Division of Physician Assistant Studies
CAPS and Academic Progression Policy

Purpose

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

- Academic performance
- Academic integrity
- Professional behavior

The purpose of CAPS is to ensure that students meet the academic and professional standards required for progression and graduation from the Physician Assistant Studies Program.

Committee on Academic and Professional Standards

Committee Composition

The Committee on Academic and Professional Standards shall consist of:

- The Director of Clinical Education
- Principal faculty members of the Division of Physician Assistant Studies

The Program Director shall appoint a faculty member to serve as Chair of the Committee.

A quorum of three committee members is required to make a recommendation.

When a student is being reviewed for an academic or professional behavior concern arising during a clinical rotation, the Director of Clinical Education (or designee) must be present for the committee's deliberations.

The Program Director will review all CAPS recommendations and make the final determination regarding the student's disposition.

Meetings and Referrals

The Committee shall meet regularly, at a minimum prior to the end of each academic semester, and additionally as needed to monitor student progress and identify deficiencies in knowledge, skills, academic integrity, or professional behavior.

A referral to CAPS may be initiated by any member of the program faculty who has concerns regarding a student's academic performance, academic integrity, conduct, or professional behavior.

For purposes of this policy, program faculty include:

- Program Director
- Medical Director
- Principal Faculty
- Instructional Faculty
- Clinical Preceptors involved in supervised clinical practice experiences

Academic Advising

Academic advising is intended to facilitate the early identification and support of students experiencing academic difficulty.

Academic advisors will monitor the performance of their assigned advisees throughout each semester.

Students earning a course grade of **C or below** at any point in the semester will be required to meet with their academic advisor and will be strongly encouraged to meet with the course or unit instructor.

Advising for students experiencing academic difficulty may include discussion of:

- Study habits
- Note-taking strategies
- Time management
- Examination preparation and test-taking strategies
- Other factors affecting academic performance

Academic advisors may recommend or require evaluation through the University's Office of Student Success to identify additional strategies and services to support academic success.

When concerns arise regarding a student's physical health, mental health, or overall well-being, advisors will ensure that students are aware of available University and community resources.

Academic Deficiencies and Remediation

Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics Course Series Examinations

Students who score below 75% on any examination in the Clinical Medicine and Pharmacotherapeutics course series will be required to:

1. Complete a remediation plan.
2. Retake the examination to demonstrate competency in medical knowledge.

A minimum score of 75% must be achieved on the retake examination. Only the original examination score will be used to calculate the final course grade.

Failure to achieve a score of 75% following completion of the remediation plan will result in referral to CAPS. The Committee will determine whether additional remediation, deceleration, or other action is warranted.

Significant Deficiencies

A student identified by program faculty as having a significant deficit in knowledge, clinical skills, academic integrity, or professional behavior may be referred to CAPS at any point during the program.

Following review, CAPS may recommend sanctions including:

- Remediation
- Deceleration
- Dismissal

Additional information regarding these sanctions is available in the program policies governing remediation, deceleration, and dismissal.

Professionalism Violations

Professional Standards

By enrolling in the Physician Assistant Studies Program, students acknowledge their responsibility to uphold the standards of professional conduct expected of physician assistant students and future physician assistants.

The **Division of Physician Assistant Studies Professionalism Policy** is published in the PA Student Handbook and on the program website.

Professionalism Deficiencies

Examples of behaviors that may constitute professionalism deficiencies include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to provide documentation required following admission.
- Failure to provide documentation required by clinical sites.
- Repeated tardiness or absenteeism.
- Failure to communicate appropriately with faculty, staff, preceptors, or peers.
- Failure to complete assigned responsibilities.
- Disrespectful or disruptive behavior.
- Unprofessional conduct in clinical settings.
- Breaches of confidentiality.
- Academic dishonesty including unauthorized use of artificial intelligence.
- Falsification of records or documentation.
- Failure to accept responsibility for actions.
- Failure to respond appropriately to feedback.
- Violations of program, University, or clinical site policies.

Professionalism Warning Process

Following an initial professionalism concern, the student will be required to meet with program faculty, which may include the academic advisor, Program Director, and/or Director of Clinical Education.

The student will receive a *Formal Warning*, which will be documented in the student's permanent program record.

The student will be required to sign documentation acknowledging receipt of the warning and their understanding that any subsequent professionalism concern will result in, at minimum, a formal sanction of program probation.

Professionalism Probation

A student who demonstrates unprofessional behavior following issuance of a *Formal Warning* will, at minimum, be placed on *Professionalism Probation*.

The probation letter shall specify:

- The nature of the professionalism deficiency
- The terms and conditions of probation
- Required corrective actions
- Consequences for failure to comply with probation requirements

The probation letter will remain in the student's permanent program record, and a copy will be provided to the student.

In most cases, students placed on professionalism probation will remain on probation for the remainder of their enrollment in the program.

CAPS may place a student directly on probation without a prior *Formal Warning* when the nature or severity of the violation warrants such action.

Students should be aware that a formal sanction of probation must be disclosed when academic or professional reference requests specifically inquire about disciplinary actions.

Failure to Comply with Probation Requirements

Failure to satisfy the terms of professionalism probation may result in additional sanctions, including:

- Deceleration
- Dismissal from the program

In addition to formal sanctions, CAPS may require completion of:

- A professionalism remediation assignment
- A professional development plan
- Other corrective actions deemed appropriate by the Committee

Requirements for Academic Progression

Grade Point Average

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 at the conclusion of any semester will be placed on academic probation.

Students on academic probation must restore their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher by the end of the following semester.

Failure to achieve the required GPA may result in:

- Suspension
- Deceleration
- Dismissal

CAPS will review the student's record and make a recommendation regarding the student's disposition.

Course Completion

Students must successfully complete all courses within a semester before progressing to the subsequent semester.

CAPS will determine eligibility for progression to the next semester.

Patient Safety and Professional Conduct

Because of the critical nature of healthcare education and patient care, students may be sanctioned irrespective of cumulative GPA.

Some courses require successful completion of specific components in order to pass the course. Such requirements are described in individual course syllabi.

Students whose behavior jeopardizes the health or safety of themselves or others, or who engage in serious professional misconduct, may be subject to disciplinary sanctions and/or course failure regardless of overall academic standing.

Grading Scale

Didactic Courses

Grades are assigned as a percentage of total points earned divided by total points available.

Grade	Percentage
A	90% to 100%
B	80% to <90%
C	70% to <80%
F	<70%

Exceptions

The following courses utilize an alternate grading scale:

- PA 512: Physical Diagnosis
- PA 522: Clinical Procedures I
- PA 542: Clinical Procedures II
- PA 686: PA Summative Evaluation

Grade	Percentage
A	93% to 100%
B	85% to <93%
C	80% to <85%
F	<80%

Clinical Rotations

Grade	Percentage
Pass	80% to 100%
Fail	Less than 80% or failure of any required course component

Requirements for Graduation

To be eligible for graduation, students must successfully complete all didactic and clinical program requirements, satisfy all professional standards, and maintain academic integrity.

All graduation requirements must be completed within five years of the student's original matriculation date.

Academic Requirements

Students must:

- Complete all didactic and clinical coursework.
- Earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Have no incomplete grades.
- Successfully complete PA 686: PA Summative Evaluation.
- Have no outstanding academic remediation plans.

PA Summative Evaluation

The PA Summative Evaluation occurs following completion of all didactic and clinical coursework.

Students must successfully complete:

- A written comprehensive examination
- Nine Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)

Successful completion requires:

- A passing score on the written examination; and
- A score of 80% or higher on each OSCE.

Students failing one or more OSCEs must complete remediation.

Students failing the written comprehensive examination must pass a second statistically equated form of the examination before graduation. The second examination attempt will occur no sooner than 42 days, or six weeks after the first attempt.

Students must earn a final course grade of C (80%) or higher in PA 686 according to the grading scale established for the course.

Failure of the PA Summative Evaluation

Students who fail the PA Summative Evaluation following re-examination and/or remediation will be referred to CAPS.

Possible sanctions include:

- Deceleration
- Dismissal

Students who are decelerated will receive both:

- A Plan for Deceleration outlining revised program requirements and expected graduation date; and
- A Formal Remediation Plan designed to address identified deficiencies.

Administrative Requirements

Students must:

- Submit all required documentation to the program and University.
- Satisfy all financial obligations to the University.

Professional Standards Requirements

Students must:

- Demonstrate ongoing compliance with professional behavior expectations.
- Have no outstanding professionalism remediation plans.
- Have no outstanding academic integrity remediation plans.

Students who have satisfied all graduation requirements will be recommended by the Program Director to the Dean for graduation.

Applicable ARC-PA Standards

A3.01 Program policies are published, readily available, and consistently applied to all students, principal faculty, staff, and the program director regardless of location.

A3.14 The program publishes, consistently applies, and makes readily available to enrolled and prospective students:

a) Required academic standards to maintain enrollment and progression
b) Requirements and deadlines for completion of the program
c) Policies and procedures for remediation
d) Policies and procedures for deceleration
e) Policies and procedures for withdrawal
f) Policies and procedures for dismissal
g) Policies and procedures for student grievances
h) Policies and procedures for student appeals
i) Policies regarding student employment while enrolled in the program
j) Policies regarding student travel to required rotation sites

Approved: September 2019
Revised: October 2021; December 2022; March 2023; October 2023; April 2024; November 2026
Next Review: November 2027