

## Division of Physician Assistant Studies

### **CAPS and Academic Progression Policy**

The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS) has been established by the Division of Physician Assistant Studies for the purpose of evaluating students who are at risk for failing to meet performance standards or who have failed to meet performance standards in any of the following areas:

- Academics (didactic and clinical education)
- Academic integrity
- Professional behavior

The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards is comprised of the medical director for the physician assistant studies program, the director of clinical education for the physician assistant studies program, and principal faculty in the Division of Physician Assistant Studies, with a chair appointed by the physician assistant studies program director. A quorum of three is required to make a recommendation. In cases where a student fails to meet academic or professional behavior standards during a clinical rotation, the director of clinical education (or his or her designee) must be present at the CAPS meeting in which the student's case is considered. In all cases, the program director will review the recommendations of the Committee and make a final decision regarding a student's disposition.

The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards will meet regularly (at a minimum, prior to the end of the semester) and as needed to closely monitor each student's progress, with the goal of promptly identifying deficiencies in knowledge, skills, or professional behavior. Referral of a student to the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards may be made by any physician assistant studies program faculty with a concern about a student's academic performance, academic integrity, conduct, or professional behavior. Program faculty includes the program director, medical director, principal faculty, and instructional faculty (including preceptors for supervised clinical practice experiences).

#### *Academic Advising*

To facilitate early identification of students needing counseling for academic concerns, academic advisors (program faculty) will monitor grades of their advisees throughout the semester. Students having a course grade of 'C' or lower at any point during the semester will be required to meet with their academic advisor and will be strongly encouraged to meet with the course/unit instructor. Advising of students with academic concerns typically includes a discussion of study habits, approach to note-taking, test-taking strategies, and an exploration of other factors as indicated. Academic advisors may recommend or mandate an evaluation by the University's Office of Student Success to explore additional options to enhance academic performance. When there is a concern related to a student's physical or mental health or well-being, the academic advisor will verify that the student is aware of resources available through the University and/or community.

### *Clinical Medicine Course Series Exam Remediation*

Students scoring below 75% on any exam in the Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics course series will be required to complete a remediation plan and re-take the examination in order to demonstrate medical knowledge competency. A minimum passing score on the re-take of the examination is 75%. Failure to achieve this score on the examination after completion of the remediation assignment will result in referral to the program's Committee on Academic and Professional Standards, which will determine whether additional remediation and/or deceleration will be required.

A student identified by program faculty as having a significant deficit in knowledge, skills, or professional behaviors at any point in the program may be subject upon CAPS review to sanctions which include remediation, deceleration, or dismissal from the program (see also program policies on remediation, deceleration, and dismissal).

## **Professionalism Violations**

Following an initial concern related to professionalism, a student will be required to meet with program faculty (academic advisor, program director and/or director of clinical education) to discuss the concern and will receive a **formal warning**. This meeting will be documented in the student's permanent program record and the student will sign that to attest their understanding that the **consequence of any further professionalism concern will include, at a minimum, a formal sanction of program probation**. Examples of unprofessional behavior which may result in a formal warning include but are not limited to:

- Failure to provide evidence of meeting post-acceptance requirements
- Failure to provide evidence of meeting clinical site requirements
- Violations of the program dress code
- Lack of punctuality in class attendance
- Unexcused absences
- Inattentiveness in class
- Disrespectful behavior toward classmates, faculty, or preceptors
- Failure to respond to program communications including emails in a timely manner

**A student who exhibits unprofessional behavior following the formal warning described above will, at a minimum, be given a sanction of program probation.** The indication for the probation, terms of the probation, and consequences of failure to meet the terms of the probation will be documented in a letter which will remain in the student's permanent program record and a copy will be provided to the student. In most cases, the student will remain on professionalism probation throughout the remainder of their time in the program. A student may also be placed on probation for a professionalism violation without a formal warning based on the circumstances of the violation at the discretion of CAPS.

**Failure to meet the terms of the professionalism probation as outlined in the formal letter of probation may include a sanction of deceleration (repetition of a portion of the program) or dismissal from the program.** Students should be aware that a formal sanction of probation must be reported to hiring authorities when such an inquiry is made as part of an academic or peer reference.

## **Requirements for Academic Progression**

Students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above. If a student's GPA is below 3.0 at the completion of any semester, the student will be placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation will be required to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 or above by the end of the following semester. Failure to bring the GPA to 3.0 or above may result in suspension and deceleration or dismissal from the program. The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards will determine the student's disposition.

Progression in the program requires completion of all courses in a given semester with a passing grade before beginning any courses in the following semester. The determination of eligibility to progress to the next semester will be made by the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards.

Because of the critical nature of the provision of health care, there are some situations in which students may be sanctioned irrespective of cumulative grades. For example, some courses cannot be passed if there is a failure in one component of the course. This is explicitly noted in the syllabi for such courses. Likewise, students who act in a manner which jeopardizes the health and safety of themselves or others or who act in an unprofessional manner may be sanctioned or given a failing grade for a course.

## Grading Scale

Grades for the physician assistant studies program will be assigned on a percentage basis (points earned divided by total points available multiplied by 100).

### Grading scale for didactic courses\*

A = 90% to 100%

B = 80% to less than 90%

C = 70% to less than 80%

F = Less than 70%

**\*Exceptions are PA 512: Physical Diagnosis, PA 522: Clinical Procedures 1, PA 530: PA Practice 2, PA 542: Clinical Procedures 2, and PA 686 PA Summative Evaluation** where final letter grades will be assigned as:

A = 93% to 100%

B = 85% to less than 93%

C = 80% to less than 85%

F = Less than 80%

### Grading scale for clinical rotations

Pass = 80% to 100%

Fail = Less than 80% OR failure of any required component as detailed in course syllabus

## Requirements for Graduation

To be eligible to graduate from the physician assistant studies program at WVU, a student must complete all components of the curriculum in the didactic and clinical phases, meet minimum grade requirements as outlined above, demonstrate compliance with professional behavior expectations, and maintain academic integrity (see sections on Academic Dishonesty above).

All courses in a given semester must be passed before the student may progress to the next semester. All requirements for graduation from the program must be completed within five years of the student's original date of matriculation.

**Academic requirements for graduation:**

All didactic and clinical coursework must be completed with a minimum final cumulative GPA of 3.0 and no incomplete grades. The PA Summative Evaluation (PA 686) must be completed with a passing grade (see below). There must be no outstanding/uncompleted Formal Remediation Plan for an academic concern.

The PA Summative Evaluation takes place over one week following the conclusion of all didactic and clinical course requirements. Students must pass a written comprehensive examination and a series of eight Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). Successful completion of the PA Summative Evaluation requires a passing score on the written comprehensive examination AND a total score of 80% or higher on each of the standardized patient and clinical procedures OSCEs. Students failing one or more of the OSCEs will be required to remediate the OSCE(s). Failure of the written examination will result in a delay in graduation and the student must pass a second, statistically equated form of the exam to graduate from the program. The second form of the exam will not be given until at least three months after the first exam attempt. A student must attain a final grade of 'C' or higher in the PA Summative Evaluation course according to the grading scale below:

A = 93% to 100%

B = 85% to less than 93%

C = 80% to less than 85%

F = Less than 80%

*Failure of the PA Summative Evaluation*

Students failing the PA Summative Evaluation after a re-take of the written exam or unsuccessful remediation of one or more OSCEs will be referred to the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards, which will make a recommendation regarding the student's disposition. Possible sanctions include dismissal from the program and deceleration. Students who are decelerated for failure of the PA Summative Evaluation will be required to repeat a portion of the clinical year and will be provided with a Plan for Deceleration. The plan will outline the requirements for program completion and the time frame for completion of all components of the program, including a repeat of the PA Summative Evaluation. The plan will also include the expected date of graduation. Students who are decelerated will also be provided with a formal Plan for Remediation, which will assist them in remedying deficiencies identified in the PA Summative Evaluation.

**Administrative requirements for graduation:**

All required documentation must be provided to the University and the program and all financial obligations to the University must be met.

**Professional standards requirements for graduation:**

There must be no outstanding/uncompleted Formal Remediation Plan for a professionalism or academic integrity concern.

Students having met all of the above requirements will be recommended by the program director to the dean for graduation.

## **Applicable ARC-PA 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards**

A3.02 The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply its policies and practices to all students.

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.

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