



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.

Table of Contents:

- [Required Academic Standards](#)
- [Requirements for Progression and Graduation](#)
- [Remediation](#)
- [Adverse Actions](#)
- [Conduct Violations and Harassment](#)
- [Student Grievances](#)
- [Program Deceleration, Leave of Absence, Program Completion Deadline](#)
- [Withdrawal](#)

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 complete courses in the subsequent semester.
2. At the end of the second and third didactic semesters, the program requires students to complete a formative, cumulative, comprehensive written examination based on the content covered in their PA program curriculum to date at the time of the assessment. The layout and topics for the Summer Cumulative and Fall Cumulative exams are derived from the PANACE blueprint. Although not for a grade, students are required to complete these assessments.
3. At the end of the fourth didactic semester, students are required to complete a multi-part comprehensive examination (PreClinical Seminar) involving written questions, clinical skills, and a standardized patient encounter experience. Unlike the Summer and Fall Cumulative Exams, this PreClinical Seminar is for a grade. Failure to successfully pass any aspect of the PreClinical Seminar will require remediation and may result in delayed onset of clinical rotations or inability to progress to the clinical phase of the program.

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. Demonstrate they have met Physician Assistant Core Competencies.
3. Submit a completed graduation application to the Student Solutions Center.
4. The student should meet all university financial obligations.
5. The student must be in good academic and professional standing with the program.

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, skills assessment, or rotation specific assignment included in the curriculum. If the student fails to successfully remediate, their score will be changed to a 0% for that grade item. With successful remediation, 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 two (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. The student has two (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. Failure of any other **clinical course assignment** requires completion of a remediation plan as set forth by the course director. "Successful" is defined as 80% or higher. Failure to successfully complete the remediation plan will result in a 0% for that course assignment.
 - d. Students must complete remediation as agreed upon by the course director.
2. A formal remediation plan is required if a faculty member identifies that a student has a significant deficiency in knowledge or skills prior to the Summative Evaluation. 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.

3. Formal remediation plans must be completed prior to the start of the following semester during the didactic phase. During the clinical phase, a formal remediation plan may delay progression and graduation.
4. Remediation may be required if a preceptor indicates that a student is "Below Average" or is "Unacceptable" in any one of the areas of evaluation on the final end-of-rotation Preceptor Evaluation of the Student. The student will receive a 0% if the remediation plan is not successfully completed.
5. Students are required to retake any failed components associated with the Summative Evaluation. If successful completion has not occurred after 2 attempts a formal remediation plan will be determined by the course director.
6. In circumstances where it is statistically impossible for a student to pass a course, remediation will not be offered and the original examination, evaluation and/or assessment scores will be utilized to calculate final course scores.
7. 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.
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*
- *Written response to selected exam items*
- *Problem-based learning exercises focused on area(s) of weakness*
- *Written self-reflection exercise*
- *Individual 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 four or more initial written formal assessments across all courses in a single semester, excluding Preclinical and Summative Seminars.
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 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

As future Physician Assistants responsible for the well-being of patients, UCPAP students are held to a high standard of professional behavior. The professional behavior of UCPAP students includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Fulfilling all academic and extracurricular commitments
2. Responding to communication from UCPAP faculty and staff in a timely manner
3. Notifying the appropriate personnel about anticipated absences in a timely manner
4. Complying with immunization and other training requirements
5. Adhering to schedules in a punctual and respectful manner
6. Using appropriate and constructive language in verbal and written communications in evaluations of courses and clinical rotations
7. Treating all UCPAP community members (fellow students, faculty, staff, adjunct professors, and preceptors) with respect
8. Adhering to the UCPAP's Dress Standard Policy by maintaining a neat, clean, and professional appearance during all University or PA Program-related activities. Unless otherwise specified, the required dress code for the physician assistant program is business casual attire.

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 areas of evaluation in the Interpersonal Skills or 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 (e.g., a self-reflection paper, counseling, community service).
3. At the end of the probationary period, the student may 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. The student 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 student receives a "Below Average" or "Unacceptable" from a third preceptor in any one of the areas of evaluation in the same section on the Preceptor Evaluation of Student.
6. When they fail a third initial EOR written examination.
7. When they fail to pass the third attempt of the Preclinical or Summative evaluation.
8. For any gross violations of professional conduct.
9. For circumstances that would render them ineligible to participate in clinical rotations.
10. For failure to comply with or pass a random urine drug screen at any time during the program as per university policy.
11. When they are unable to meet the minimum technical standards necessary to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of an entry-level physician assistant.
12. When it is no longer possible 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 (refer to university policy).
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.

Student Grievances

Grievance Process

Students who disagree with the score or qualitative evaluation of any formal assessment should attempt to resolve the difficulty or concerns in a professional, non-confrontational manner with the course director within five (5) business days of the grade being posted in the learning management system. If unresolved, a written appeal to the Program Director may be made within five (5) business days of the course director's decision. The Program Director will independently evaluate the situation and render a decision. The decision of the Program Director is final. In the event that the Program Director and the course director are one in the same, the grievance will be reviewed by the Director of Didactic Education who will render the final decision.

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.

Grounds for a grade appeal of final course grade are:

1. Error in Calculation or Recording of a Grade. The student grade was erroneously entered in the gradebook, or the final grade was calculated in a method inconsistent with the course syllabus.
2. Arbitrary Evaluation: A significant and unwarranted deviation from grading procedures and course outlines set at the beginning of the course (ordinarily during the first week of the course) and included in the syllabus.

The appeal letter should be succinct and contain evidence that supports the student 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 two (2) business days of the final course grade being posted within the learning management system.
2. Appeals will be rendered to the student within five (5) business days of receipt of the written appeal. Students will have the opportunity to present their case to the faculty. This is a purely academic proceeding; no legal counsel will be allowed to attend or participate. 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 five (5) business 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.

Program Deceleration, Leave of Absence, & Program Completion Deadline

1. Deceleration is only allowed if a leave of absence is granted by the program.
2. Students may request a leave of absence when personal (non-academic) circumstances arise which jeopardize the likelihood for successful completion of

their studies. Students requesting a leave of absence should be in good standing.

- a. Good standing is 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. Students must submit a written formal leave of absence request with an explanation for the request to the Program Director, who will review the request with program faculty.
4. The program reserves the right to approve or deny the request.
5. The Program reserves the right to attach conditions that must be met for students to return.
6. Students who are granted a leave of absence by the program are to contact the Dean of Students and follow the University's process for withdrawal.
7. 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.

Withdrawal

1. Students must notify the Program Director in writing and contact the Dean of Students to complete the withdrawal process as outlined in the University Academic Catalog.
2. Withdrawal from an individual course constitutes dismissal from the program at the end of the semester.

3. Unless granted a leave of absence by the Program, a student must reapply completing the standard application process. Completing the standard application process does not guarantee readmission into the program.
4. Students should discuss with the Financial Aid Office how withdrawal can affect their financial aid package.

ARC-PA Associated Standards:

A3.15 The program must define, publish, consistently apply, and make readily available to students upon admission:

- a) any required academic standards,
- b) requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program,
- c) policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration,
- d) policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal,
- e) policy for student employment while enrolled in the program,
- f) policies and procedures for allegations of student mistreatment, and
- g) policies and procedures for student grievances and appeals.

B4.01 The program must conduct frequent, objective, and documented evaluations of student performance in meeting the program's learning outcomes and instructional objectives for both didactic and supervised clinical practice experience components. The evaluations must:

- a) align with what is expected and taught and
- b) allow the program to identify and address any student deficiencies in a timely manner

REVISED: December 2023