing on or before the Friday of the sixth week of classes of the semester will receive a 50% refund of tuition.

- Students withdrawing on or before the Friday of the tenth week of classes of the semester will receive a 25% refund of tuition.
- After the tenth week of class, tuition is non-refundable.

Personal living expenses vary with lifestyle choices, such as living alone or with your family versus sharing rent with a roommate. Lifestyle choices, such as buying or renting a car versus using public transportation and travel to and from your home country and to clinical sites in Puerto Rico or the continental US, also impact your personal budget. The following estimates are provided to help you plan for your personal living expenses at PHSU-SOM-BVI.

<b>Cost of Attendance</b>				
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
Tuition	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 63,654.00	\$ 63,654.00
Fees	\$ 10,951.00	\$ 8,351.00	\$ 8,426.00	\$ 8,426.00
<b>Total Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>\$ 70,951.00</b>	<b>\$ 68,351.00</b>	<b>\$ 72,080.00</b>	<b>\$ 72,080.00</b>
Living Expenses	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 34,800.00	\$ 34,800.00
Books, course materials, supplies and equipment	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 2,200.00
Transportation	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 1,980.00	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 6,280.00	\$ 6,280.00	\$ 6,280.00	\$ 6,280.00
Tests/Others		\$ 768.00	\$ 2,868.00	\$ 3,600.00
<b>Total of Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 33,560.00</b>	<b>\$ 33,728.00</b>	<b>\$ 49,748.00</b>	<b>\$ 50,480.00</b>
<b>Total Estimated Cost of Education</b>	<b>\$ 104,511.00</b>	<b>\$ 102,079.00</b>	<b>\$ 121,828.00</b>	<b>\$ 122,560.00</b>

\* Fees in the first year include anatomy lab fees. All years include disability and medical insurance fees. Clinical years include malpractice fee.

### Annual Fees Breakdown

<b>University Fees</b>	<b>\$ 3,193.00</b>
General Student Fees- Include Orientation, I-clickers, ID cards, and other fixed resources.	
University Fee (Building)	
Educational Services and Resources	
Library	
Technology	
<b>Anatomy Lab Fees*</b>	<b>\$ 2,600.00</b>
<b>Disability Insurance Fee</b>	<b>\$ 190.00</b>
<b>Malpractice Fee**</b>	<b>\$ 75.00</b>
<b>Health Insurance Fee***</b>	<b>\$ 4,968.00</b>

\*Applies only to Y1.

\*\* Only applies to clinical years.

\*\* Health insurance fees are estimated based on the current costs from the STL Campus. The cost may vary based on the health insurance company cost.

## Admission Criteria

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Applicants to the PHSU-SOM-BVI MD degree programme must provide evidence of the following:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (applications will be considered from students in their final year of undergraduate studies, provided they will complete their degree requirements prior to enrolment at PHSU-SOM-BVI)
- Minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.7 (on a four-point scale)
- Minimum Science GPA (SGPA) of 2.7 (calculated from courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and math)
- Completed the following prerequisite coursework:
  - 3 credit/hours of English
  - 8 credit/hours Biology I and II with laboratory
  - 8 credit/hours General Chemistry I and II with laboratory
  - 8 credit/hours Organic Chemistry I and II with laboratory
  - 8 credit/hours General Physics I and II with laboratory
  - 6 credit/hours Advanced Mathematics
  - 6 credit/hours Behavioral Sciences (Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science or Economics)
- Preference may be given to applicants who have taken the following recommended courses: Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Microbiology, Genetics, Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Spanish
- Applicants who are US citizens or permanent residents must submit an official score on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) administered by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC); all other applicants are encouraged to submit an official score from a comparable external validation exam (e.g., Graduate Management Admission Test [GMAT] or international equivalent to the MCAT) to enhance their applications.
- Three Letters of Recommendation
- Application essay
- Students whose undergraduate degrees were earned at institutions where English is not the primary language of instruction must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The minimum scores accepted are:
  - 600 on the paper-based test
  - 250 on the computer-based test
  - 100 on the internet-based test

Enrolment is limited and only the most competitive applicants, who meet the minimum criteria, will be invited to interview.

Accepted applicants must provide evidence of meeting the school's immunization requirements and attest to meeting the school's Technical Standards. Immunization requirements are in accordance with the Centers of Disease Control CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and Centers of Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. Required immunizations prior to admission:

- Tdap booster
- MMR (2 doses)
- Hepatitis B (3 doses)

- Varicella (2 doses)
- Polio (if under 21 years old)
- Flu shot (annual doses)

Additional information about immunization requirements for enrolled students throughout the four-year educational programme is available in the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook.

## Graduation Requirements

To receive the MD degree, every student must fulfill the following requirements:

**Time Frame for Completion of the Academic Program:** A medical student will be allowed a maximum time frame of two years of enrollment beyond the standard required to complete the program. Summer enrollment is considered part of the academic year for the measure.

Program	Standard	Maximum
Doctor of Medicine (MD) Degree	4 years	6 years

**Course Requirements:** Students must complete *all required courses, clerkships, and electives* within the established time frame.

**Performance Requirement:** A student must pass each required course, clerkship, and elective. Any student failing to meet this performance standard will be referred to the Students Promotion Committee to determine the action to be taken.

**Medical Licensure Exam Requirement:** USMLE Step 1 must be taken and passed before beginning the clerkship phase of the curriculum (Year 3). A passing score for USMLE Step 2 CK is required for graduation. See policies in the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook for additional information.

- Students must take the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE), developed by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), as a USMLE Step 1 performance indicator in January and May. The test score will be used to assess the readiness of the student to pass the USMLE Step 1. A minimum score in the CBSE is required to be authorized to take the USMLE Step 1. The required minimum score is revised annually and announced to second-year students at the beginning of each academic year.

**Professional Behavior Requirement:** The students must conduct themselves following the norms for professional conduct set forth by Ponce Health Sciences University and the corresponding accreditation agencies.

**Clinical Practice Examination (CPX):** All medical students must take and pass a Clinical Practice Examination (CPX) at the end of their first clinical academic year.

The Student Promotions Committee reviews students' cognitive and attitudinal aspects of performance to decide if student complies with graduation requirements.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

### Medical Education (MD)

A Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy has been established to ensure that medical students complete the academic program within the acceptable time frame and the minimally accepted quality of performance. This policy also ensures that the Student Financial Aid requirements set forth by federal regulations have been met. The SAP applies to all medical students enrolled in the Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine. Student academic progress is evaluated twice each academic year by the SOM Students Promotion Committee, which determines whether students comply with promotion and graduation requirements.

### General Requirements

#### 1. Time Frame for completion of the Academic Program

A medical student will be allowed a maximum time frame of two years of enrollment beyond the standard required to complete the program. Summer enrollment is considered part of the academic year for the measure.

The total years to complete the degree include those years accredited on admission to MD Program for transfer students.

Program	Standard	Maximum
Doctor of Medicine – Four Year Program	4 years	6 years

#### 2. Completion of Program Requirements

##### a. Course Requirement

Students must complete **all required courses, clerkships, and electives** within the established time frame.

##### b. Performance Requirement

A student must pass each required course, clerkship and elective. Any student failing to meet this standard of performance will be referred to the Students Promotion Committee to determine the action to be taken.

##### c. Medical Licensure Exam Requirement

USMLE Step 1 must be taken and passed before beginning the clerkship phase of the curriculum. A passing score for USMLE Step 2 CK is required for graduation.

##### d. Professional Behavior Requirement

The students must conduct themselves in accordance with the norms for professional conduct set forth by the Ponce Health Sciences University and the corresponding accreditation agencies.

##### e. Clinical Practice Examination (CPX)

All medical students are required to take and pass a Clinical Practice Examination (CPX) at the end of their first clinical academic year.

##### f. Student Promotions Committee

The SOM Student Promotions Committee reviews students' cognitive and attitudinal aspects of performance to decide if they can advance to the next academic year or graduate, in the case of

senior medical students.

### **Grade Requirement**

The Ponce Health Sciences University Medical Program does not measure academic progress by cumulative grade point average. To graduate, the student should pass all required courses, clerkships, and electives. Satisfactory Academic Progress will be reviewed each semester.

An Incomplete Grade could be assigned following the Institutional Incomplete Grade Policy. The student must complete the “I” (Incomplete) by the following semester, or an - “F” will be recorded for that course. The “I” (Incomplete) grades are part of the academic record, as are the final grades.

### **Academic Probation**

Any student failing to meet Ponce Health Sciences University medical program performance requirement will be referred to the School of Medicine Students Promotion Committee and placed on academic and financial aid probation. The following guidelines will be applied:

1. If the student fails one course, he/she should remediate the deficiency during the summertime. In these cases, an associate dean will notify the student that he/she is under academic probation and authorize summer enrollment.
2. If the student fails two or more courses or fails a course a second time, he/she may be considered for either repetition of courses or dismissal.
3. If the Students Promotion Committee determines that the student must repeat one or more courses during the summer or the next academic year, the student is considered on academic probation.
4. If the Students Promotion Committee determines to dismiss the student from the medical program, the student must be informed about his/her right to appeal.
5. If the dismissal decision is reversed by due process, the student will be considered on academic probation.

### **Appeal Process**

Students referred to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) will be notified, stating the reasons for the referral and informing them about their right to be heard or provide information to the SPC. Course or clerkship directors should recuse themselves if the student being considered had an unsuccessful outcome in their course. Any Committee member who has a conflict of interest as having personal relations or providing health care to the students must also recuse themselves.

The appeal or due process presented below must be followed.

Students who have been notified a decision of the SPC that they must repeat an entire year of study or are dismissed from the medical program has the right to appeal to the Dean of Medicine. The appeal must be submitted in writing within five working days of receiving the notification. The Dean of Medicine will evaluate the appeal and the student's academic record. The Dean can appoint a three-member Ad-Hoc Committee to re-evaluate all evidence. Rejection of the appeal by the Dean is final.

The Ad Hoc committee will notify the student of the date and time when the case will be heard. The student has the right to attend and provide information about their case to the Ad-Hoc Committee. The



Dean of Medicine will consider the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation and make the final decision.

Any decision will be reported to the student in writing. The decision made by the Dean of Medicine is final. During the appeal process, the student has the right to withdraw from the school at any time up to the point when the Dean makes the final decision.

The same process described above will be followed in the case that the adverse decision made by the Committee is for non-academic reasons, such as unacceptable professional behavior. The Department Chairperson, the Associate Dean for Medical Education, or the Vice-President of Student Affairs will refer the case to the SPC. If the SPC recommends dismissing the student, the appeal process described above may be activated.

If an adverse decision is made due to non-academic reasons and the Dean of Medicine sustains the decision after the appeal process, the student may appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and then to the President.

### **Financial Aid Eligibility**

Financial Aid eligibility is contingent upon satisfactory academic progress. Please refer to the institutional policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress published by the Office of Financial Aid.

### **Enforcement**

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs shall have primary responsibility for overseeing this policy and will provide all medical students with a copy of this document upon admission to the Ponce Health Sciences University School of Medicine.

The President, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Dean of Medicine, the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Registrar, and the Financial Aid Director will receive all pertinent data to ensure proper enforcement of the policy here set forth.

## **Programme, School, and Institutional Policies**

MD students must abide by all programme, school, and institutional policies set forth in the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook.

### **Student Financial Aid**

PHSU-SOM-BVI policies concerning student financial aid shall be in accordance with the policies of the parent institution PHSU and applicable international student financial aid opportunities.

### **Transfer of Credits**

PHSU-SOM-BVI does not accept transfer credit nor offer admission with advanced standing.

### **Teacher-Learner Expectations**

The PHSU-SOM-BVI holds in high regard professional behaviors and attitudes, including altruism, integrity, respect for others and a commitment to excellence. Effective learning is best fostered in an environment of mutual respect between teachers and learners. In the context of medical education, the term “teacher”

is used broadly to include peers, resident physicians, full-time and volunteer faculty members, clinical preceptors, nurses, and ancillary support staff, as well as others from whom students learn.

### Guiding Principles:

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**Duty:** Medical educators have a duty to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the profession's standard of care and also to instill the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession's social contract with its patients.

**Integrity:** Learning environments that are conducive to conveying professional values must be based on integrity. Students and residents learn professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.

**Respect:** Respect for every individual is fundamental to the ethics of medicine. Mutual respect is essential for nurturing that ethic. Teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students and residents are always treated respectfully.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS:

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Teachers should:

- Treat students fairly and respectfully
- Maintain high professional standards in all interactions
- Be prepared and on time
- Provide relevant and timely information
- Provide explicit learning and behavioral expectations early in a course or clerkship
- Provide timely, focused, accurate and constructive feedback on a regular basis and thoughtful and timely evaluations at the end of a course or clerkship
- Display honesty, integrity and compassion
- Practice insightful (Socratic) questioning, which stimulates learning and self-discovery, and avoid overly aggressive questioning which may be perceived as hurtful, humiliating, degrading or punitive
- Solicit feedback from students regarding their perception of their educational experiences
- Encourage students who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately

Students should:

- Be courteous of teachers and fellow students
- Be prepared and on time
- Be active, enthusiastic, curious learners
- Demonstrate professional behavior in all settings
- Recognize that not all learning stems from formal and structured activities
- Recognize their responsibility to establish learning objectives and to participate as an active learner
- Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning, a practice that is essential to the profession of medicine

- Recognize personal limitations and seek help as needed
- Display honesty, integrity and compassion
- Recognize the privileges and responsibilities coming from the opportunity to work with patients in clinical settings
- Recognize the duty to place patient welfare above their own
- Recognize and respect patients' rights to privacy
- Solicit feedback on their performance and recognize that criticism is not synonymous with "abuse"

### **Relationships Between Teachers And Students**

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Students and teachers should recognize the special nature of the teacher-learner relationship which is in part defined by professional role modeling, mentorship, and supervision. Because of the special nature of this relationship, students and teachers should strive to develop their relationship to one characterized by mutual trust, acceptance and confidence. They should both recognize the potential for conflict of interest and respect appropriate boundaries.

Adopted from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Uniform Clinical Training Affiliation Agreement published June 4, 2015; updated 2019.

## Technical Standards

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All applicants accepted into the MD degree programme must be able to meet the following technical standards (with or without accommodation) upon admission and throughout their enrollment. These technical standards also apply to other health sciences programs at other PHSU campuses. To seek reasonable accommodations, see the PHSU Reasonable Accommodations Policy and contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Observation:** It requires the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell. For medical students this means to be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences. A candidate must also be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand.

**Communication:** All of our students should be able to speak, hear, and to observe people (or patients) in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, posture, and perceive nonverbal communication. The students must be able to communicate effectively and sensibly with patients. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. The students must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently both in oral and written form with all members of the health care team in English.

**Motor:** MD students should have sufficient motor function to carry out basic laboratory techniques and to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. They must perform anatomical dissections; have sufficient motor ability to use a microscope; be able to do basic laboratory tests, carry out diagnostic procedures and read EKG's and X-rays. A student should be able to execute reasonable motor movements required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Some examples of emergency treatment are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the opening of obstructed airways, among others. These actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

**Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and problem solving. These are critical skills demanded from all of our programs (MD, PhD, etc.). In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

**Behavioral and Social Attributes:** The students must possess the physical and emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities inherent to their studies. For medicine, this may mean diagnosis and care of patients, being able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. The students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and learn to function with the uncertainties inherent to clinical problems of many different patients. Compassion, integrity, concerns for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are personal qualities that are assessed during the admission and must be kept and/or improved during the educational processes.

## **Anti-Discrimination**

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The Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU), as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, disability, or status of veteran, or any basis protected by law.

Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance its values consistent with the PHSU mission. This policy applies to admission, students, employment, and access to and treatment in PHSU programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the PHSU and is in accordance with federal, state and/or local laws and regulations.

## **Grievances and Complaints**

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Any student has the right to submit to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs a written report of a concern or complaint of any violation to the PHSU policies and/or professional ethic without fear of retribution. Violations of PHSU regulations will not be tolerated. Verbal, psychological or physical abuse, such as speaking insultingly, engaging in schemes to undermine the self-esteem of the person, or any discriminatory practices or adverse activity will not be tolerated. All student complaints about the school and/or its faculty and other personnel are managed in accordance with the PHSU Grievance Policy specified in the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook.

The school is committed to using information derived from student grievances and complaints to improve the educational programme and enhance the student experience while enrolled at PHSU-SOM-BVI. The school maintains a log of all complaints as required by its accrediting authorities.

## **Privacy of Student Records Policy**

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PHSU-SOM-BVI is part of PHSU and, as such, adheres to all applicable federal, Commonwealth and local regulations concerning the privacy or confidentiality of student records, including, but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Faculty members are required to strictly comply with the University's FERPA policy in their administration and use of student record. For information about rights included under FERPA, see the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook.

## **Student Support Services**

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### **Registrar**

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The Registrar's Office is under the direct supervision of the Vice President for Students Affairs. The primary role of the Registrar is to maintain the permanent records and documents that pertain to each matriculated student's progress through medical or graduate school.

The main services offered by the Registrar's Office are to:

- Prepare and maintain custody of all academic records following the regulations of Buckley Amendment (Buckley Law).
- Coordinating Registration Procedures.
- Coordinate Veterans Services.
- Provide certifications of Enrollment, Class Lists and Deferments.
- Prepare the evaluation of records for promotion and graduation.
- Certify Degrees and Academic Standing.
- Certify Enrollment for USMLE Part I and II.
- Prepare, maintain, and distribute the Official Transcript.
- Receive, record and secure documentation for final course grades.
- Establish policies for access to student Academic Record in accordance with Federal Ed Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

### **Certifications**

A fee will be charged to students who request academic certifications or certification of enrollment for other purposes. Certification for Income Taxes will be free of charge. Certifications for verification of Degree follows the same steps as for enrollment certification. (Must fill a request form and pay)

### **Transcripts**

The student's academic record is an official document and copies are made upon the request of the student.

- Students who need official transcripts of their record for personal use or official use must fill in a transcript request form at the Registrar's Office and must pay a fee for each copy at the Finance Office. The Registrar's Office requires five working days for processing the transcript request. No transcripts will be sent by fax.
- Official transcripts must bear school seal and will be sent directly to the Institution requested by the student.
- Transcripts requested for personal use of the student will be handed to the student personally; if the student authorizes another person to come for the transcript, a written authorization is needed, and the person must have identification. Transcripts handed to the student must be labeled "student copy".
- Student undergraduate transcripts are confidential records kept for exclusive use of Ponce Health Sciences University Registrar's Office and will not be given to the applicant or third person under any circumstances.
- No transcripts or certifications will be honored if the student has outstanding debts.

## Student Affairs

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The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) provides a variety of services for the entire student body to assist Ponce Health Sciences University fulfill their common goal: excellence in education. The main goal of the Student Affairs Office is to assist the students in addressing many of their personal and psychological needs for them to concentrate their efforts in the learning task.

The Office of Student Affairs is available to help the students with health care services, counseling, study, and test taking strategies, post-graduate training, National Residency Matching Programs, students' extracurricular activities and more.

The Office of Student Affairs provides these services by directly supervising the Counseling Center and the Student Success Office. The personnel from OSA are available to meet virtually or in person to provide resources to fulfill students' needs.

## Student Activities

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Students may organize extracurricular activities. However, written permission from the Office of Student Affairs must be obtained prior to the activity. The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee will ascertain the good academic progress of the students involved and Administration will give permission for the use of University Facilities.

## Student Organizations

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Any student organization at PHSU must be registered and approved by the Student Affairs Office before starting its operation or activities. The registry must include the following information: the name of the organization or group, its goals and objectives, the names of its board members with the respective positions and a brief description of the requirements and procedures for enrollment or initiation. New organizations or groups may register between July and October every year as far as they present the required information. The information must be updated on a yearly basis, including the list of members.

Encouragement to participate in organizations to meet individual and group needs and interests is tempered by the need of the student to be in good academic standing.

## Students Associations

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A comprehensive list of the authorized associations is available in the PHSU-SOM-BVI student portal.

## Student Government

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**Student Council:** As the principal representative of the student body in administrative and academic matters the Student Council serves as an advisory group to the Administration and should facilitate the conveyance of information to the student body. As with all other advisory

groups within the University the Student Council does not dictate policies. However, its recommendations can influence and impact administrative decisions.

**Class Officers:** Every class may select a President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer and Public Relations Officer. Each class elects its officers from among students in good academic standing. The list of class officers must be presented to OSA during the first months of the academic year. It shall include the names, positions, telephones, e-mails and or other relevant information. Class Presidents have the responsibility to serve as intermediate between the School and their class only. Presidents do not represent the entire student body.

The Student Council and Class Officers should meet periodically with the officials at the Deanship of Students Affairs to facilitate close cooperation between the students and the administration.

### **Academic Support Services**

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Academic support services, including academic advising, tutoring, learning specialist services, library services, and personal counseling, are available on-site and/or remotely through the parent university as described in the PHSU-SOM-BVI Medical Student Handbook.

### **Facilities**

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PHSU is working with the British Virgin Island local authorities to utilize and expand facilities for basic science medical education within the existing campus of H. Lavity Stoutt Community College in Tortola, British Virgin Islands. Students also will participate in clinical experiences in local healthcare facilities. Formal agreements are underway and additional information will be published on the school's website as it becomes available.