



**SALUS**  
UNIVERSITY

Pennsylvania College of Optometry

## ACADEMIC POLICY

### Traditional Doctor of Optometry Degree Program

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# PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

## ACADEMIC POLICY

### Traditional Doctor of Optometry Degree Program

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Insert Definition of Provost and Dean

#### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Academic Policy of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry is an important resource in striving to ensure that the College is an intellectual community that supports commitment, achievement, integrity, mutual cooperation, and respect. This expectation applies to the academic standards that infuse the essential activities that occur in the College's classrooms, laboratories, clinics, and other teaching, learning, and patient care environments, as well as the professionalism with which the constituencies of the College relate to each other and conduct themselves on a daily basis.
- 1.2 All students are expected to pursue the highest standards of academic excellence.
- 1.3 As a Doctor of Optometry, one must exhibit high principles and character because of the level of confidence and trust that society places in health care providers and the unique relationship that exists between patients and Doctors of Optometry. Thus, the professional institution that trains and educates such clinicians is mandated, both explicitly and implicitly, to adhere to the highest standards that determine competence as well as other values such as integrity and honesty. These standards and values are fundamental to the trust that exists between society and the profession of optometry.
- 1.4 This Academic Policy applies to all Doctor of Optometry degree program students enrolled in the College and is published for students, faculty, administrators, and staff, all of whom are held responsible for reading and adhering to this Policy.
- 1.5 The faculty and administration of the College, in conjunction with the Salus University Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee and the Office of Academic Affairs, have developed this policy to uphold the educational standards of the College for all students.
- 1.6 Unless otherwise stated, the Dean of the College is the individual charged with rendering final interpretations of the Policy and for deciding whether to grant exceptions to the Policy.

#### 2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and, in conjunction with his/her College staff, is charged with the oversight of the curriculum, development of educational policy, and other academic matters. The faculty, in conjunction with the Dean and the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, creates and modifies the curriculum. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is the chief academic officer of the University and is responsible for final decisions concerning the curriculum and educational policy for all colleges.
- 2.2 The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and her/his staff are charged with the administration and integration of the basic science module/blocks and curriculum, including faculty and student schedules.

- 2.3 The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and her/his staff are charged with the administration and integration of the clinical science module/blocks and curriculum, along with the management of the educational operations of the clinics, including faculty and student schedules. He/she is also charged with administration of the clinical educational programs in The Eye Institute clinical network and at all off-campus sites.
- 2.4 The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs is charged with the administration of matters related to admissions, counseling, disability resources, career services, and student life on campus. This office has the responsibility for advising students in personal matters impacting academics, tutoring services, and special events. The University's Office of Student Affairs is responsible for maintaining the students' permanent academic records.
- 2.5 The Vice President of Clinical Operations is responsible for all patient care/business operations of the University, specifically The Eye Institute, including patient scheduling, patient care protocols, maintenance of records, patient fees and insurance payments, compliance with infection control protocols, and other related issues.

### 3. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULES

- 3.1 The University Calendar provides the beginning and ending dates for each term as well as University holidays. The Office of the Dean distributes the College's Academic Calendar(s) no later than the spring term prior to the subsequent academic year. Important dates are listed, such as the beginning and ending dates for each term, academic holidays, academic breaks, study days, University closing dates, and examination dates.
- 3.2 Any travel or other commitments scheduled on days reserved for academic activities are made at the student's own risk in the event that these dates become necessary to be used for mandatory classes, laboratories, examinations or other educational activities.
- 3.3 The Weekly Class Schedule is distributed during the current term for the subsequent term.
- 3.4 Both the College's Academic Calendar(s) and Weekly Class Schedules are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., faculty illness or inclement weather).
- 3.5 Instructors require prior approval from the appropriate Associate Dean and/or his/her designee to modify the Weekly Class Schedule.

### 4. ATTENDANCE

- 4.1 It is the policy of the College that student attendance at all lectures is expected, and that students should attend every lecture for which the student is scheduled.
- 4.2 A syllabus will be published, either electronically or in printed form, for each module/block and will describe the module/block requirements, grading policy, and attendance policy.
- 4.3 An instructor has the option to require mandatory attendance at lectures. The instructor will describe details of his/her attendance requirements in the module/block syllabus.
- 4.4 Attendance is mandatory for all laboratories; clinical assignments, including Community Based Activities (CBA); Clinical Problem Solving (CPS) sessions; Problem Solving

Sessions (PSS); and, when specified, orientations, seminars, grand rounds, conferences, and meetings.

- 4.4.1 Where attendance is mandatory, absences alone may result in a module/block grade of Failure (F) as specified in course syllabi.
- 4.5 A student who is not in good academic standing (see sections 17 and 19) may be required to attend specified module(s)/block(s). In this event, written notification to the student will be sent from the Office of the Dean or his/her designee.
- 4.6 A student should inform the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs and his/her instructor(s) of anticipated family or medical situations which may qualify for excused absences and/or result in extended absences.
- 4.7 Attendance and absence policies as described in this document also apply to all scheduled examinations and/or assessments.
- 4.7.1 In the event of extremely harsh weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about University closing via the University alert system. Students should consult the University website for the weather policy.

#### 4.8 Absences: Mandatory Non-Patient Care Activities

- 4.8.1 Any student who is absent from a mandatory activity must complete and submit an absence-approval request form with appropriate documentation to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs. These forms may be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.
- 4.8.2 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit appropriate documentation within 48 hours following his/her return to educational/program activities.
- 4.8.3 For an anticipated absence that may qualify as an excused absence, a student is required to submit appropriate documentation prior to his/her absence.
- 4.8.4 Absence excuses may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 4.8.4.1 A statement from a physician that, at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under the physician's care and too ill (state diagnosis) to participate in the mandatory activities.
  - 4.8.4.2 A statement from a physician that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.
  - 4.8.4.3 A death in the student's immediate family. The relationship of the deceased to the student, name and the date of the death must be provided.
  - 4.8.4.4 Documented failure of normal or auxiliary means of transportation under extenuating circumstances.
  - 4.8.4.5 A substantive personal event such as student's wedding.
  - 4.8.4.6 Childbirth (the medical leave policy as referenced in section 23 takes precedence).
  - 4.8.4.7 Educational or professional activities, e.g., attendance at a professional meeting. The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Optometry, must grant approval; if granted, the length of the approved absence will be determined as part of the review process. These requests must be made at least two weeks prior to the desired absence. Students must be in good academic standing (see 4.9.8.8).

- 4.8.5 The determination whether an absence not specifically covered above is considered to be excused, shall be decided by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.
- 4.8.6 All work missed during an excused absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the module/block instructor prior to receiving a grade for the module/block. All work must be completed within a period of time designated by the module/block instructor.
- 4.8.7 If the number of absences is excessive, as determined by the Dean, a student may be required to take a leave of absence.

#### 4.9 Absences: Patient Care Activities

- 4.9.1 Attendance is mandatory at all patient care activities.
- 4.9.2 Students in professional programs make a commitment to all clinical assignments and responsibilities, including patients and the other members of the health care team. Failure to immediately inform the appropriate personnel, as defined in this section and sub-sections, of an absence and its reason demonstrates a disregard of this important aspect of professionalism. While there may be instances when timely communication with the team is nearly impossible, casual attitudes regarding this responsibility will not be tolerated. This portion of the Academic Policy applies to all internal and external clinical/patient care activities.
- 4.9.3 A student must immediately inform the module or service chief, faculty, preceptor, or other appropriate individual of any absence unless he/she is physically unable to communicate. Students should refer to the Professional Practice Syllabi for specific contact information.
- 4.9.4 All absences (excused and unexcused) will be reported to the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs by the clinical service unit internally, and to the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program externally.
- 4.9.5 For an absence to be excused, an explanation must be submitted in writing internally to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs or her/his designee, and externally to the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program.
- 4.9.6 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit proper documentation for consideration of approval within 48 hours following his/her return to campus activities and upon return to the site for external rotations.
- 4.9.7 For an anticipated absence, a student is required to submit documentation at the start of the term and at least three weeks prior to his/her absence. Students should refer to the Professional Practice Syllabi for the anticipated absence policy and procedure.
- 4.9.8 Acceptable reasons for an "excused" absence may include the following:
- 4.9.8.1 Illness of the student. A statement is needed from the treating physician that, at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under his/her care and too ill (state diagnosis) to participate in patient care activities.
- 4.9.8.2 Serious illness of an immediate family member. A statement is needed from the treating physician that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.

- 4.9.8.3 A death in the student's immediate family. The name of the deceased, relationship to the student, and the date of death must be provided.
- 4.9.8.4 Documented failure of normal and auxiliary means of transportation.
- 4.9.8.5 A substantive personal event. The Chief of Service or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program, in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, must grant approval. Use of applicable personal/professional days is required.
- 4.9.8.6 Childbirth (the medical leave policy of the College as referenced in section 23 takes precedence).
- 4.9.8.7 Educational or professional activities, (e.g., attendance at a professional meeting). The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Dean, must grant approval. If granted, the length of the approved absence will be determined as part of the review process. These requests must be made at least two weeks prior to the desired event.
- 4.9.8.8 Students will be considered for an approved absence for educational or professional activities if they are in good standing both academically and clinically (e.g., performing at a clearly passing level with no significant clinical absences or late arrivals).
- 4.9.9 Any excuse not specifically covered above will be addressed and resolved internally by the Director of the Internship Program and externally by the Director of the Externship Program.
- 4.9.10 All work missed during the absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the Chief of the Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program prior to receiving a grade for the module/block.
- 4.9.11 All work must be completed within a period of time designated by the Chief of the Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program.
- 4.9.12 A student may appeal to the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs if she/he feels that the policy is not being honored or equitably enforced.
- 4.9.13 If absences are excessive, a student may be required to take a leave of absence as defined in 4.10.9.
- 4.10 Absences: Guidelines and Allowances  
For Patient Care Activities
- 4.10.1 Obligations to the clinical program and patients are paramount and therefore, permission to be absent will only be given when appropriate and documented.
- 4.10.2 Absences from patient care activities occurring the day or week of examinations or during orientation weeks will be excused only for substantive urgent issues such as a serious illness with a physician's note, unexpected documented transportation failure, death of an immediate family member (students must follow absence guidelines listed in section 4.9). In addition, absences from patient care activities will generally not be approved during the final week of a term.
- 4.10.3 Anticipated absences may not be approved in cases of sub-standard clinical performance or if the student's absence substantively impacts patient care activity.

- 4.10.4 Guidelines for scheduling the NBEO Part III - Clinical Skills Examination (CSE) must be followed as specified in the Professional Practice Syllabi or distributed policies. The Professional Practice Syllabi also describe the process for absences related to taking/retaking NBEO Part I - Applied Basic Science and/or Part II - Patient Assessment and Management at non-targeted times.
- 4.10.5 Make-up patient care time or a project/assignment is typically required for students with excused absences.
- 4.10.6 The maximum number of absences allowable is based on a proportion of the time dedicated to the module/block or patient care activity in the College curriculum.
- 4.10.7 Make-up time for a student whose absences comply with the Academic Policy will generally be equal to the number of days missed. Should the absence be deemed predictable and elective in nature, the Associate Dean for the Practice of Optometric Medicine may assign a larger number of make-up days than the actual days missed.
- 4.10.8 Make-up patient care time or a project/assignment may be waived at the discretion of the Chief of Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship or Externship Program in conjunction with the Associate Dean for the Practice of Optometric Medicine, providing that the clinical performance has been achieved at an acceptable level of competency as demonstrated to the Associate Dean for the Practice of Optometric Medicine and also providing that patient care was not compromised.
- 4.10.9 Maximum number of allowable excused absences per term is listed below.
- |                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> year: | fall = 1; spring = 1                  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> year: | summer = 1; fall = 2; spring = 2      |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> year: | summer = 1; fall = 2; spring = 3      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> year: | per quarter = 2 plus one personal day |
- 4.10.9.1 The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, in conjunction with the Directors of the Traineeship and Internship or Externship Program, will address absences in excess of these numbers of days. All absences during the Traineeship and Internship Program should be made-up utilizing guidelines listed in the respective Professional Practice Syllabi,
- 4.10.9.2 Departments may exceed these guidelines for due cause and allow more absences, but may not restrict absences to fewer than those allowed by this Policy.
- 4.10.10 Spring term third year students and fourth year students having more than the number of absences indicated above will be referred to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. A grade of Incomplete ("I") will be recorded for the module/block, provided that the student otherwise has a passing grade.
- 4.10.11 Make up of these assignments must be completed at a time determined by the Chief of the Service, Director(s) of the Traineeship, Internship or Externship Program(s), and the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete ("I") grade was received.
- 4.10.12 The Dean or his/her designee may grant a 45-day calendar extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or Chief of Service, Director of the Traineeship or Internship Program, or the Director of the Externship Program via the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs confirming that "extenuating circumstances" exist.

- 4.10.13 For a student who misses more than 25% of the rotation time, a repeat of the entire rotation may be required.
- 4.10.14 The decision for a student to repeat an entire rotation will be made by the Director of Traineeship, Internship or Externship, and the Chief of Service.
- 4.10.15 Excused absences, regardless of their nature, are additive, with the total number accumulated counting toward the proportion of the rotation missed as described above. For example, if a student was ill for two days, had one day of personal crisis, took one personal day, and interviewed for two days, then that student has used six (6) days of excused absences. In a hypothetical rotation consisting of 24 rotation days, these six (6) days of absences constitute a proportion of 25 percent. In this case, the department could pass the student if his/her performance was at a level of competency deemed appropriate by the department and if a make-up of six days of clinical time, a project, or combination thereof has been successfully completed.
- 4.11 Tardiness and Unauthorized Early Departure
- 4.11.1 Students are expected to arrive on time, as defined by the clinical schedules, and to stay in the assigned service until released by professional staff. Late arrivals after the start of a clinical assignment, absences from the assigned clinical area, and early departures at on-campus and satellite sites, clerkship sites, or externship sites will be documented and reported to the Chief of Service or the Director of the Traineeship Program (clerkship sites) or the Director of the Internship or Externship Program (externship sites). Failure to follow clinical schedules and attendance policies may result in unexcused absences (see section 4.13).
- 4.12 Unexcused Absences: Mandatory Non-Patient Care Activities
- 4.12.1 An "unexcused absence" is any absence that does not meet the criteria for being an excused absence, as outlined in sections 4.8.
- 4.12.2 Unexcused absences from educational/program activities will result in a zero for any academic activities that occur during the period of the unexcused absence. This grade of zero will be averaged into the final module/block grade. A student will not be allowed to take a make-up exam in the case of an unexcused absence.
- 4.13 Unexcused Absences: Patient Care Activities
- 4.13.1 An "unexcused absence" is any absence that does not meet the criteria for an excused absence as outlined in sections 4.9 and 4.10.
- 4.13.2 Unexcused absences, including repeated lateness, early departures or other absences from the clinic, will not be permitted and may result in a failing (F) grade in a patient care-related module/block/rotation for that term.
- 4.13.3 A pattern of unexcused absences, including repeated lateness, early departures or other absences from patient care activities, could also result in dismissal for unprofessional conduct.

4.13.4 All unexcused absences must be made up as assigned by the Office of the Associate Dean for and may include assignments on Saturdays, academic/institutional holidays, or vacation periods, or other hours as assigned. The number of make-up days for unexcused absences may exceed the actual number of days missed.

#### 4.14 Attendance: Community-Based Clinical and Screening Programs

4.14.1 Attendance at all assigned external community-based clinical and screening programs is mandatory.

4.14.2 All excused absences must be made up.

4.14.3 The specific method for making up an absence will be determined by preceptor or instructor.

4.14.4 A student may appeal to the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs if he/she feels that the policy is not being honored or equitably enforced.

4.14.5 Make-up for excused absences may consist of participating at a future date in activities similar to those that occurred during the absence, including during academic/institutional holidays or vacation periods. They may also include writing project papers or other methods that allow the student to demonstrate competency in the activities missed.

4.14.6 Prior to an expected absence students are expected to find a student replacement for his/her patient care duties. If the replacement does not arrive for the assignment, the originally assigned student will be charged with an unexcused absence.

4.14.7 Students who fail to notify the preceptor prior to the absence and/or fail to arrange a replacement, or do not receive an excused absence from the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs will be charged with an unexcused absence and may receive a grade of Failure (F) for the module/block.

4.14.8 Any unexcused absences from community-based clinical and screening program activities could result in dismissal for unprofessional conduct.

#### 4.15 Attendance: Clerkship Program

4.15.1 Attendance at Clerkship sites is mandatory.

4.15.2 The hours and days of office and patient care activity are determined by the preceptor to complete the required credit hours, consistent with the College's academic calendar and policies.

4.15.3 If illness, preceptor vacations, or other circumstances prevent students from maintaining their clinical schedule, the Director of the Clerkship Program should be notified immediately (refer to the Clerkship Syllabus).

4.15.4 The preceptor, in consultation with the Director of the Clerkship Program and in conjunction with the Director of the Traineeship Program or his/her designee, will determine how and when student absence(s) will be made up.

4.15.5 For a student who otherwise has a passing grade, all absences not made up to the satisfaction of the preceptor and the Director of the Traineeship Program or his/her

designee by the end of a term will result in an Incomplete grade ("I") being registered as the student's grade for the term.

- 4.15.6 Make up of this work must be completed within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the ("I") grade was received.
- 4.15.7 The Incomplete grade will be removed only when all Clerkship work is completed, including, Attendance Logs, CTS Submissions, Site Evaluation Form and Student Evaluation Form (refer to the Clerkship Syllabus)
- 4.15.8 The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, via the Director of the Clerkship or his/her designee, may grant a 45-calendar day extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or faculty member confirming that "extenuating circumstances" exist.
- 4.15.9 A student's progress in the Professional Practice Series (PP4) at The Eye Institute may be delayed until the clerkship activity (PP3) is satisfactory and completed.

#### 4.16 Attendance: Externship Program

- 4.16.1 Attendance at Externship sites is mandatory. The syllabus for the Externship Program describes the attendance policy in detail.
- 4.16.2 The hours and days of office and patient care activity are determined at the discretion of the preceptor, consistent with the College's Externship Program calendar and policies.
- 4.16.3 Policies regarding excused and unexcused absences relating to patient care activities apply while students are on externship rotations (see sections 4.9 and 4.10).
- 4.16.4 If illness, preceptor vacations, or other circumstances prevent students from maintaining their clinical schedule, the Office of the Externship Program should be notified within 24 hours (refer to the Externship Program Syllabus).
- 4.16.5 The Director of the Externship Program, in consultation with the preceptor, will determine how and when student absence(s) will be made up.
- 4.16.6 For the student who otherwise has a passing grade, all absences not made up to the satisfaction of the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program by the end of a term will result in an Incomplete grade ("I") being registered as the student's grade for the term.
- 4.16.7 Make up of these absences must be completed within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete grade ("I") was received.
- 4.16.8 The Incomplete grade ("I") will be removed only when all externship activities are completed to the satisfaction of the Director of the Externship Program.
- 4.16.9 The Dean via the Director of the Externship Program and the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs may grant a 45-calendar day extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or faculty member/preceptor confirming that "extenuating circumstances" exist.
- 4.16.10 If it is determined that the externship activity will not be completed within 60 calendar days, a deferred grade (R) will be issued with a documented anticipated completion date.
- 4.16.11 Awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree will be withheld until the externship activity is satisfactory and completed.

## 5. ELECTIVE COURSES

### 5.1 Elective Course: Registration and Enrollment

- 5.1.1 Successful completion of a minimum of two (2) elective courses is required as part of the traditional Doctor of Optometry degree program.
- 5.1.2 Individual registration is required through the Office of the Registrar for enrollment in each elective course.
- 5.1.3 Students will be permitted to register during the University registration period for the term the elective course is offered.
- 5.1.4 After registration closes, students will not be permitted to register for any elective course unless their originally requested elective course is canceled.
- 5.1.5 Elective course credit will not be granted to any student who has not properly registered.
- 5.1.6 Enrollment in elective courses with limited enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis, with preference given to fourth-year students. Due to the nature of course content, some electives are only open to students in specific program years (e.g., limited to third or fourth year students only).
- 5.1.7 An elective course offered in other colleges at the University may be taken to meet the elective requirements for the Doctor of Optometry degree program. Application, admission, registration, and additional fees (including tuition) may apply. Prior approval from the PCO Dean or his/her designee is required.
  - 5.1.7.1 Only students in good academic standing may enroll in elective courses for credit beyond those required for graduation. In this instance, additional tuition may apply.

### 5.2 Elective Course: Withdrawal

- 5.2.1 All elective course withdrawal requests must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the elective course begins (see section 10.9.1).
- 5.2.2 All weekend elective course withdrawal requests must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 4 PM on the Friday before the elective begins.
- 5.2.3 Non-compliance with these procedures will result in a failure (F) for the elective course.
- 5.2.4 A student not attending an elective course for which he/she is registered will be permitted to withdraw from the elective course if an excused absence is granted by the Dean of Student Affairs.

### 5.3 Elective Course: Cancellation

- 5.3.1 The College in conjunction with the Dean, reserves the right to cancel any elective course with less than the minimum required enrollment. Students will receive notice from the Office of the Registrar if an elective for which they have registered has been canceled and will have two (2) days to re-register for a replacement elective as indicated.

### 5.4 Elective Course: Grading

- 5.4.1 The grading system for elective courses is Pass (P) / Failure (F).
- 5.4.2 Certain elective courses may include an examination, a research project, or other requirements for grading purposes, which will be indicated in the elective course description and syllabus.
- 5.4.3 All grades of Failure (F) received in elective courses will be computed into the term and cumulative grade point averages and will remain on the transcript.
- 5.4.4 No credit will be awarded for any elective course for which a grade of Failure (F) is received.
- 5.4.5 A student who receives a Failure (F) in an elective is eligible to re-register for the elective. The Dean or his/her designee will determine if remediation or reenrollment procedures will be followed (see sections 11, 12 and 13) after reviewing the syllabus for the specific elective course.
- 5.5 Elective Course: Attendance
- 5.5.1 Attendance is mandatory for each elective course.
- 5.5.2 Attendance sheets must be completed and verified by the responsible instructor for each elective course session. Attendance information and grades will be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar.
- 5.5.3 Students not attending 100% of the elective course will automatically receive a Failure (F).
- 5.5.4 A student not attending an elective course for which he/she is registered will be permitted to withdraw from the elective course if an excused absence is granted by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs (see section 4.8).
- 5.6 ADVANCED STUDIES
- 5.6.1 Advanced Studies: Registration and Enrollment
- 5.6.1.1 Advanced Studies in specified content areas are offered as an optional complement to the traditional Doctor of Optometry degree program. Four component parts comprise each Advanced Studies offering, and additional tuition applies.
- 5.6.1.2 Application for Advanced Studies must be submitted to the Office of Advanced Studies for review. A letter of acceptance or denial will be issued to the student as appropriate.
- 5.6.1.3 Students must meet the established eligibility criteria to enroll in Advanced Studies.
- 5.6.1.4 Automatic registration occurs for Advanced Studies parts. Notification of enrollment for each part will be sent from the Office of the Registrar and fees will be applied.
- 5.6.1.5 Enrollment in Advanced Studies is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 5.6.1.6 Only students in good academic standing may enroll in Advanced Studies. If a student successfully completes all parts within an Advanced Studies content area, a certificate of completion is awarded at the time of graduation.

## 5.6.2 Advanced Studies: Withdrawal

- 5.6.2.1 Students will not be permitted to withdraw from an Advanced Studies part(s) after the start of the term in which the Advanced Studies part is offered.
- 5.6.2.2 Non-compliance with this procedure will result in a Failure (F) for the Advanced Studies part(s) and the appropriate tuition will be charged.
- 5.6.2.3 If an excused absence is granted by the Dean of Student Affairs, then a student may be permitted to withdraw. A student is still required to meet the four part continuum in order to successfully complete the specified content area.

## 5.6.3 Advanced Studies: Attendance

- 5.6.3.1 Attendance is mandatory for each Advanced Studies part.
- 5.6.3.2 Attendance sheets must be completed and verified by the responsible instructor for each Advanced Studies part session. Attendance information and grades will be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar.
- 5.6.3.3 Students not attending 100% of an Advanced Studies part will automatically receive a Failure (F).
- 5.6.3.4 If an excused absence is granted by the Dean of Student Affairs, then a student may be permitted to withdraw. A student is still required to meet the four part continuum in order to successfully complete the specified content area.

## 5.6.4 Advanced Studies: Grading

- 5.6.4.1 The grading system for Advanced Studies parts one, two, and three is Pass (P) / Failure (F). The grading system for part four, is Honors (H) / Pass (P) / Failure (F).
- 5.6.4.2 All grades of Failure (F) received in Advanced Studies parts will be computed into the term and cumulative grade point averages under the Advanced Studies designation, and will remain on the transcript.
- 5.6.4.3 No credit will be awarded for any Advanced Studies part for which a grade of Fail (F) is received.
- 5.6.4.4 A student who received a Failing (F) grade in an Advanced Studies part may be eligible to re-register for the Advanced Studies part. The Dean or her/his designee will determine the remediation or reenrollment procedures to be followed in conjunction with the instructor, and syllabus for that specific Advanced Studies part.

## 6. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.1 Students are required to check their Salus University email account twice daily, as some correspondence from instructors and administrators may be time-sensitive. Any students with unresolved academic matters (e.g., remediation examinations, incomplete grades) must check their email on a daily basis until the matter is resolved. In addition, all students are expected to regularly check their Salus University email account during

weekends, breaks, holidays and other unassigned times for the duration of the life of the account.

6.1.1 Letters and related communications regarding student academic standing (e.g., academic Warning, Probation, Dismissal) will be sent electronically to student Salus University email addresses as PDF email attachments.

6.2 Students are expected to use their Salus University email account when communicating with faculty, staff, and administrators at Salus University. Administrators, faculty, and staff of Salus University are not responsible for reading or responding to any email from a student that is not sent from his/her Salus University account.

## 7. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

7.1 Concerns should initially be discussed with the instructor and, if necessary, the appropriate Associate Dean.

7.2 In the event that the Associate Dean is the course instructor or is otherwise a direct participant in the concerns, the situation should be discussed with the Dean.

7.3 Discrimination or sexual harassment concerns should be brought to the attention of the Salus University Affirmative Action Officer or the Dean of Student Affairs.

## 8. PATIENT CARE ASSIGNMENTS

8.1 Students are expected to read The Eye Institute Practice Manual, provided by the Department of the Practice of Optometric Medicine and the Vice President of Clinical Operations.

8.2 Student assignments may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons:

8.2.1 Decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for academic and/or clinical deficiencies.

8.2.2 Decision of the Salus University Judicial Committee regarding a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and/or conduct unbecoming of a professional.

8.2.3 Decision by an officer of Salus University for non-payment of tuition and fees or any other matter deemed appropriate.

## 9. EXAMINATIONS

### 9.1 Examinations: General Policies

9.1.1 Examinations provide the opportunity for instructors to assess students and for students to demonstrate academic progress and competence.

9.1.2 Rules for Taking Examinations are distributed to students and posted on Blackboard. Each student is responsible for understanding these Rules. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.

- 9.1.3 Infractions of the Rules for Taking Examinations are considered serious offenses. These matters will be referred to the Salus University Judicial Committee for review and potential action. Students determined to be guilty of infractions will be penalized in an appropriate manner, including the possibility of expulsion from the University.
- 9.1.4 Examination policies and procedures for a module/block will be included in the module/block syllabus, which will be posted or distributed at the beginning of each academic term.
- 9.1.5 Module/block instructors must inform students in writing at the beginning of a module/block of the relative weights to be given to various examinations and assessment tools used in determining the final grade.

## 9.2 Examinations: Schedules

- 9.2.1 Examination schedules are established and issued by the Office of the Dean or his/her designee, or the Salus University Office of Academic Affairs.
- 9.2.2 Examination schedules are subject to change for academic or unanticipated reasons.
- 9.2.3 The College will make reasonable efforts to modify student clinic schedules during final examination weeks to support appropriate examination preparation.
- 9.2.4 In the event of extremely harsh weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about University closure or delays via the University alert system. Students should consult the University website for the weather policy.

## 9.3 Examinations: Attendance

- 9.3.1 A student must be registered for any given module/block before he or she may take the module/block examinations. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for ensuring that only registered students receive a grade in a particular module/block.
- 9.3.2 Students are required to sit for all examinations as scheduled. If a student is unable to sit for the examination, he or she must immediately notify the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs. This process is important to review for excused absence and the ability to schedule a make-up. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero (0) for the exam (section 4.12).
- 9.3.3 The course coordinator will determine the make-up date, and the format of the examination. Students should consult the course syllabus for additional information.

## 9.4 NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATIONS

- 9.4.1 Passage of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) is not required for graduation. However, passage of Part I – Applied Basic Science, Part II – Patient Assessment and Management, and Part III – Clinical Skills Examination is required in most states for licensure. Therefore, it is recommended that all students register and sit for the examinations if they plan to practice in the United States of America.
- 9.4.2 See Externship Office syllabus for guidelines related to on and off campus NBEO Part III scheduling.

9.4.3 Students should consult the NBEO website [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org) for general information and registration procedures. Students are responsible for registering for the NBEO examinations by the deadlines posted on the NBEO website. All other questions should be directed to the Office of the Registrar.

9.4.4 Each student is required to release his/her NBEO scores to the College since these scores provide information vital to the College's ongoing curriculum assessment efforts.

## 10. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADES

### 10.1 Didactic Grades and Evaluation

10.1.1 At the conclusion of a didactic module/block or term (usually within one week, as determined by the Office of the Registrar), grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

10.1.2 Unless otherwise specified in a course/block syllabus, the grading scale is:

Grade	Range	Interpretation	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour
A	93.00 -100.00	(EXCELLENT) Indicates exceptional achievement	4.00
A-	90.00 - 92.99		3.70
B+	87.00 - 89.99		3.30
B	83.00 - 86.99	(GOOD) Indicates superior achievement	3.00
B-	80.00 - 82.99		2.70
C+	77.00 - 79.99	(SATISFACTORY) Indicates acceptable achievement	2.30
C	73.00 - 76.99		2.00
C-	70.00 - 72.99	(POOR) Credit earned but below desired standards	1.70
D+	67.00-69.99		1.30
D	63.00-66.99		1.00
D-	60.00-62.99		0.70
F	≤ 59.99	(FAILURE) No Credit Earned	0.00

#### Other Designations (carrying no Grade Points):

F (FAILURE) Unsatisfactory performance  
Remediation of the module/block is required 0.00 (no credits earned)

H (HONORS)  
Indicates outstanding performance 0.00 (credits earned)

P (PASS)  
Indicates performance meets all competencies or requirements 0.00 (credits earned)

CR (CREDIT)  
Credit is given but no grade is assigned 0.00 (credits earned)

AU (AUDIT)

I (INCOMPLETE) (refer to section 10.7)

R	(DEFERRED)	(refer to section 10.8)
IP	(IN PROGRESS)	
W	(WITHDRAWAL)	(refer to section 10.9)

## 10.2 Failing Grades (F)

- 10.2.1 A failure (F) in a required module/block must be removed by the passing of the module/block through remediation (see section 11), or re-enrollment (see section 13) if necessary, within one year of the conclusion of the term in which the grade was earned. The option of remediation is not available once a student has been dismissed for academic reasons such as a low grade point average.
- 10.2.2 All failures (F's) must be remediated prior to beginning externship clinical rotations.
- 10.2.3 Remediation examinations will be scheduled in conjunction with the Office of the Dean or her/his designee (see section 11.4).
- 10.2.4 Failures in Clinical Skills and Professional Practice module/blocks must be removed within the next academic term. If the grade of failure (F) is not remediated within the next term, the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.
- 10.2.5 A student not remediating a failing grade within the specified timeframe(s) will not be permitted to continue in the academic program without the written approval of the Dean.
- 10.2.5.1 After receiving this written approval, a student may be subject to special academic stipulations as determined by the Dean or his/her designee, or the Committee on Academic Promotion.
- 10.2.6 As noted in section 5.4, a failure (F) received in an elective module/block will be calculated into the grade point average for that term, and no credit will be received for the module/block.

## 10.3 Clinical Grades and Evaluations:

- 10.3.1 Internship Program Clinical Grades: At the conclusion of a clinical module/block, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:
- 10.3.1.1 The grades of Honors (H), Pass+ (P+), Pass (P), Pass- (P-) or Failure (F) will be utilized for all patient care module/blocks, including Professional Practice module/blocks (see section 10.3.3.4).

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Grade Points Earned per Term Hour</u>
H	(HONORS) Indicates outstanding performance in all expected competencies or requirements	0.00 (with credits earned)
P+	(PASS +) Indicates performance exceeding most expected competencies or requirements	0.00 (with credits earned)

P (PASS) 0.00 (with credits earned)  
Indicates performance meets expected competencies or requirements

P- (PASS -) 0.00 (with credits earned)  
Indicates performance that inconsistently and/or minimally meets expected competencies or requirements. Students earning a Pass- during the final term of internships will be required to begin their externships on campus.

F (FAILURE) 0.00 (no credits earned)  
Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Re-enrollment in the module/block is required.

I (INCOMPLETE)  
(see section 10.7)

R (DEFERRED / IN PROGRESS)  
(see section 10.8)

10.3.1.2 Students must receive Honors (H), Pass + (P+), Pass (P), or Pass - (P-) in the Fall professional practice module/block in the third professional year in order to successfully transition to the spring third year externship off campus. Students earning a Pass - during the final term of internships will be required to begin their externships on campus.

10.3.1.3 The grades of Honors (H), Pass + (P+), Pass (P), and Pass - (P-) will not be converted to grade points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero grade points and will be computed in the grade point average.

10.3.1.4 No percentage of the class will be pre-designated to receive a grade category.

10.3.2 Externship Program Clinical Grades: At the conclusion of a clinical module/block, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

10.3.2.1 The grades of Honors (H), Pass (P), or Failure (F) will be utilized for all externship clinical rotations on and off campus.

Grade Interpretation Grade Points Earned per Term Hour

H (HONORS) 0.00 (with credits earned)  
Indicates outstanding performance in all expected competencies or requirements

P (PASS) 0.00 (with credits earned)  
Indicates performance meeting expected competencies or requirements

F (FAILURE) 0.00 (no credits earned)  
Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Enrollment in a Professional Practice Supplemental course may be required. Re-enrollment in the course is required.

I (INCOMPLETE)  
(see section 10.7)

R (DEFERRED / IN PROGRESS)  
(see section 10.8)

- 10.3.2.2 For the Externship Program, achieved clinical grades will be recorded on the transcript as Honors (H), Pass (P), or Failure (F).
- 10.3.2.3 The grades of Honors (H) and Pass (P) will not be converted to grade points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero grade points and will be computed in the grade point average.
- 10.3.2.4 No percentage of the class will be pre-designated to receive a grade category.
- 10.3.3 Clinical Evaluations: At the conclusion of a clinical module/block or rotation, an evaluation summary form concerning the quality of the student's work will be rendered.
  - 10.3.3.1 The evaluation summaries are used in counseling students concerning clinical strengths and weaknesses and in the preparation of letters of evaluation/recommendation.
  - 10.3.3.2 Evaluation summaries are rendered on standard forms. These forms are provided by the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.
  - 10.3.3.3 Evaluation summaries are not considered a part of the student's Permanent Record File that is maintained in the Office of the Registrar, but may be reviewed by the student in the Office of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.
  - 10.3.3.4 A clinical evaluation may recommend enrollment in a professional practice supplemental (PPS) course (see section 14). A student may be enrolled in a PPS course as part of a special program to meet personal/academic needs, to assist a student in transition or returning from a leave of absence, who has been placed on academic probation, or as recommended by CAP.
- 10.4 Credit by Examination (CR)
  - 10.4.1 A student judged qualified by the module/block instructor may receive academic credit for a module/block within the curriculum by satisfactory performance on special examinations administered by the appropriate academic department within the College. A fee is charged for the examination.
  - 10.4.2 Upon satisfactory completion of the examination and approval by the Dean, a grade of Credit (CR) will be given and recorded during the term in which the examination was taken.
- 10.5 Credit by Transfer (CR)
  - 10.5.1 Credit by transfer may be accepted for any module/block(s) within the curriculum when it is determined the transfer module/block is substantially equivalent to that offered by the College. This equivalency will be determined by the module/block instructor, and approved by the appropriate Associate Dean and the Dean.
  - 10.5.2 Only courses/modules/blocks in which the student received a grade of C, P (Pass), or above will be considered for transfer.

## 10.6 Audit (AU)

- 10.6.1 A student may elect to officially audit any module/block within the curriculum by obtaining written permission from the module/block instructor and registering for the module/block.
- 10.6.2 The student is required to provide the Office of the Registrar with written approval from the module/course instructor no later than the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) business day of the term.
- 10.6.3 The instructor for the module/block is required to inform the appropriate Associate Dean and the Dean or his/her designee, via the Office of the Registrar, about student attendance for all required module/block audits at the time module/block grades are submitted to the Office of the Registrar.
- 10.6.4 This non-credit registration is recorded as "Audit" on the student's transcript.
- 10.6.5 A module/block audit fee will be applied.
- 10.6.5.1 Non-degree students may be permitted to audit module/blocks under special circumstances with the written approval of the Dean and/or his/her designee.
- 10.6.5.2 The Office of the Registrar will notify the module/block instructor when a student has approval to audit a module/block.
- 10.6.6 A module/block taken on an audit basis will not count toward the fulfillment of degree requirements.
- 10.6.7 An audit will not affect the student's grade point average since credit hours attempted and grade points will not be awarded for an audited module/block.
- 10.6.8 Not attending this required module/block may result in a failed stipulation (audit) and suspension or dismissal from the College for not adhering to this requirement unless this is a required stipulation.
- 10.6.8.1 In certain instances for educational reasons, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, and/or the Dean or his/her designee, may require a student to audit a module/block or a component already taken.

## 10.7 Incomplete Grade (I)

- 10.7.1 The temporary designation Incomplete (I) may be used by the Instructor when a complete assessment cannot be rendered because course work is not complete due to a student-centered reason, such as being granted an excused absence due to illness and/or personal urgency, and when the students' work is otherwise of passing quality.
- 10.7.2 Incomplete grades must be resolved within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the "I" grade was received. The date for resolution of the Incomplete grade will be set by mutual agreement of the student and instructor.
- 10.7.2.1 The Dean or his/her designee may grant a 30 calendar day extension for resolution of the Incomplete if written documentation is provided by the student and/or instructor confirming that "extenuating circumstances" exist.
- 10.7.2.2 All Incomplete (I) grades must be removed prior to beginning external clinical rotations. In this instance, the start and/or end date of the external clinical rotation may be delayed.

- 10.7.3 If the student fails to remove the Incomplete (I) grade within the time allowed, the module/block instructor, with the approval of the Dean, will authorize the Office of the Registrar to change the grade to a Failure (F). The student, module/block instructor, the appropriate Associate Dean, and the Dean will be notified in writing of this grade change.
- 10.7.4 When the Incomplete (I) designation is used, the instructor or department will submit to the Office of the Registrar, in writing, the reason for the designation of the Incomplete (I) and the student's academic standing in the module/block to date.
- 10.7.5 The Office of the Registrar will provide this information in the Academic Progress Meetings and to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for all students not in good academic standing (potential dismissal, probation, warning). This additional information will assist the faculty and/or the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in evaluating student performance in borderline cases.
- 10.7.6 The final grade of a student who receives an Incomplete (I) is the decision of the module/block instructor.
- 10.8 Deferred Grade (R)
- 10.8.1 A Deferred grade (R) may be assigned by the Instructor when the work in a course is not completed due to a program-centered reason beyond a student's control, such as a change in schedule/instructor availability or technology challenges associated with remote instruction.
- 10.8.2 Deferred grades must be resolved within one (1) year after the end of term in which the grade was earned.
- 10.8.2.1 If the student fails to remove the Deferred (R) grade within the time allowed, the module/block instructor, with the approval of the Dean, will authorize the Office of the Registrar to change the grade to a Failure (F). The student, module/block instructor, the appropriate Associate Dean, and the Dean will be notified in writing of this grade change.
- 10.8.2.2 The timing by which the Deferred grade (R) will change to an assigned grade will be based upon resolution of identified challenges.
- 10.8.3 An instructor will not assign a Deferred grade (R) when a substandard grade is earned due to substandard student performance.
- 10.8.4 For a student who is not in good academic standing when the Deferred grade (R) designation is used, the module/block instructor or the Office of the Dean or her/his designee will provide to the Office of the Registrar, in writing, the tentative student grade based on the student's performance to date.
- 10.8.5 The Office of the Registrar will provide this information in the Academic Progress Meetings and to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for all students not in good academic standing (potential dismissal, probation, warning). This additional information will assist the faculty and/or the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in evaluating student performance.
- 10.9 Withdrawal (W)
- 10.9.1 Withdrawal from an Elective Course: A student who drops an elective course by completing a course withdrawal form in the Office of the Registrar after the

registration period and before the midpoint of that term will receive a grade of “W” (see 5.2.1).

10.9.2      Withdrawal from a Required Course: A student may not withdraw from a required course(s) or the entire curriculum without the approval of the Dean, and the subsequent approval of the Dean of Student Affairs. The desire to avoid a low grade is not an acceptable reason for withdrawal from a module or the entire curriculum.

10.9.2.1    Beginning with the spring term of the third professional year, withdrawals from any internal or external clinical assignment, or any changes in the contract signed with the Office of the Externship Program, are subject to the approval of the Director of the Externship Program and the subsequent approval of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

## 10.10      Grade Mediation and Adjudication

10.10.1    A student who has a concern about a reported grade in a module/block should first discuss the module/block grading policies and determinations with the instructor. It is expected that the student and instructor will address any misunderstandings and will attempt to resolve any disagreements over a reported grade.

10.10.2    On occasion, circumstances may develop in which a student and instructor disagree about a student's grade. The student may then appeal the grade decision, in writing, to the Associate Dean for the department in which the module/block is offered. The Student has five (5) business days from the date that the grade is posted to the transcript, to bring to the Associate Dean to begin the mediation process. The Associate Dean must resolve the grade decision within five (5) business days from the date the Associate Dean received the mediation request from the student.

10.10.2.1   The Associate Dean's decision on a grading dispute is final. There is no further appeal of the grade within the College.

10.10.2.2   In the event that the Associate Dean teaches the module/block in question, the student's written appeal is made to the Dean.

10.10.3    Any challenge of a grade must be initiated within five (5) business days of the end of the term in which the grade was posted to the transcript.

10.10.4    The original grade assigned by the instructor remains on the student's record while the appeals process is in progress and will be changed only when, and if, the appeal is successful.

10.10.5    Copies of sequestered exams, reports, and/or presentations submitted by students are required to be retained by the module/block instructor for a period of one calendar year from the end of the term in which the grade was earned, in the event that a challenge to a grade should arise.

10.10.6    If a CAP Hearing is necessary, all grade mediation issues must be resolved prior to the CAP Hearing.

## 10.11      Change of Grade

10.11.1 Once submitted to the Office of the Registrar, no grade, except that of Incomplete (I) or Deferred (R), may be changed without the mutual written consent of the module/block instructor and the appropriate Associate Dean and/or Dean.

## 10.12 Grade Point Average (GPA)

10.12.1 A student's cumulative grade-point average (GPA) is the weighted mean value of all grade points earned by the student in all module/blocks taken for letter grades within the College.

10.12.1.2 Grades are converted to grade points by multiplying the number of credits for each module/block by the specified formula assigned to the letter grade. An A=4 points, a A-=3.7 points, a B+=3.3 points, a B=3.0 points, a B-=2.7 points, a C+=2.3 points, a C=2.0 points, a C-= 1.7 points, a D+= 1.3 points a D=1.0 point, a D-=0.7 points, and an F=0 points. Thus, an A in a four-credit module/block earns the student 16 grade points (4 x 4); a B in a four-credit module/block earns 12 grade points (4 x 3), and so on.

10.12.1.3 The total number of grade points divided by the total credits used to calculate the grade points equals the grade-point average. A student has a GPA below 2.0 when total grade points are less than twice the total credits completed to earn grade points.

10.12.2 A student's cumulative grade-point average is calculated utilizing only module/blocks taken within each degree program.

## 11. REMEDIATION

11.1 Students are required to remediate any failing (F) grade. If remediation is offered, this is the first method that will be used to address grades indicating failure (F).

11.2 A student repeating credits through remediation is required to re-register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar. A remediation fee will be applied.

11.3 Remediation is further defined in Section 12 and may be prescribed in any one of the methods described in that section.

11.4 The module/block Instructor, in conjunction with Office of the Dean or his/her designee, will determine the schedule and method of remediation(s).

11.5 A grade of "D" may also be remediated at the request of the student, provided that he/she obtains approval from the Dean or his/her designee.

11.5.1 Additionally, under certain circumstances, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and/or Dean can mandate that the student remediate a grade of "D." The student will then remediate the module/block in accordance with the stipulations set forth in writing by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and/or the Dean.

11.6 The highest grade that can be earned by remediation of a D or F grade, is a grade of "C+" (satisfactory) or "P" (pass) depending upon the grading scale described in the module/block syllabus.

11.6.1 The student must realize that remediation of a module/block may result in a grade lower than the original grade. For example, an original earned grade of "D" may become an earned remediation grade of "F", which becomes the final grade.

- 11.6.2 In ALL cases, the original grade will remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the new cumulative grade-point average.
- 11.7 Students must successfully complete remediation within one year of the conclusion of the term in which the grade was earned.
  - 11.7.1 Clinical skills and Professional Practice courses must be remediated in the subsequent term.
  - 11.7.2 Professional Practice course remediation will require enrollment in a Professional Practice Supplemental course. The corresponding PPS for a failed externship course may occur within the same term as the failure with the approval of the Dean. See section 14 for additional information.
- 11.8 A module/block can be remediated only once.
- 11.9 If a student fails to achieve a passing grade in a remediation and is no longer in a good academic standing, they then the student, will be dismissed for academic reasons.
- 11.10 A student who fails a remediation should arrange to meet with the appropriate Associate Dean to review his/her academic performance and discuss ways to improve his/her academic standing.
- 11.11 If a student does not attempt to remediate a grade of "F" within the specified time, it will result in the dismissal of the student for academic reasons.

## 12. REMEDIATION METHODS

- 12.1 A student may be granted the opportunity to remediate a failing grade by directed study, re-examination, or re-enrollment.
- 12.2 Remediation by Directed Study – This option, if offered, is reserved for students who entered the term in good academic standing and who prefer additional time to remediate and master course/block material.
  - 12.2.1 A student repeating credits through directed study is required to register for those credits as per communications with the Instructor and the Office of the Registrar.
  - 12.2.2 The course/block instructor develops a remediation plan under the supervision of the appropriate Associate Dean and including any special stipulations set forth by the CAP, if applicable, and will be responsible for grade submission.
  - 12.2.3 The course/block directed study requirements must be completed within the time frame as per established policy direction regarding the specific course (11.7.1).
  - 12.2.4 The new grade earned by directed study in the course/block is recorded on the transcript along with the original course/block grade.
  - 12.2.5 A failing grade may be raised only to a grade of "C+" or "P" under this option.
  - 12.2.6 In all cases, the original failing grade will remain on the student's transcript but will not be used to calculate the student's cumulative grade point average.
  - 12.2.7 Normal tuition and/or fees apply

- 12.3 Remediation by Re-Examination
  - 12.3.1 The course/block instructor will prepare a re-examination to be administered to the student within a time period specified by the Instructor as per established policy direction regarding the specific course (11.7.1). The instructor will also be responsible for submitting the grade to the registrar.
  - 12.3.2 This option is generally offered only once per course to a student during an academic year unless extenuating circumstances exist.
  - 12.3.3 A “failing” grade may be raised only to a grade of “C+” or “P” under this option if the student achieves a “passing” grade on the re-examination.
  - 12.3.4 In all cases, the original failing grade will remain on the student’s transcript but will not be used to calculate the student’s cumulative grade point average.
  - 12.3.5 The student is required to meet with the course/block instructor prior to the re-examination to review the examination format and receive academic counseling regarding the course/blocker-examination content.
  - 12.3.6 Normal tuition and/or fees apply.
- 12.4 Remediation by Re-Enrollment – Remediation by re-enrollment may be the recommended method of remediation. Re-enrollment may result in a modified course of studies.
  - 12.4.1 A student repeating credits through re-enrollment is required to register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar.
  - 12.4.2 The grade earned during re-enrollment in the course/block is recorded on the transcript, along with the original course/block grade.
  - 12.4.3 In all cases, the original failing grade will remain on the student’s transcript but will not be used to calculate the student’s cumulative grade point average.
  - 12.4.4 A “failing” grade may be raised only to a grade of “C+” or “P” under this option.
  - 12.4.5 Any student who attempts to circumvent an agreed upon remediation plan is subject to academic dismissal.
  - 12.4.6 Normal tuition and/or fees apply.
- 13. RE-ENROLLMENT
  - 13.1 If the remediation method as outlined above (see section 12) is unsuccessful, a student may be given the option to re-enroll in the module/block.
  - 13.2 A student repeating credits through re-enrollment is required to register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar.

- 13.3 Module/block re-enrollment requirements include, but are not limited to, attending the module/block at its regularly scheduled time and satisfying the attendance and academic requirements of the module/block, or by taking a special examination.
- 13.3.1 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and/or the Dean may also mandate re-enrollment in a module/block by special examination, independent study, research projects, or seminar attendance.
- 13.4 The module/block re-enrollment requirements must be completed within one year of the conclusion of the term in which the unsuccessful remediation attempt was earned.
- 13.4.1 The module/block re-enrollment requirements must be completed prior to the start of external clinical rotations (see section 11.2).
- 13.5 The new grade earned by re-enrolling in the module/block is recorded on the transcript. For a re-enrollment, any grade may be earned as defined by the module/block syllabus.
- 13.6 If the initial re-enrollment is unsuccessful and the student is otherwise in good academic standing, he/she will be required to re-enroll in the module/block again.
- 13.7 With re-enrollment(s), the original grade(s) earned remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the new cumulative grade-point average.
- 13.8 Registration to re-enroll in a module/block will be denied if a grade of “C” or higher is earned.
- 13.9 A student who re-enrolls twice in a module/block without achieving a passing grade will be dismissed from the program and will have the option of requesting a hearing with the Committee on Academic Promotion for further review and action.
- 13.10 Normal tuition and/or fees apply.

## 14. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SUPPLEMENTAL

- 14.1 Professional practice course remediation or reinstatement will require enrollment in a Professional Practice Supplemental course. A Professional Practice Supplemental (PPS) course is a custom designed course to meet the educational needs of an individual student. A student may be enrolled in such a course under a variety of circumstances. It may be included as part of a special program tailored by the Office of the Dean to meet a student’s personal or academic needs. Similarly, a PPS may be utilized to assist a student in transition from an approved leave of absence. A student who has been placed on academic probation may be enrolled in a PPS. PPS courses are also used for remediation of third or fourth year extern who have been identified as weak or failing by their preceptor or have failed to meet professional behavior standards at externship sites or a TEI rotation. A PPS course is Pass (P)/Fail (F) course.
- 14.1.1 For additional information, please refer to the PPS syllabus.

## 15. ACADEMIC PROGRESS MEETINGS: FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 15.1 The faculty is responsible for evaluating the academic achievement and potential of all students at the midpoint and conclusion of each academic term.

15.2 The faculty is responsible for recommending to the Dean and/or his or her designee those students who will advance to the next term of the program.

## 16. MIDTERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION

16.1 The performance of all students registered within a module/course will be evaluated by the instructors of record at a point approximately mid-way into each academic term.

16.2 The name of any student who has been evaluated as “weak” or “failing” will be provided to the Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar will compile this information and present it at the Midterm Academic Progress meeting.

16.3 Following the Midterm Academic Progress meeting, the Office of the Dean or his/her designee will notify the student in writing that his/her performance is unsatisfactory.

16.4 Additionally, the student will be contacted by the Dean and/or his/her designee and will be required to meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and may be recommended to meet with a member of the Office for Academic Success, and/or the module coordinator or his/her designee.

16.5 A student is expected to take action to resolve his/her academic difficulties with the assistance of the individuals and services available to him/her.

16.6 The Office of the Dean may also require tutoring for students experiencing academic difficulty.

16.7 If a student fails to comply with the action items delineated in the post-Midterm Academic Progress meeting letter, the matter may then be referred to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for review and further action, including potential dismissal.

16.8 Midterm evaluations/grades are not part of the student’s permanent transcript and are not used in the determination of academic standing.

## 17. ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION

17.1 The course coordinators or his/her designee will meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and/or the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs to evaluate the performance of all students registered within a module/block at the end of each grading period.

17.2 The academic standing of each student will be reviewed to evaluate academic and/or clinical performance. Information reviewed will include the student’s prior academic performance, academic status entering the term in question and any additional information relevant to their progress.

17.2.1 Grades become official at the end of the term in which the grade was earned and posted.

17.2.1.1 If a student is not meeting minimum program requirements, he/she will receive notification from the Dean and/or his/her designee. The student will be required to meet with appropriate individuals from the College, and/or a member of the Center for Personal and Professional Development.

- 17.3 Categories of Academic Standing include satisfactory, warning, probation, and dismissal.
- 17.3.1 Satisfactory Academic Standing – A student is in satisfactory academic standing when, he/she is attaining a term grade point average and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 2.0, and any failing (F) grades have been successfully remediated.
- 17.3.1.1 Prior to beginning an external clinical rotation a student must be in good academic standing and all requirements related to remediation and/or re-enrollment must be successfully completed.
- 17.3.2 Academic Warning – A student may receive a notice of academic warning if his/her term GPA or cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher, but below 2.15. Academic warning is an indication to the student that his/her academic performance is in danger of falling below minimum acceptable academic expectations.
- 17.3.3 Academic Probation – A student is considered on academic probation when:
- His/her term GPA falls below 2.00;
  - His/her cumulative GPA at the end of a term falls below 2.00;
  - He/she receives a Failure (F) in specific clinically-related module/blocks (i.e., any Clinical Skills, Professional Practice, or Externship course/module/block)
- 17.3.4 Academic Dismissal – A first-year student will be dismissed from the academic program when:
- His/her GPA is below 1.90 at the end of the Fall term;
  - His/her cumulative GPA is below 2.0 at the end of the Spring term.
- All other students** are dismissed from the academic program when:
- Their term GPA is below 2.0 for two consecutive terms; or
  - Their cumulative GPA is below 2.0 for two consecutive terms; or
  - They receive two failures in a clinical course (i.e., any Clinical Skills, Professional Practice, Professional Practice Supplemental, or Externship course/module/block) at any time in the program, whether in same or different term(s).
- This applies whether or not a failed module/block has been subsequently passed. They repeat and fail a clinical related module/block a second time.
- They fail to successfully remediate a failing (F) grade in any course/module and they are not in good academic standing.
- (See section 17.5 for non-academic reasons for dismissal).
- 17.4 Students failing externship courses may be dismissed at any point during the term with approval of the Dean.

17.5 Student failure to comply with directives from the Dean or his/her designee may result in his/her dismissal from the academic program. (see section 17.6).

## 17.6 Dismissal for Other Reasons

17.6.1 In addition to the academic reasons for dismissal listed in Section 17.3, the College reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student at any time for what the College faculty and/or administration believe to be good and sufficient reasons.

17.6.2 These good and sufficient reasons may include, but are not limited to, student demeanor, knowledge base, mental or physical fitness, as well as any form of cheating, plagiarism or unprofessional conduct. Students are expected to read the Salus University Student Handbook for additional information.

17.6.3 The College assigns great importance to self-discipline, the ability to interact appropriately with others, and the ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner. Demonstration of deficiencies in any of these qualities is viewed by the College as evidence that the student is not suited to a professional career, and constitutes adequate cause for dismissal regardless of academic performance.

## 18. REINSTATEMENT

### 18.1 Administrative Reinstatement without Appeal

18.1.1 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may be reinstated to the College's academic program upon a consensus recommendation at an Academic Progress Meeting and with the approval of the Dean without having to formally appeal to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

18.1.2 A student will be so notified in writing with the conditions of reinstatement within 3 business days of the date of the Academic Progress Meeting.

### 18.2 Appeal Process for Reinstatement

18.2.1 A student who has been dismissed based upon the faculty consensus at an Academic Progress Meeting will receive a letter informing them of their standing within 3 business days.

18.2.2 A student will have the right to request an appeal hearing with the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion or waive the right to appeal. This decision must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Registrar within 3 business days of receipt of the dismissal letter.

18.2.3 Appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received from the student. The hearing will be scheduled based on availability of Committee members and may include evenings and weekends.

18.2.3.1 If a student wishes to appeal the dismissal, the appeal should be addressed to the Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Included in this letter of appeal should be a written explanation of why the student feels that his/her appeal for reinstatement should be considered and granted by

the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. The student must also indicate if he/she will appear in person before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

- 18.2.4 The student must submit all other information and supporting documents in writing to the Office of the Registrar, at least two (2) business days prior to his/her scheduled appeal.
- 18.2.5 The student may also make an oral presentation to the Committee during the appeal hearing; however, such a presentation is not required.
- 18.2.6 A student who fails to contact the Office of Registrar three (3) business days after the notification date of their dismissal letter will forfeit the right to his/her appeal.
- 18.2.7 If the student chooses not to make a formal appeal, the Office of the Registrar must make a formal notation in the student's Permanent Record File.

## 19. PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY (PCO) COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION

### 19.1 Composition of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion

- 19.1.1 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion (CAP) is a standing committee appointed by the Dean. The committee is composed of four faculty members (three voting members and one Chair of the Committee).
- 19.1.2 The Dean may select a faculty member to serve as an alternate member of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in the event of unavailability of a named Committee member, or for instances in which a Committee member has recused himself/herself or has been disqualified.
- 19.1.3 Representatives from the Salus University Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Office of the Registrar, are non-voting members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. If appropriate, the committee may call upon representatives from the University for additional information.
- 19.1.4 Three faculty members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion must be present to consider an appeal for reinstatement.
- 19.1.5 Any member of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion may recuse or decline participation in any hearing.
- 19.1.6 The student may send a request to the Dean to disqualify one faculty member of the Committee without stating a reason. A request to disqualify more than one member of the Committee requires a written explanation. Any request for disqualification must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar and addressed to the Dean at least 3 business days in advance of his/her scheduled hearing.

### 19.2 Responsibilities of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion

- 19.2.1 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion is responsible for hearing appeals for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on criteria outlined in the Academic Progress Evaluation (Section 19).

- 19.2.2 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal.
- 19.2.3 The Committee may review grades, NBEO examination scores, and summaries concerning professional development and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control.
- 19.2.4 The Committee shall then make a decision either to uphold the dismissal; or reinstate the student either immediately, or at a future date.
- 19.2.5 If the Committee's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion may include, but are not limited to, requiring the student to:
- Take a remediation examination(s);
  - Enroll in a module/block of study;
  - Continue enrollment under a modified program;
  - Repeat specific module/blocks or rotations even if previously passed;
  - Repeat an academic year of study;
  - Obtain academic counseling and/or tutoring; or,
  - Obtain academic, medical, or psychological evaluation(s).
- 19.2.6 The Dean will review the conditions put forth by the CAP Committee on Academic Promotion, and advise the student.
- 19.2.7 Students who are required to re-enroll and repeat a module/block are responsible for the academic/clinical work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the module/block reenrollment. The Dean or his/her designee, in consultation with the faculty for that module/block, will outline alternate conditions for said re-enrollment in writing.
- 19.2.8 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons is not eligible for remediation or re-enrollment in any module/block, nor may he/she participate in any clinical activities.
- 19.2.9 During the appeal process students may audit a didactic module/block (lecture, laboratory, CPS, and/or other course) unless otherwise prohibited.
- 19.2.10 Remediation or re-enrollment may occur only after if the student is formally reinstated.
- 19.2.11 The faculty, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, the Salus University Office of Student Affairs, and/or the Office of the Dean will closely monitor the performance of all reinstated students. Their continuance at the College will depend on successful compliance with the articulated Conditions of Reinstatement.
- 19.3 Conduct of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Hearing
- 19.3.1 The hearing shall be conducted in such a manner as to give the student the full opportunity to explain the reason for his/her unsatisfactory academic performance.

- 19.3.2 The Committee will have access to the student's complete files, including documentation of previous appeal(s) if any exist.
- 19.3.3 By appealing the dismissal, the student authorizes the committee to review relevant information including, but not limited to, grades, NBEO examination scores, faculty interviews, summaries concerning professional development, and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control.
- 19.3.3.1 The student should realize that unsatisfactory performance based on poor or unwise judgment (e.g., spending too much time on non-academic activities such as working inside or outside the College, excessive participation in student activities, and/or poor study habits) is not an acceptable explanation for poor academic performance.
- 19.3.3.2 Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control, which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. Verifiable evidence of such circumstances is required to be submitted to the Committee as part of the written statement of appeal.
- 19.3.4 A primary focus of the Committee is determining the student's potential for future academic success. Extenuating circumstances alone may not provide sufficient reason for reinstatement of the student. The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion grants reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced that the student is capable of making marked improvement in his/her academic performance. The student has the right to provide written letters of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.
- 19.3.5 The appeal hearing will be conducted in a manner as to provide a fair evaluation of the student's performance. It will not be restricted unduly by rules of procedure or evidence, nor shall deviations from prescribed procedures invalidate a decision or proceeding unless significant prejudice to a student results.
- 19.3.6 The appeals process is not a formal legal proceeding. Although a student may seek and retain legal counsel at the student's own expense, the role of legal counsel is limited to advising the student. Legal counsel may attend the hearing but may not actively participate in the hearing as an advocate to examine witnesses, to make opening or closing statements, to direct discussion, or to present the student's case on his/her behalf. Securing the availability of counsel at the scheduled hearing time and date is the responsibility of the student. A student who wishes to exercise the option of legal counsel attending the hearing must notify the Office of the Registrar, in writing, at least (2) business days in advance of the hearing.
- 19.3.7 Requests for an extension to scheduling an appeal should be made in writing by the student, addressed to the Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least two (2) business days prior to his/her scheduled hearing. Extensions may be granted when the presence of extenuating circumstances has been established clearly, or when a strong case has been made that additional information pertinent to the appeal cannot be made available by the time the appeal would be heard normally.
- 19.3.8 The appeal hearing will be private. The Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion will determine the number of persons to be admitted to the hearing. Those attending will treat all information confidentially.
- 19.3.9 The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording remains the property of the University and will be secured by the Office of the Registrar. If the student appellant

wishes to obtain a transcribed copy of the hearing, a written request must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. A fee will be charged to cover the transcription expense.

19.3.10 The Office of the Registrar will provide the complete University file and academic record of each dismissed student for review by members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion at the appeal hearing. The Committee may also seek written or verbal statements of evaluation from faculty and staff regarding the student's academic record and potential, and/or the Committee may ask such individuals to appear before the Committee.

19.3.11 The student shall be notified in writing of the action of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, including all requirements set forth by the Committee, within five (5) business days following the hearing. Should the Committee require further information or time for deliberation; the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the five (5) business days.

## 19.4 Counseling and Assistance Available to Students

19.4.1 The Dean of Student Affairs is available to:

19.4.1.1 Interpret for/counsel students on the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion;

19.4.1.2 Inform students of recommendations rendered during Academic Progress Meetings concerning unsatisfactory academic performance and/or professionalism concerns, but will not attribute comments to specific faculty members; and,

19.4.1.3 Review with students the steps in appeals processes.

19.4.2 A member of the Office for Academic Success for Personal and Professional Development is available to provide a student with, or facilitate, counseling services.

## 19.5 Appealing a Decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Not Involving Dismissal

19.5.1 This section pertains to any student who has been asked to remediate or re-enroll in a module(s)/block(s), assume a modified program, or repeat a year.

19.5.2 Students may appeal non-dismissal actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in the form of a letter directed to the Dean.

19.5.3 This letter of appeal must be received in the Office of the Registrar within five (5) business days, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying him/her of the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

19.5.4 The Dean must consider every case in which a student requests an appeal.

19.5.5 The Dean will commence consideration of the appeal within five (5) business days after receipt of the letter of appeal, not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.

19.5.6 The Dean, after consulting with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Medicine and/or the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, will consider and rule on the appeal.

19.5.7 The Dean's decision on the appeal may uphold, modify, or reverse any previous decision.

- 19.5.8 The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Dean concerning the appeal.
- 19.5.9 The Dean's decision will be made within ten (10) business days, not including the day the student's letter of appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.
- 19.5.10 Should the Dean require additional time for deliberation, the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the ten (10) business days.
- 19.5.11 The decision of the Dean regarding the appeal of a decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion not involving Dismissal is final.
- 19.6 **Appealing a Decision by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Involving Dismissal**
- 19.6.1 The student may appeal to the Dean when the decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion is to dismiss the student.
- 19.6.2 The request must be made by the student in writing in a letter addressed to the Dean and is limited to an **administrative review**, indicating alleged improprieties in the process/hearing by/before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, or new information that was unavailable to the student at the time of the hearing before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. The request is not to be used for additional fact finding. New information, **which was available but not presented** to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion by the student, will not be considered.
- 19.6.3 This letter of appeal must be received by the Office of the Registrar within five (5) business days, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying him/her of the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.
- 19.6.4 The purpose of the appeal is to ensure that appropriate procedure has been adequately followed so that the opportunity clearly existed to introduce mitigating or other circumstances.
- 19.6.5 The Dean may serve alone or may select up to three members of the faculty, administrative staff or others, as he/she deems appropriate, to serve as an Appeals Advisory Committee to gain the benefit of their input prior to rendering a final decision.
- 19.6.6 If convened, the Appeals Advisory Committee shall commence to consider the appeal within five (5) working days after receipt of the written notice of the appeal, not including the day of receipt of the appeal letter by the Office of the Registrar. In the absence of the Dean, the Vice President of Academic Affairs of Salus University will appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.
- 19.6.7 The review will be carried out using all available documents, records of the Committee on Academic Promotion, and, if necessary, testimony by the appropriate Committee Chair or other individuals, as deemed appropriate by the Dean or the Appeals Advisory Committee.
- 19.6.8 The student may elect to forward to the Office of the Registrar written statements in support of the appeal. The student shall be given the opportunity to appear in person before the Dean and the Appeals Advisory Committee.
- 19.6.9 Upon completion of his/her investigation, the Dean shall render his/her decision or the decision of the Appeals Advisory Committee in writing to student. The student shall be

notified of the decision in writing within ten (10) business days of having filed the request for appeal with the Office of the Registrar, not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.

19.6.10 The student shall be accorded full student rights and privileges until all appeals have been exhausted with the exception of participation in patient care activities.

19.6.11 The decision of the Dean is final. There are no further appeals within the College or University.

## 20. STUDENT RECORDS

### 20.1 Student Records and Files

20.1.1 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintenance of all official academic records of students. Salus University's policy regarding creation and maintenance of student records is based upon practices recommended by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. In addition, the school's policy is governed by regulations affecting educational institutions, written by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education or any other government agency. Students may review a copy of these policies in the Salus University Office of Student Affairs. Please refer to the Student Handbook or the Registrar's Office for current policy.

20.1.2 Salus University maintains a Permanent Record File on each student. Included in a student file are the original application form, the undergraduate transcript/record, and the letter of acceptance. Subsequent to enrollment, the student file contains module/block enrollment/remediation forms, grades, letters of correspondence concerning the student, letters indicating actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, communications concerning scholarships, and other correspondence relating to the student's education.

20.1.3 In addition to written material kept in the student file, Salus University maintains computerized general information about each student, module/blocks taken, grades, summary statements of academic action, and enrollment information.

20.1.4 It is institutional policy that the material contained in the student records is confidential, with transfer of such information within the College/University permissible only for legitimate academic purposes. The school complies with the provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and as subsequently amended.

### 20.2 Examination of Student Records

20.2.1 A student, by means of a written request submitted to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of the Registrar, may examine his or her student records at Salus University. These records shall be made available to the student for review as promptly as possible. The records shall be examined in the office in which they are kept, under observation of administrative personnel, and shall not be altered, destroyed, or removed from the office. Material in records that relates to more than one individual will not be made available for direct review, but the student will be told about the information in such records which relates to him/her. Former students have the same access to their records as those currently enrolled; however, certain information will not be retained on a permanent basis by the University (e.g., admissions materials, registration forms, and course withdrawal forms). All persons must sign the written form kept within the record and indicate the date and the reason for the review.

- 20.2.2 A student may obtain a copy of his or her student record. The costs of photocopying or duplicating records shall be produced by the student.
- 20.2.3 Students may challenge the accuracy of information contained in a record or may challenge that information if a record represents an undue invasion of privacy. In the case of a challenge, the student should meet with the faculty member or administrative official responsible for the information being questioned. The faculty member or administrative official may, through discussions with the student, concur with the challenged points and correct or delete the information accordingly. Those corrections or deletions must be chronicled in writing. If a change in grade is submitted, the faculty member must indicate in writing the reason for doing so and complete the appropriate change of grade form. If the faculty member is unwilling to amend the academic record, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the department in which the module/block is offered.
- 20.2.4 Any review of information in the file by faculty members and administrative officers, other than by those persons responsible for keeping the records, requires the dated signature of the faculty member or administrative official on a written form kept within the records. The reviewer must include a brief statement indicating the reason for review of the record.
- 20.3 Transfer of Student Information
- 20.3.1 The student will be notified of the transfer of any information within the student file to persons or institutions other than those associated or affiliated with Salus University. Such information may be transferred only:
- 20.3.1.1 Upon written request of the student to persons he/she designates (e.g., educational institutions, hospitals, licensing boards);
- 20.3.1.2 To organizations responsible for the accreditation of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and Salus University;
- 20.3.1.3 To federal or state educational agencies, providing the agency requests the information in writing and specifies the purpose for acquiring the information; or
- 20.3.1.4 By reason of a valid subpoena or judicial order of a court.
- 20.3.1.4.1 It must be noted that Salus University is not permitted to send to other agencies or individual copies of non-Salus University transcripts, Optometry Admission Test scores, National Board of Examiners in Optometry score results, or other non-Salus University score reports or information. Requests for copies of those transcripts or scores must be made directly to the organizations that originally provided such information.
- 20.3.2 The Office of the Registrar will prepare transcripts of optometry students based upon information in the student file. Upon the receipt of a written request, the student must identify the persons, institutions, hospitals, or licensing boards to which the letters or transcripts are to be sent. A student may also request a copy of the transcript and may challenge the accuracy of the information to be transmitted. The initial challenge should be made to the Office of the Registrar, who prepares the letter or transcript with the ultimate appeal to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.
- 20.3.3 Letters of clinical evaluation are the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

20.3.4 The records of students shall be kept under the name used for admission to the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University unless the student files a change-of-name form with the Office of the Registrar while in attendance at the College. Names cannot be modified after the student's graduation.

## 20.4 Release of Information (Grades, Tests, Scores, etc.)

20.4.1 Official grades can be transmitted from Salus University to another institution only through the Office of the Registrar. Departments may not transmit grade information on behalf of the Office of the Registrar or the College/University to another institution, department, individual faculty member, Registrar, etc.

20.4.2 If a student requests a letter of recommendation, the individual faculty member may state the grade received in the module/block and a narrative.

20.4.3 Copies of examinations with or without answers may be made available to students at the instructor's discretion. Curves, distribution, etc., may be posted if desired.

20.4.4 Federal and State Laws prohibit the posting of scores, grades, etc., that can in any way identify a student. When a faculty member posts grades, they should do so using the assigned Test Identification Number so that no student is easily identifiable.

20.4.5 Scores on examinations may be given to students on an individual basis (i.e., placed in the student's standard or electronic mailbox by departments in a "sealed" manner).

## 20.5 Transcripts

20.5.1 Only final grades appear on transcripts. If a failing (F) grade has been received in a module/block, the grade appears on the transcript as well as the remediation and/or reenrollment grade(s) (see section 11 and 13). The final transcript grades issued at graduation cannot be modified or challenged except for clerical errors.

## 21. ENROLLMENT

21.1 The College expects that all candidates for degrees and certificates will be enrolled full time during consecutive academic periods (years, terms, or months depending on the year of the program) until the completion of the requirements for the degree or program have been completed.

## 22. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

22.1 A student enrolled at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry is considered to be making satisfactory academic progress unless notified otherwise.

22.2 A student who is experiencing academic difficulty should, at his/her earliest opportunity, first speak with the module/block instructor or coordinator, or clinical faculty member/service chief regarding his/her performance.

22.3 The student should contact the Office of Student Affairs regarding tutoring support. Personal counseling opportunities can be explored through the Office for Academic Success.

- 22.4 Other individuals within the College and University such as the appropriate Associate Dean, and/or member of the Salus University Office of Student Affairs should also be contacted to discuss the student's academic performance.
- 22.5 Satisfactory academic progress through the various health professions education programs is an eligibility criterion for all students who receive Title IV student financial assistance. Students must carry a minimum of nine (9) credit hours when enrolled in a semester term or six (6) credit hours when enrolled in a quarter term to have full time student status for financial aid purposes.
- 22.6 A module/block not taken for a grade is not counted for these purposes.
- 22.7 Under normal circumstances, all didactic module/block work must be completed in no more than 5 years. A student must complete the entire program within seven (7) years (not including approved Leaves of Absence) and must present evidence of continued satisfactory academic progress at all times. The Dean must approve any exceptions to this total length of program.

## 23. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

23.1 The following sets forth policy guidelines for a student "Leave of Absence" from the College/University. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of students and of the College/University. Unusual issues, not anticipated by these guidelines, may arise and will be evaluated and managed appropriate to the individual circumstances.

23.1.1 Any approved Leave of Absence may not exceed a period of twelve (12) months. At the end of that time, if additional leave is necessary, it should be requested in writing. The request will then be subject to review and approval by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Dean of the College or his/her designee.

23.1.2 For any approved leave, if the student does not resume studies at the end of two calendar years, matriculation will be terminated. The student may then apply for re-admission at a later time (Section 25).

### 23.2 Notification of Absence

23.2.1 Students are obligated to promptly notify the Salus University Office of Student Affairs and the appropriate faculty of any illness or family emergency that necessitates any absence from the College and include supportive documentation.

23.1.2 The student's status must be clarified with the Office of the Registrar with respect to matriculation at the College.

### 23.3 Request for a Leave of Absence

23.3.1 A student may request a leave of absence if he/she is unable to continue studies because of substantive issues.

23.3.1.2 A student seeking a Leave of Absence must submit a written request to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs. The reason for requesting the leave should be clearly stated. The specific type of leave being requested by the student (e.g., Administrative, Emergency Family, Medical) should be included in the request.

## 23.4 Granting or Denial of a Leave of Absence

- 23.4.1 Only the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may grant or deny a Leave of Absence.
- 23.4.2 The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may deny a request for a leave of absence if granting of the leave is inconsistent with the policy guidelines set forth herein.
- 23.4.3 The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may approve, in writing, one of the following types of Leaves: Administrative, Emergency Family, Medical and/or Suspension.
- 23.4.4 The desire to avoid a low grade is not an acceptable reason for requesting a leave of absence.

## 23.5 Administrative Leave

- 23.5.1 Upon written request of a student, the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may grant an Administrative Leave of Absence.
- 23.5.2 Reasons for requesting an Administrative Leave of Absence include, but are not limited to, educational endeavors at another institution of higher learning, financial hardship of a student necessitating full-time employment, or a need to handle business matters outside of the country.

## 23.6 Emergency Family Leave

- 23.6.1 Upon written request of a student, the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may grant an Emergency Family Leave of Absence.
- 23.6.2 Emergency Family Leave includes, but is not limited to, a need for the student to assist with a family member illness.

## 23.7 Medical Leave

- 23.7.1 A Medical Leave of Absence may be granted by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs upon written request of the student and submitted written opinion of the student's physician or other health care provider that a medical leave is necessary.
- 23.7.2 A Medical Leave of Absence may be granted if a student is unable to continue studies because of the student's personal health issues. Maternity, paternity and adoption leaves are included in this section and will be processed in a manner consistent with the Medical Leave of Absence policy.
- 23.7.3 When an extension to the initial Medical Leave has been deemed necessary, the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may grant an extension to a leave for a period of up to a maximum of twelve (12) additional months upon the written recommendation of the student's health care provider.
- 23.7.4 Return to active student status from a Medical Leave of Absence must be supported by a letter from a physician or other health care provider.
- 23.7.5 The College reserves the right, at its own expense, to have the student examined by a physician to confirm the opinion of the student's physician in requesting the Medical Leave of Absence, or upon the student's request to return to the academic program.

## 23.8 Suspension / Medical Leave of Absence

- 23.8.1 In instances of serious illness, physical and/or mental, wherein members of the faculty or administration believe that a student should not continue studies, and wherein the student cannot or will not request a Leave of Absence, the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs may elect to suspend the student or place the student on a Medical Leave of Absence. A Suspension / Medical Leave of Absence should not exceed twelve (12) months.
- 23.8.2 A student who has been placed on such suspension or leave must make their request to return and re-enter the curriculum in writing to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs and file this letter with the Office of the Registrar. The student must provide written verification from a physician or other health care provider, subject to approval by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs that the student's health permits him/her to resume his/her academic program.
- 23.8.3 Upon the written recommendation of the physician(s) and/or health care providers, the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Dean of the College or his/her designee may extend this Leave for up to one additional twelve (12) month period.
- 23.8.4 The College reserves the right, at its own expense, to have the student examined by a physician to determine the student's health status prior to granting the Suspension/ Medical Leave of Absence and/or upon the student's request to return to the academic program.

## 23.9 Leave of Absence Record

- 23.9.1 The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs should ensure that a student completes the written "Leave of Absence" form making explicit the reason(s) that the leave is being requested.
- 23.9.2 A leave becomes official when it is entered into the student's record housed in the Office of the Registrar. All outstanding grades become a withdraw (W).

## 23.10 Return from a Leave of Absence

- 23.10.1 The student must notify the Office of the Registrar in writing of his/her intent to return to the College. The Office of the Registrar will notify the Dean of Student Affairs of the student's intent to return. The Dean of Student Affairs will review the student's request and notify the Dean and or his/her designee(s) of their status.
- 23.10.2 Upon approval to return from a Leave of Absence, **regardless of the type**, the student's permanent record and status is reviewed by the Dean of the College and/or his/her designee(s). Upon returning from an approved leave, the Dean or his/her designee(s) will determine the student's entry point into the curriculum.
- 23.10.3 A repeat of module(s)/block(s) or portions of the curriculum previously completed successfully, or other academic and/or clinical conditions may be required or applied if deemed educationally necessary. Additional tuition/fees for repeated work may also apply.

23.10.4 Students are not permitted to engage in any educational activities until their program of study has been determined by the Dean and/or his/her designee(s) and recorded in the Office of the Registrar.

## 24. WITHDRAWAL

24.1 The following sets forth policy guidelines for student withdrawal from Salus University. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of students and of the University. Unusual issues, not anticipated by these guidelines, may arise and will be managed appropriate to the individual circumstances.

24.1.1 A student may withdraw voluntarily from the College/University at any time. A student who wishes to withdraw must obtain a withdrawal from the Office of the Registrar and indicate in writing the reason(s) for the withdrawal. The student must then meet with the Dean and/or his or her designee(s), followed by a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs.

24.2 The official records of a student will not be released until the student has obtained the required signatures on the withdrawal form and returned the form to the Office of the Registrar.

24.3 A student who wishes to seek re-admission to the Doctor of Optometry degree program must follow the procedures outlined in Section 25 of this policy (Re-admission).

24.4 If the student is granted re-admission, the Dean of the College and/or his/her designee(s) will determine the content of the student's academic program, entry point, conditions, and requirements pertinent to the readmitted student's curriculum.

## 25. RE-ADMISSION

### 25.1 Student Dismissed for Academic Reasons/Student Who has Withdrawn

25.1.1 A student in either of these categories who wishes to be re-admitted to the Pennsylvania College of Optometry should re-apply to the Office of Admissions in the same way as any new applicant. Application procedures are outlined in the Salus University catalog.

### 25.2 Student Dismissed for Non-Academic Reasons

25.2.1 A student in this category should submit his/her application to the Office of Admissions and the application will be reviewed by the Dean.

## 26. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

26.1 Graduation and the awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of academic, clinical, and professional requirements.

26.2 The student is responsible for understanding all requirements for graduation and completing them within the prescribed course of study.

26.3 The student must successfully pass all internal examinations and satisfactorily complete all required clinical activities. The student must successfully complete the entire prescribed course of study with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.

- 26.4 The student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the faculty, the professional attributes and conduct necessary for the practice of optometry.
- 26.5 The student must have demonstrated integrity and honesty through their personal and professional behaviors.
- 26.6 Student misconduct such as cheating on examinations, falsifying clinical data, or activities constituting criminal behavior may result in the denial of the Doctor of Optometry degree even though the individual has satisfactorily completed the academic program.
- 26.7 The College/University reserves the right to place on probation, suspend or expel from the institution any student who willfully violates any rule or regulation of the College/University or the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or other state, Federal, or local government, whether or not convicted in a criminal court.
- 26.8 Upon satisfactory completion of the academic and professional standards set by the College/University and the optometry curriculum, the faculty and Dean of the College will recommend candidates to the Provost/Vice-President of Academic Affairs for conferral of the Doctor of Optometry degree.
- 26.9 Graduation with Honors
- 26.9.1 Exceptional work accomplished by a student is acknowledged after completion of the academic and clinical program by awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree with Summa Cum Laude (3.75 GPA), Magna Cum Laude (3.5 GPA), or Cum Laude (3.25 GPA) for exceptional academic/clinical work throughout the period of optometric education. In addition to the stated grade point averages for academic performance to receive the above designations, students must have also demonstrated superior clinical performance by having receiving the following:
- 26.9.2 A grade of Honors (H) in four (4) of the seven (7) Professional Practices/Externships, beginning with the summer term of the third year.
27. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
- 27.1 The University complies with federal and state regulations regarding students with disabilities. The policy pertaining to Students with Disabilities is detailed in the Salus University website.

