

ACADEMIC POLICY

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Master of Science in Clinical Optometry Degree Program

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This Academic Policy applies to all students enrolled in the Master of Science (MSc) in Clinical Optometry degree program, and is published for students, instructors, faculty, administration, and staff at Salus University and collaborating institutions. This policy complements the Student Handbook of the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry degree program.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Dean is the chief academic officer of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) and, in conjunction with his/her College staff, is charged with the oversight of the curriculum, development of educational policy, and other academic matters. 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. The Provost and 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.

ADMISSIONS PREREQUISITES

Successful completion of prerequisite courses/programs is required, in all instances, before a student may matriculate into the program. Successful completion of the courses, acceptable transfer of credit from another institution, or satisfactorily passing an exemption/competency examination may fulfill prerequisite requirements. Eligible candidates for the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry degree program must have successfully completed or are in the process of successfully completing a Bachelor of Science degree program or its equivalent.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULES

The course and examination schedule serves as the calendar for the program. The course and examination schedule is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., faculty illness or inclement weather).

ATTENDANCE

In general, it is the policy of the College that student attendance at all lectures is expected but not mandatory; however, students are responsible for learning all course material and students should attend every scheduled lecture. A course instructor maintains the right to require mandatory

attendance at lectures at his/her discretion. The course instructor will describe details of his/her attendance requirement(s) in the course syllabus.

Attendance is mandatory for all hands-on laboratories and examinations. In addition, students are expected to be actively engaged in all assigned activities.

The instructor and/or the Dean will determine the consequences of unexcused absences. Poor attendance or a lack of active engagement in assigned activities may result in a failing grade. Attendance requirements also apply to make-up or special examinations, remediation examinations, laboratory or clinical examinations, and re-enrollment examinations.

Students are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the duration of assigned activities. Students are required to sit for examinations as scheduled. If a student is ill and unable to sit for the examination, he/she must notify the examination proctor or the Office of Professional Studies and International Programs, and have his/her physician submit a written report of the illness.

EVALUATION MEASURES

The Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) at Salus University will evaluate/assess students via five methods:

1. **Comprehensive Written Examinations**: Faculty members prepare comprehensive, written examinations that are administered to the students with on-site proctors in cooperation with the in-country partner. A passing grade on each examination taken prior to the beginning of a Controlled Patient Care Session is required in order for a student to participate in the Controlled Patient Care Session.
2. **Proficiency in Clinical Procedures**: Students participate in extensive hands-on training and practice on one another in order to master key clinical skills as identified in the Clinical Procedures Laboratory course syllabus. The Clinical Procedures Laboratory sessions are instructor-supervised, and students who fail to demonstrate the ability to perform these procedures safely on another student will not be permitted to participate in Controlled Patient Care.
3. **Clinical Case Studies**: The Clinical Case Studies are coordinated and facilitated by instructor/faculty advisors who approve each topic and evaluate each student's work. Students may develop case write-ups from their patient files. They must submit their written work for review by their advisors. They must also prepare a case presentation for delivery and oral defense before their advisors during a Controlled Patient Care Session.
4. **Controlled Patient Care**: The students travel to a clinical facility for one or two rotations of Controlled Patient Care. They perform ocular health examinations under the direction of a team of clinical instructors. The students complete all aspects of Controlled Patient Care while working with paid human subjects. In-depth discussion of differential diagnoses, evaluation skills, and management follows the extensive exposure to human subjects.
5. **Culminating Scholarly Project**: Instructors serve as advisors to students who conduct original research. The advisors must review and approve the topics, proposed methodologies, preliminary results and draft papers. Students meet with their advisors and publicly present their findings during a Controlled Patient Care session.

GRADING SYSTEM

The quality of a student's work is indicated by the following grades:

	<u>Grade Points Earned per Term Credit Hour</u>
A Superior achievement	4
B Acceptable achievement	3
C Achievement below graduate standards - remediation required	2
D Achievement well below graduate standards - remediation required	1
F (Failure) Unsatisfactory performance - remediation required	0
H (Honors) Indicates outstanding performance	
P (Pass) Meets all expected competencies	
R (Deferred) non-credit grade	

The grade of A, B, C, D or F will be utilized for evaluation of the courses corresponding to each Comprehensive Examination and Clinical Case Studies. The grade of Honors (H), Pass (P) or Failure (F) will be utilized for evaluation of Controlled Patient Care and the Culminating Scholarly Project. The grade of Pass (P) or Failure (F) will be assigned following evaluation of the Clinical Procedures Laboratory.

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

I – Incomplete

An Incomplete (I) grade may be given only when the work in a course is not completed due to a student-centered reason, such as being granted an excused absence due to illness and/or personal urgency and when the student's work is otherwise of passing quality. A student must remove the grade of Incomplete (I) within two academic quarters. If the student fails to remove the incomplete grade within the time allowed, the grade will be changed to a Failure (F).

R – Deferred

A Deferred grade (R) may be given 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. The College will determine the timing by which the Deferred Grade will change to an assigned grade based upon resolution of identified challenges. It is not appropriate for the instructor to assign a Deferred Grade when the assignment of a substandard grade is indicated due to substandard performance.

A Deferred Grade (R) can also be given for Scholarly Work which is progressing satisfactorily but legitimately extends beyond one academic quarter. Upon acceptable completion of the Scholarly Work, the R grade must be validated by a grade of Honors (H) or Pass (P).

NR – Not Recorded

This notion indicates that no grade has been submitted, to date, by the instructor.

CR – Credit

A grade of Credit (CR) may be used for required courses within the Masters Program if approved by the Academic Dean.

Change of Grade

Once submitted to the Registrar, no grade, except that of Incomplete (I) and Deferred (R), may be changed except with the mutual written consent of the course instructor and the Dean.

REMIEDIATION

The student is responsible for completing all failed courses and grades of C, D or F by one of the following procedures:

Comprehensive Written Examination Remediation

The College will schedule remediation examinations for any student who receives a failing grade in a course associated with a comprehensive written examination. The remediation examinations will include those courses that the student failed. A student, in his/her preparation for the remediation examination, should reflect on the curriculum competencies in the area(s) of deficiency.

Should the instructor determine that remediation is better accomplished by a method other than a written examination, e.g., preparing a paper in the area of deficiency, the student will be notified in writing as to the alternative method of remediation and its parameters.

A student will have no more than three opportunities to pass a remediation examination. A student failing three remediation examinations is subject to dismissal from the program. Successful remediation of all prior examinations is required before a student is permitted to attend a Controlled Patient Care Session.

There are costs associated with all remediation activities, and those associated costs are the sole responsibility of the students remediating that activity.

Clinical Procedures Laboratory Remediation

A student may remediate failures in Clinical Procedures Laboratory by appropriate clinical assessments determined by the clinical instructor. A student may have no more than one attempt to remediate Clinical Procedures Laboratory. A student failing to successfully remediate clinical assessments is subject to dismissal from the program.

Associated costs of remediation activities are the sole responsibility of the student taking part in the remediation activity.

Clinical Case Studies Remediation

A student may remediate a Clinical Case Studies failure (F) by appropriate assignments as determined by his/her faculty advisor. The assignments for improvement will reflect the specific deficiency noted by the advisor in the student's original preparation and presentation.

A student may have no more than one attempt to remediate Clinical Case Studies. A student failing to successfully complete the remediation within one year of receiving the failure (F) is subject to dismissal from the program.

Associated costs of remediation activities are the sole responsibility of the student taking part in the remediation activity.

Controlled Patient Care Remediation

A student may remediate a failure (F) in Controlled Patient Care by repeating a Controlled Patient Care Session within one year of the failure (dependent upon availability of the International Module).

A student may have no more than one attempt to remediate Controlled Patient Care. A student failing to successfully remediate a failure in Controlled Patient Care is subject to dismissal from the program.

Associated costs of remediation activities are the sole responsibility of the student taking part in the remediation activity.

Culminating Scholarly Project Remediation

A student is expected to submit a work of passing quality on his/her first attempt given continuous feedback from his/her faculty advisor. In the unlikely event that the work is not of passing quality, a student may have no more than one attempt to remediate the Culminating Scholarly Project. A student failing to successfully complete the remediation within one year of receiving the failure is subject to dismissal from the program.

Associated costs of remediation activities are the sole responsibility of the student taking part in the remediation activity.

Remediation Grades

Remediation grades will be computed in the grade point average (GPA) and will be reported on the transcript, along with the original grade that was not of passing caliber. For courses in which a letter grade is assigned, any "C," "D," or "F" must be remediated to a "B." For courses in which an "H" (Honors), "P" (Pass), or "F" (Failure) is assigned, an "F" must be remediated to a "P." The highest grade that can be earned by remediation is a grade of "B" or "P." The student must realize that remediation may result in a grade lower than the original grade, i.e., going from a C to a Failure (F). In such a case, the new grade will be computed in the grade point average (GPA). In all cases, the original grade will remain on the transcript followed by the repeat grade.

Attendance and other academic policies for remediation activities apply as above.

Fees for Remediation

Specific methods used for student remediation will have fees assigned to each. A student must pay all fees in full in advance of the remediation activity.

GRADE MEDIATION AND ADJUDICATION

A student having a concern or complaint about a reported grade may appeal the grade decision, in writing, to the Dean, which will deliberate the issue and confer with instructors and other administrators as appropriate. The Dean will render its decision to the student in writing. The decision of the Dean is final. There is no further appeal within the University.

Any challenge of a grade must be made within ten (10) business days of the date of issue from the Office of the Registrar. 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.

Copies of sequestered exams, reports, and/or presentations submitted by students are required to be retained by the College 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.

END OF TERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS MEETINGS

There will be an Academic Progress Meeting to evaluate the performance of all students registered within a course at the end of each term. The academic standing of each student will be reviewed to determine if academic difficulties are being experienced.

Categories of Academic Standing include the following:

- Good Academic Standing – A student is in good academic standing when progressing normally in the curriculum and/or attaining an overall grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 3.0.
- Academic Probation – A student is considered on academic probation when his/her cumulative GPA falls below 3.0.
- Academic Dismissal – A student is subject to dismissal from the academic program when his/her cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for one year and/or he/she does not successfully complete all academic requirements.

Dismissal for Other Reasons

In addition to the academic reasons for dismissal listed above, PCO reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student, at any time, for what the College faculty and administration may believe to be good and sufficient reasons.

These reasons may include, but not limited to, his or her demeanor, knowledge base, and character demonstration, as well as any form of cheating, plagiarism or unprofessional conduct. Students are to read the Salus University Student Code of Conduct for additional information.

PCO assigns great importance to self-discipline, the ability to work pleasantly 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.

Following the Academic Progress Meeting, the Office of the Registrar will make official entry of the grades into the student record and notify the student in writing about his/her academic performance for the term (grade report).

If a student is not making satisfactory progress in the program, he/she will receive notification from the Dean or his/her designee. The Dean or his/her designee may require a student to communicate with a member of the College and/or University staff.

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.

Failure to comply with directives from the Dean or his/her designee may result in being dismissed from the academic program. The matter may then be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotion for review and further action.

PCO COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION

Composition of PCO Committee on Academic Promotion

The Committee is selected by the Dean and is composed of four faculty members (three voting members and one non-voting Chair of the Committee). The Dean also appoints the Chair of the Committee.

Representatives from the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, Office of the Registrar, Center for Personal and Professional Development, Office of Professional Studies and International Programs and/or Office of Academic Affairs are *ex-officio*, non-voting members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. The three faculty members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion must be present to consider an appeal for reinstatement.

The Dean may select a faculty member to serve as an alternate member of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in the event of illness or unavailability of a named Committee member, or where a Committee member has recused himself/herself or been disqualified either with or without reason.

Responsibilities of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion

The Committee on Academic Promotion is responsible for hearing an appeal for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on criteria outlined in the End of Term Academic Progress Evaluation. The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal. The Committee may review grades and summaries concerning professional development and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control.

The Committee shall then make a decision either to:

- Uphold the dismissal, or
- Reinstate the student, either immediately, or at a future date if warranted by exceptional circumstances.

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 specified course of study
- Continue matriculation on a modified program
- Repeat specific courses or rotations even if previously passed
- Repeat an academic year of study
- Obtain academic counseling and/or tutoring
- Obtain academic, medical, or psychological evaluation

The Dean will review the conditions put forth by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. This process is to ensure feasibility of enacting the conditions and to determine the student's final curriculum/course scheduling and requirements.

Students who are required to re-enroll and repeat a course are responsible for the academic/clinical work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the course reenrollment. The Dean or his/her designee, in consultation with the faculty for that course, will outline alternate conditions for said reenrollment in writing.

Students are responsible for tuition and related educational costs associated with required course re-enrollment.

A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons is not eligible for remediation or re-enrollment in any course, nor may they participate in any clinical activities. Students appealing their dismissal may continue participation in didactic course work (lecture, laboratory), unless otherwise prohibited until the formal appeals process is exhausted.

Remediation exams or re-enrollment may occur only after the student is formally reinstated.

The faculty, PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and Office of the Dean will closely monitor the performance of all reinstated students. Their continuance at the University will depend on their compliance with the terms of their reinstatement.

APPEALS OF THE DECISIONS BY THE PCO COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION

Reinstatement Without Appeal

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

A student will be so notified in writing with the conditions of reinstatement within five (5) business days of the date of the Academic Progress Meeting.

Appeal for Reinstatement

A student who is dismissed for academic reasons and not granted reinstatement without appeal may schedule an appeal hearing with the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, unless he/she waives this right to a hearing. The hearing may be scheduled via Skype or conference call. The hearing will be scheduled based on the availability of Committee members and may include evenings or weekends.

If a student who is dismissed for academic reasons chooses to appeal his/her dismissal, the appeal and request for reinstatement must be addressed, in writing and in English, to the Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and submitted to the Registrar's Office not less than three (3) business days prior to a scheduled hearing. 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 letter may include additional supporting documents or enclosures.

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.

The student may also make an oral presentation in English to the Committee during the appeal hearing in-person or via telephone, Skype or another online communications platform; however, such a presentation is not required.

The Committee will have access to the student's complete files, including documentation of previous appeals.

Conduct of the Appeal Hearing

The hearing shall be conducted in English in such a manner as to give the student the full opportunity to explain the reason for his/her unsatisfactory academic performance.

Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control, which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. Examples of such circumstances include personal illness, serious illness in the immediate family, or a death of an immediate family member. Verifiable evidence of such circumstances is required to be submitted to the Committee as part of the written statement of appeal. This may include letters from physicians or other health-care providers, obituary notices or a copy of a death certificate.

The student should realize that unsatisfactory performance based on poor or unwise judgment is not an acceptable explanation for poor academic performance.

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 (in English) of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.

The 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 may result.

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 in-person or via Skype or another online communications platform that makes provision for all participating parties visible, 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 or 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 must notify the Office of the Registrar, in writing and in English, at least (2) business days in advance.

Requests for an extension to an appeal should be in writing and in English by the student, addressed to the Chairperson of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, and submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least three (3) 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.

The hearing will be private. The Chair will determine the number of persons to be admitted to the hearing. Those attending will treat all information confidentially. The Chair on a need-to-know basis will address any requests for information concerning a hearing made by other College administrators.

The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording remains the property of the College/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 in English must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. A fee will be charged to cover the transcription expense.

Any member of the Committee may recuse or decline participation in any hearing because of conflict.

The student may disqualify one voting member of the Committee without stating a reason. A request to disqualify more than one member of the Committee requires a written explanation in English and must be approved by both a majority of the voting Committee members and the Chair of the Committee. This written correspondence should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The student must notify the Committee of any requested disqualification at least three (3) business days in advance of his/her scheduled hearing.

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

The student shall be promptly notified in writing in English 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.

Counseling and Assistance Available to Students

Counseling and assistance may be provided in person or via telephone, Skype or some other online communications platform. The Dean of Student Affairs is available to:

- Explain to students the actions of the Committee on Academic Promotion;
- Inform students of recommendations rendered during Academic Progress Meetings concerning unsatisfactory academic performance and/or behavioral concerns, but will not attribute comments to specific faculty members;
- Review with students the steps in the appeals process.

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

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

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

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.

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

The Dean will commence consideration of the appeal within five (5) business days, not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar, after receipt of the letter of appeal. Students may also elect to have forwarded to the Dean written statements in English from faculty members or other directly related individuals in support of their appeal.

The Dean, after consulting with faculty and administrators, will consider and rule on the appeal. The final ruling 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.

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

The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Dean concerning the appeal. The decision of the Dean regarding the appeal of a decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion not involving dismissal is final.

Appealing of a Decision by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Involving Dismissal

The student may appeal to the Dean when the decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion is to dismiss the student. The request must be made by the student in writing and in English and addressed to the Dean and must be limited to an **administrative review**, indicating alleged improprieties in the process/hearing by/before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, or new information which 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, will not be considered.

The Office of the Registrar must receive this letter of appeal in English 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.

The purpose of the appeal is to ensure that the appropriate procedure has been adequately followed so that the opportunity clearly existed to introduce mitigating or other circumstances.

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 Advisory Committee to gain the benefit of their input prior to rendering a final decision.

The Advisory Committee shall commence to consider the appeal within five (5) working days after receipt of the written notice of appeal in English (not including the day of receipt of the appeal letter by the Office of the Registrar). In the absence of the Dean, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs of Salus University will appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.

The review will be carried out using all available documents, records of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, and, if necessary, testimony by the appropriate Committee Chairperson or other individuals, as deemed appropriate by the Dean or the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

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 Advisory Committee.

Upon completion of his/her investigation, the Dean shall render his/her decision or the decision of the Advisory Committee in writing to the student. The student shall be notified of the decision in writing within ten (10) business days (not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar) of having filed the request for appeal with the Office of the Registrar.

The student shall be accorded full student rights and privileges until all appeals have been exhausted with the exception of participation in Controlled Patient Care activities, unless deemed otherwise appropriate.

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

STUDENT RECORDS

Student Records and Files

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintenance of all official academic records of students. PCO'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 College'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 Office of Student Affairs.

PCO maintains a Permanent Record File on each student. Included in a student file are the original application form with supporting documents and the letter of acceptance. Additional material is added subsequent to the enrollment of the student at Salus University.

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

It is institutional policy that the material contained in the student records is confidential, with transfer of such information within the school 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.

Examination of Student Records

A student, by means of a written request submitted to the Vice President and 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 such as by scanning and electronic transmission. If the records are examined by a student when he/she is on campus, the records shall be examined under observation of administrative personnel, and shall not be altered, destroyed, or removed from the office. Material in records that relate to more than one individual will not be made available for direct review, but the student will be told the information on such records which relates to him or 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.

A student may obtain a copy of his or her student record. The costs of photocopying or duplicating records shall be borne by the student.

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 communicate with the faculty member or administrative official responsible for the information being questioned. The faculty member or administrative official may, through communication with the student, concur with the challenged points and correct or delete the information accordingly. Those corrections or deletions must be made 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 Dean.

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.

Transfer of Student Information

The student will be notified of the transfer of any information within the student file to persons or institutions other than those associated with or affiliated with Salus University. Such information may be transferred only:

- Upon written request of the student to persons he or she designates (e.g., educational institutions, hospitals, and licensing boards, etc.);
- To organizations responsible for the accreditation of Salus University;
- To federal or state educational agencies, providing the agency requests the information in writing and specifies the purpose for acquiring the information;
- By reason of a valid subpoena or judicial order of a court.

It must be noted that the University is not permitted to send to other agencies or individuals copies of non-PCO transcripts, test scores, reports or information. Requests for copies of those materials must be made directly to the organizations that originally provided such information.

The Office of the Registrar will prepare transcripts of 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. The student may also request a copy of the transcripts and may challenge the accuracy of the information to be transmitted. The initial challenge should be made to the Office of the Registrar, which prepares the letter or transcript with the ultimate appeal to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Letters of clinical evaluation are the responsibility of the Dean.

The records of students shall be kept under the name used for admission to PCO, 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.

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

Official grades can be transmitted from PCO 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 to another institution, department, individual faculty member, Registrar, etc.

If a student requests a letter of recommendation, the individual faculty member may state only the grade received in the course and a narrative, but not the items mentioned in the previous paragraph(s) as restricted (non-PCO transcripts, test scores, etc.).

Scores on examinations are released to students individually. Federal and State Laws prohibit the posting of scores, grades, etc., that can in any way identify a student. When a faculty member or administrator posts grades, they should do so using the Salus University-assigned Test Identification Number so that no student is easily identifiable.

Transcripts

Only final grades appear on transcripts. When a course has been failed, the grade appears on the transcript as well as the remediation and/or reenrollment grade(s). The final transcript grades issued at graduation cannot be modified or challenged except for clerical errors.

ENROLLMENT

The College expects that all candidates for degrees and certificates will normally be enrolled 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.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

A student enrolled in PCO is considered to be making satisfactory academic progress unless notified otherwise.

A student who is experiencing academic or language translation difficulties should, at his/her earliest opportunity, inform the instructor and/or appropriate College and PSIP administrators. In some instances, tutorial assistance may be arranged to help students improve their learning experiences. Additional tutorial work may be offered at the discretion of the instructor and/or the administration while any course is in progress. Costs associated with this potential additional educational resource will be the responsibility of the student.

Under normal circumstances, all didactic course work must be completed in no more than 2 years. A student must complete the entire program within 3 years (not including approved Leaves of Absence) and must present evidence of continuing to make satisfactory academic progress at all times. The Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs must approve any exceptions to this total length of program.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation and awarding of the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry are contingent upon satisfactory completion of all academic and financial requirements.

The student is responsible for understanding all requirements for graduation and completing them within the time dictated by the curriculum.

The student must successfully complete the entire curriculum with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better.

The student must have successfully completed the Bachelor of Science degree program or its equivalent in order to graduate the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry degree program.

The student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the faculty, the professional attributes and conduct necessary for the practice of optometry.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Salus University complies with US federal and state regulations regarding students with disabilities. The policy pertaining to Students with Disabilities is detailed in the Student Handbook.

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