



Academic Performance & Progression Policy

Background and Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations on requirements and procedures related to academic performance and progression.

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Policy Statement:

Required Academic Standards

1. Attendance and participation requirements are outlined in the Student Attendance, Participation, and Inclement Weather policy.
2. Students must successfully pass all didactic and clinical courses. A score of 80% or higher is required to pass a course. A final course score of 79.50% – 79.99% will round up to 80%. A final course score of 79.49% or lower signifies a failing score.

Requirements for Progression and Graduation

Requirements for Progression

1. Due to the sequential nature of the curriculum, students must successfully pass all courses for a given semester before becoming eligible to take courses in the subsequent semester.
2. At the conclusion of each semester, students must be recommended for progression to the next semester by program faculty to be eligible to take courses in the subsequent semester.

Requirements for Graduation

To graduate from the PA Program and earn a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree, students must:

1. Successfully pass all didactic and clinical courses.
2. Successfully pass all components of the summative evaluation.
3. Demonstrate they have met all program outcomes.
4. Submit a completed graduation application to the Student Solutions Center.

Remediation

Student progress is monitored and documented in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation as described herein:

1. Except for assessments associated with the Summative Evaluation, remediation is required for any failed written examination or skills assessment included in the curriculum. The score for a failed assessment will be 0% until the student successfully completes the remediation plan, at which time the original assessment score will count toward the final course score.
 - a. Failure of a **written exam** requires remediation plus a reassessment exam. The student has 2 attempts to successfully pass the reassessment exam. "Successful" is defined as $\geq 75\%$. Failure to pass the reassessment

exam will result in a 0% for that assessment.

- b. Failure of a **skills assessment** requires remediation plus a skills reassessment. The student has 2 attempts to successfully pass the skills reassessment. "Successful" is defined in each course syllabus. Failure to pass the skills reassessment will result in a 0% for that assessment.
 - c. Within one week of any student assessment failure or identified deficiency, the course director or faculty member will meet with the student to establish a remediation plan.
 - d. Students should complete remediation plans within 2 weeks of receipt, except during the clinical year. Remediation for a failed assessment during a clinical rotation can take 4-8 weeks to complete. An alternative timeline may be granted only by approval from the Program Director or Associate Program Director.
2. A formal remediation plan is required if a faculty member identifies that a student has a significant deficiency in knowledge or skills. This may be demonstrated by failure of any component of the Preclinical Seminar, consistently poor performance on assessments, or other identified deficiencies in knowledge or skills. When a student is required to complete a formal remediation plan, the student meets with a principal faculty member to establish his or her remediation plan. Formal remediation plans may require the student to suspend progression in his or her courses until remediation is successfully completed. Due to the sequential nature of the didactic phase, formal remediation plans requiring students to suspend progression are only offered immediately prior to or during the clinical phase.
 3. Remediation may be required if a preceptor indicates that a student is "Below Average" or is "Unacceptable" in any one of the requirements/areas of evaluation on the end-of-rotation Preceptor Evaluation of the Student. The score for the preceptor evaluation will be 0% until the student successfully

completes the remediation plan, at which time the original assessment score will count toward the final course score.

4. Students are required to retake any failed components associated with the Summative Evaluation but remediation is not offered.
5. In circumstances where it is statistically impossible for a student to pass a course, remediation will not be required and the original examination, evaluation and/or assessment scores will be utilized to calculate final course scores.
6. The responsible course director or faculty member must document remediation efforts and outcomes on the remediation form and file this in the student's official file.
7. Completion of a remediation plan does not imply that a student has met a particular course or program outcome.
8. The specific remediation plan developed is at the discretion of the course director or faculty member and may include but is not limited to the examples below.

Remediation Plan Examples:

- *Reading assignments*
- *Written completion of selected course learning objectives with reference citations*
- *Written response to selected exam items with reference citations*
- *Problem-based learning exercises focused on area(s) of weakness*
- *Written self-reflection exercise*
- *Individual faculty-led tutoring (especially skills related deficiencies)*
- *Additional supervised clinical practice experience up to and including repeating an entire rotation*

Adverse Actions

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on Academic Probation when they demonstrate a consistent pattern of academic deficiency as evidenced by one or more of the following:

1. Acquiring an average examination score of less than 75% in a single didactic course which has two or more examinations.
2. Failing 4 or more formal assessments across all courses in a single semester.
3. Receiving two end-of-rotation Preceptor Evaluations of the Student with mark(s) indicating that the student is "Below Average" or is "Unacceptable" in any one of the requirements/areas of evaluation in the Patient Care or Medical Knowledge sections. This will result in being placed on Academic Probation for the remainder of the clinical year.
4. Failing two End of Rotation (EOR) written examinations will result in being placed on Academic Probation for the remainder of the clinical year.

Procedure for regaining good standing following placement on Academic Probation:

1. In order to return to good standing following placement on Academic Probation during the didactic phase, students must refrain from demonstrating any of the academic deficiencies listed above for the remainder of the didactic phase and must successfully pass the Preclinical Comprehensive Evaluation.
2. Students who demonstrate a deficiency warranting academic probation during the final didactic semester will not be placed on academic probation if they successfully complete the Preclinical Comprehensive Evaluation.
3. In order to return to good standing following placement on Academic Probation during the clinical rotation phase, students must refrain from demonstrating any of the academic deficiencies listed above for the remainder of the clinical year and must successfully pass the Summative examination.

Professionalism Probation

If a student demonstrates unprofessional behavior, the behavior will be presented to faculty for discussion, at which time the faculty will vote on what action should be

taken.

Student Professionalism is formally evaluated throughout the program in the following ways:

1. Faculty Evaluation of Student Professionalism - performed by core faculty members throughout the didactic and clinical phases. If a student receives a mark of "Unacceptable" in any category, then the student will be subject to the above process and may be placed on professionalism probation.
2. Preceptor Evaluation of Student - performed by preceptors at the end of each clinical rotation. If a preceptor indicates a student is "Below Average" or is "Unacceptable" in any one of the requirements/areas of evaluation in the Interpersonal Skills and Professionalism sections, then the student will be subject to the above process and may be placed on professionalism probation.

If it is determined that the student should be placed on professionalism probation, the terms of probation are as follows:

1. A student can be placed on Professionalism Probation at any time throughout the didactic and clinical years. Once placed on probation, the student will remain on probation for a length of time determined by the faculty. A letter will be sent to the student outlining the specific terms of probation.

To be released from Professionalism Probation and regain good standing:

1. The student must refrain from demonstrating unprofessional behavior (of any sort) during the probationary period.
2. The student may be required to complete assignments as deemed appropriate by the faculty (ie, a self-reflection paper, counseling, community service, etc.).
3. At the end of the probationary period, the student will be required to appear before the faculty (and any other persons considered appropriate to the case), to verbalize understanding of the behavior that resulted in professionalism probation.
4. After the student meets with faculty, faculty will discuss whether probation should be lifted. Students will be notified in writing as to the faculty's decision.

Dismissal

Students **will** be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program in the following circumstances:

1. When they fail to meet post-acceptance requirements in the manner specified in the Admissions policy.
2. When they fail any course.
3. If while on academic probation, they repeat any of the deficiencies that are criteria for academic probation.
4. When they fail to achieve good standing following placement on Professionalism Probation.
5. When a third preceptor indicates that a student is "Below Average" or is "Unacceptable" in any one of the requirements/areas of evaluation in the same section on the Preceptor Evaluation of Student.
6. When they fail a third EOR written examination.
7. For any gross violations of professional conduct.
8. For conduct that would render them ineligible to participate in clinical rotations or obtain licensure.
9. For failure to comply with or pass a random urine drug screen at any time during the program.
10. When they are unable to meet the minimum technical standards necessary to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of an entry-level physician assistant (see [UC PA Program Technical Standards](#)).
11. When it is no longer possible for them to complete all program requirements for graduation within 5 years of their original date of matriculation.

Students **may** be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program in the following circumstances:

1. When their behavior poses a threat to the standards of orderly operation, scholarship, and conduct.

2. When they have violated principles related to academic integrity and plagiarism as outlined by the University of Charleston.
3. When their behavior poses a threat to the mental or physical well-being of others.

Students dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program have the right to:

1. Appeal the decision (see the Appeals Process section under Student Grievances below)
2. Seek re-entry by applying for admission during the normal admissions cycle. In the event that a student is admitted into the program, the program faculty reserves the right to attach contingencies to the admittance.

Conduct Violations and Harassment

The UC PA Program adheres to the same policy adhered to by the School of Health Sciences. This can be found in the University of Charleston Student Handbook.

(<http://www.ucwv.edu/UC-Life/Student-Resources/Student-Handbook/>)

Student Grievances

Academic Grievances

Students who disagree with the score or qualitative evaluation of any formal assessment or course should attempt to resolve the difficulty or concerns in a professional, non-confrontational manner with the course director. If the matter cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should contact his/her mentor for assistance. If the course director and mentor are one in the same, the student has the right to choose a principal faculty member of their choice to work with. If still unresolved, a written appeal to the Program Director may be made within 10 days of the assessment evaluation. The Program Director will independently evaluate the situation and render a decision. The decision of the Program Director is final.

Appeals Process

The Physician Assistant Program recognizes due process and the rights of a student to appeal Program decisions/actions affecting student progress within the Program. Student appeals must be based upon the Program's failure to follow established policies or procedures. The appeal letter should be succinct and contain evidence that supports their appeal of a program decision/action according to the appeal process as defined herein:

1. All appeals must be submitted to the Program Director in writing within 5 working days of the Program action/decision being appealed.
2. Appeals will be reviewed during a meeting of the program faculty and a decision will be rendered to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Students will be invited to attend the faculty meeting at which the appeal is considered to present their case and respond to any questions the faculty may have. As this meeting is a purely academic proceeding, no legal counsel will be allowed to attend or participate. The appellant student may, however, request participation by other students or non-program faculty with approval of the Program Director. Proceedings may not be recorded in any manner (audio, video, digital, etc.).
3. Students who wish to challenge the Program's appeal decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences. This appeal must be initiated within 10 working days of the Program's appeal decision and must be submitted in writing.
4. All academic appeal decisions rendered by the Dean of the School of Health Sciences are final.

Deceleration, Completion Deadline

1. Deceleration is only allowed in the event that a student is granted a leave of absence.

2. Students may request a leave of absence when personal (non-academic) circumstances arise which jeopardize the likelihood for successful completion of their studies. Poor academic performance will not be regarded as a justifiable reason to request a leave of absence. Students must submit a written formal request with an explanation for the request to the Program Director, who will review the request with program faculty. Requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The program faculty reserve the right to approve or deny the request. Only students who are in good standing are permitted to request a leave of absence. Program faculty reserve the right to attach conditions that must be met for students to return.
 - a. Good standing will be defined as meeting all of the following criteria:
 - i. A course average of 80% or higher in all currently enrolled courses.
 - ii. An exam average of 75% or higher in all currently enrolled courses.
 - iii. Not being on academic or professionalism probation.
 - iv. Not being under investigation for violation of academic integrity policies.
3. All requirements for completion of the program must be completed within 5 years of the original date of matriculation. Inability to do so will lead to dismissal of the student.

Withdrawal

1. Students may withdraw from the PA Program at anytime. Students wishing to withdraw must meet with their faculty mentor and the Program Director to complete the required documentation.
2. Unless a leave of absence is requested and granted, withdrawal from an individual course will not allow a student to progress in the program as per the requirements for progression (see Requirements for Progression and Graduation section) and therefore constitutes withdrawal from the program.
3. Students who withdraw for any reason from the program, or who are unable to progress due to any reason other than a program-approved leave of absence, will not be granted readmission to the program without going through the standard application process. Completing the standard application process does not guarantee readmission to the program.

ARC-PA Associated Standards:

A3.11 The program must define, publish and make readily available to faculty and students policies and procedures for processing student grievances and allegations of harassment.

A3.17 The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include:

- a. any required academic standards
- b. completion deadlines/requirements related to curricular components
- c. requirements for progression in and completion of the program
- d. policies and procedures for processing student grievances
- e. policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal
- f. policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration
- g. policies and procedures for processing allegations of harassment

A3.19 Student files kept by the program must include documentation:

- a) of student performance while enrolled
- b) of remediation efforts and outcomes
- c) that the student has met requirements for program completion

C3.03 The program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.