



## **ACADEMIC POLICY**

### **Master of Science in Clinical Optometry Degree Program**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 This academic policy applies to MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program students enrolled in Salus University and is published for students, faculty, and staff, all of whom are held responsible for reading and adhering to this policy.
- 1.2 The faculty and administration of the Department of International and Continuing Education (DICE) in conjunction with Salus University, Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC), Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, and Registrar have developed this policy to uphold the educational standards of Salus University and DICE for all students.
- 1.3 This policy will be reviewed by the faculty and administration of DICE in collaboration with the Dean of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) and the Office of the Provost for necessary updates on an annual basis.
  - 1.3.1 Recommended substantive changes to this Policy will be reviewed and acted upon by the University's Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee.
    - 1.3.1.1 Substantive changes approved by the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee will be shared with all stakeholder groups impacted by the policy.
- 1.4 Unless otherwise stated, the Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education or the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs 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 of the Department of International and Continuing Education is charged with the oversight of the curriculum and other academic matters. The Office of Academic Affairs creates and modifies the curriculum of the program. The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program is appointed by the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs in consultation with the Dean of PCO and the Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education. Currently, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program and the Dean of International and Continuing Education are the same person. The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree/Dean of International and Continuing Education meets with the Dean of PCO on a regular basis to collaborate on the interface of the MSc in Clinical Optometry program with the Doctor of Optometry degree programs. 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 at Salus University.

- 2.2 The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education and the DICE administrative team are charged with the administration of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program.
- 2.3 The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education or their designee is responsible for monitoring the progress of the student and developing modified programs when it is deemed necessary to ensure student academic success.
- 2.4 The Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education assumes other responsibilities as delegated and assigned by the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- 2.5 The Dean of Student Affairs is charged with the administration of matters related to registration, student counseling, and student life on campus. This office has the responsibility for advising students in personal matters impacting academics and coordinating special events.
  - 2.5.1 Under the auspices of the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining student permanent records.
  - 2.5.2 The Dean of Student Affairs oversees the Center for Personal and Professional Development, the Office of the Registrar, and the Office of Admissions.

### **3. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Faculty are responsible for monitoring student performance throughout the term and providing students with performance feedback consistent with course grading outlines and syllabi.
- 3.2 A syllabus will be distributed for each course and will describe the course instructor, course description, prerequisites, course learning goals and outcome measures, course requirements, attendance policies, ethical conduct, disability support services, course schedule, evaluation and grading, assignments, assessments, and learning materials.
- 3.3 Faculty and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education recommend to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs students for the awarding of degrees based on program requirements.
- 3.4 Faculty are required to use their Salus University email account when communicating with students, faculty, staff and administrators at Salus University.

## **4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 Students are responsible for understanding all requirements stated in the Academic Policy.

4.2 Students are expected to check their Salus University email account twice daily as some correspondence from faculty may be time dependent. In addition, all students are expected to check their Salus University email accounts on a daily basis, including during weekends, breaks, holidays and other unassigned times for the duration of the account life.

4.2.2 Students are required 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 mail sent by students that is not sent from a Salus University email account.

## **5. NON-DEGREE STUDENTS (N/A)**

## **6. PROGRAM PREREQUISITES**

6.1 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. Before the MSc program begins, the student must have earned a BSc degree or its equivalent.

## **7. PATIENT CARE/DIRECT CARE ASSIGNMENTS / CLINICAL PRIVILEGES**

7.1 Students enrolled in the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry degree program do not engage in direct patient care assignments, but rather participate in controlled patient care encounters in which paid patients sign consent forms indicating they are willing to undergo testing by students in training under the supervision of clinicians. Students are required to complete any designated vaccinations/background checks to participate in these sessions.

## **8. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULES**

8.1 This program follows the university's quarter calendar system. Schedules are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., faculty illness or inclement weather). Students are notified promptly via electronic calendar adjustments and email communication.

- 8.1.1 The DICE administrative team provides students with an electronic academic calendar with program specific information regarding orientation, class schedules, rotation and transition day dates, special events, and academic breaks.
- 8.2 Any travel or other commitments scheduled on days reserved for academic activities may result in penalty.
- 8.3 The program academic calendar is distributed no later than seven days prior to the start of the term.
- 8.4 Instructors need prior approval from the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry Program/Dean of International and Continuing Education to change the program academic calendar once it has been published.

## **9. ATTENDANCE**

- 9.1 In general, it is the policy of DICE that student attendance at all lectures is expected but not mandatory; however, the student is responsible for learning all course material. A course instructor maintains the right to require mandatory attendance at lectures at their discretion. The course instructor will describe the attendance requirement(s) in the course syllabus.
  - 9.1.1 Attendance is mandatory for all hands-on laboratories and examinations. The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education will determine the consequences of unexcused absences.
  - 9.1.2 Attendance requirements also apply to make-up examinations, remediation examinations, laboratory or clinical examinations, and re-enrollment examinations.
  - 9.1.3 A student should inform the Dean of Student Affairs, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education and their instructor(s) of anticipated family or medical situations which may qualify for excused absences and/or result in extended absences. If the number of excused absences is excessive (more than 25% of examinations, clinical assignments, and workshops per term) a student may be required to take a leave of absence.
  - 9.1.4 Each student is responsible for ensuring their own individual access to and use of current technology to meet the attendance requirements of all courses.

## **9.2 Attendance for Clinical Observation/Clinical Assignment**

9.2.1 Any student who is absent from a mandatory activity must complete and submit an absence-approval request form with appropriate documentation to the Dean of Student Affairs. This form may be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.

## **9.3 Excused Absence from Clinical Observation/Clinical Assignment**

9.3.1 For an anticipated absence that may qualify as an excused absence, a student is required to submit appropriate documentation to the Office of Student Affairs prior to their absence. For anticipated absences such as holidays or weddings, this should be submitted during the first week of the affected term.

9.3.2 Acceptable reasons for excused absenteeism may include the following:

- A statement from a healthcare provider that at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under their care and too ill to attend their clinical rotation.
- A statement that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.
- A death in the student's immediate family. The relationship of the deceased to the student and the date of the death must be provided.
- Documented failure of normal and auxiliary means of transportation.
- Personal event such as the student's marriage.
- Childbirth (maternity and paternity policy of Salus University takes precedence).

9.3.3 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit appropriate documentation to the Office of Student Affairs within 48 hours following their return to educational/program activities.

## **9.4 Excused Absence from Didactic Activity**

9.4.1 For mandatory didactic activities, please see 9.3.1.

## **9.5 Unexcused Absence from Examination, Clinical Observation and Clinical Activity**

9.5.1 An unexcused absence” is an absence that does not meet the criteria for excused absence as outlined in section 9.3.2.

9.5.2 The consequences of an unexcused absence will be determined by the course instructor in conjunction with the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education and may result in a professionalism grade deduction, warning, or citation. If a

student receives an unexcused absence from an examination, they will be able to sit for the examination or assessment and earn a maximum grade of 65. Repeated unexcused absences may result in a course grade of Failure (F) upon review by the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

**9.6 Lateness to Clinical Observation/Clinical Activity**

9.6.1 The student is expected to arrive on time, as defined by the clinic schedule and to stay in the assigned clinical service until released by the instructor. Late arrival after the start of a clinical assignment, absence from the assigned clinical area, and early departure will be documented and reported to the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

9.6.2 Failure to follow clinical schedule and attendance policies may result in an unexcused absence (see section 9.5).

**10. ELECTIVE COURSES (N/A)**

**11. COURSE CONCERNS / ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

11.1 Course issues should initially be discussed between the instructor(s) and the student. If the concerns are not resolved satisfactorily, they should be brought to the attention of the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education. If the concerns are still not resolved satisfactorily, they should be brought to the attention of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

11.2 Classroom discrimination or sexual harassment concerns should be brought to the attention of the Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education, University Affirmative Action Officer, or the Dean of Student Affairs.

**12. EXAMINATIONS**

12.1 Exam policies and procedures can be found in the Salus University Student Handbook. The student is responsible for understanding these policies. Questions or concerns should first be directed to the course instructor and then, if not resolved, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

12.1.1 Infractions of the examination policies are considered serious offenses. These matters will be referred to the University Judicial Committee for review and further action. Any student found guilty of infractions will be penalized in an appropriate manner, including the possibility of expulsion from Salus University.



- 12.2 Exam schedules are included in the program schedule and are subject to change for academic or unanticipated reasons.
- 12.3 Students are required to take examinations as scheduled. If a student is ill or unable to take the examination, they must notify the instructor and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education and obtain an excused absence (see section 9).

### 13. ASSESSMENT AND GRADE

- 13.1 At the conclusion of a course, a grade will be recorded for each enrolled student (on a schedule determined by the Registrar) according to the following grading system:

13.1.1	Grade Interpretation	Points Earned Per Term Hour
	A = 93.00-100.00 Exceptional Performance	4.00
	A- = 90.00-92.99	3.70
	B+= 87.00-89.99	3.30
	B = 83.00-86.99 Good Performance	3.00
	B- = 80.00-82.99	2.70
	C+= 77.00-79.99	2.30
	C = 73.00-76.99 Minimally Acceptable Performance	2.00
	C- = 70.00-72.99	1.70
	F = <u>&lt;</u> 69.99 Failure-Unsatisfactory Performance	0.00

#### Other Designations (No Grade Points Earned)

Honors: Outstanding Performance - assigned credit earned

Pass: Satisfactory Performance - assigned credit earned

CR: Credit - credit earned

AU: Audit - no credit earned

I: Incomplete - no credit earned

R: Deferred (course work in progress) - no credit earned

W: Withdrawal - no credit earned

### 13.2 Failing Grade (F)

- 13.2.1 To earn the program degree, all failing grades must be remediated. Failure in course may be attended to by examination, remediation, or reenrollment as determined by the instructor and in conjunction with Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

- 13.2.2 If the failing grade is not removed within the time frame indicated in Section 13.2.4 and 13.2.5 the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.
- 13.2.3 If the failing grade is remediated by examination, this must occur before the end of the next academic term.
- 13.2.4 If the failing grade is remediated by a process of course remediation, this must occur before the end of the next academic term.
- 13.2.5 If the failing grade is remediated by reenrollment, the student must reenroll in the next course offering.
- 13.2.6 The highest possible grade for a student who reenrolls in or remediates a course is a "B."
- 13.3 **Incomplete (I)**
- 13.31 The temporary designation Incomplete (I) may be used when a complete course evaluation cannot be rendered because course requirements were not fulfilled due to an excused absence.
- 13.3.2 An Incomplete (I) grade may be given only when the work in a course is not completed and when the course faculty member and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education determines that a passing grade in the course is attainable.
- 13.3.3 Incomplete grades must be resolved within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete (I) grade was received.
- 13.3.4 If unresolved after a total of 45 days, the Registrar will change the Incomplete (I) grade to a Failing (F) grade unless the student has been granted a Withdrawal (W) from the course and a Leave of Absence from the program.
- 13.3.5 When the Incomplete (I) designation is used, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education will submit to the Registrar, in writing, the reason for the designation of the Incomplete (I) and the student academic standing in the course to date.
- 13.3.6 The final grade of a student who receives an Incomplete is the decision of the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

13.4 **Deferred (R)**

13.4.1 In certain courses where the normal work of the course extends beyond the scheduled period, a Deferred (R) grade may be granted with prior approval from the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education or their designee. Deferred grades must be resolved before the end of the degree program.

13.5 **Withdraw (W)**

13.5.1 To withdraw from a required course, a student must obtain the approval of the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education. The desire to avoid a low grade is not an acceptable reason for withdrawal from a course.

13.6 **Grade Mediation**

A student who has a concern about a reported grade in a course should first discuss the grading policies and determinations with the instructor and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education. It is expected that the student, the instructor, and the Director/Dean will address any misunderstandings and will attempt to resolve any disagreements over a reported grade.

13.6.1 On occasion, circumstances may develop in which a student and the Director/Dean disagree about a student's grade. The student may then appeal the grade decision, in writing, to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs if necessary.

13.6.2 The student has five (5) business days from the date the grade is posted to the transcript, to bring the appeal to the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/ Dean of International and Continuing Education to begin the mediation process. Once a reply has been provided to the student, and the student is still dissatisfied, they have an additional (5) business days to bring an appeal to the Provost. The appeal will be resolved by the Provost within five (5) business days from the date the Provost receives the appeal.

13.7 **Change of Grade**

Once submitted to the Office of the Registrar, no grade may be changed without the written consent of the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education.

13.8 **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

13.8.1 The student cumulative grade point average is calculated using only courses taken in the degree program. The student cumulative grade point average (GPA) is the weighted mean value of all grade points earned by the student in all courses taken for letter grades. The total number of grade

points divided by the total credits used to calculate the grade points equals the grade point average.

13.8.2 Honors (H) or Pass (P) will not be converted to grade points and therefore, is not calculated into grade point average (GPA).

13.9 Audit (AU) (N/A)

13.10 Drop/Add Period (N/A)

13.11 Credit (CR) (N/A)

13.11.1 Evaluation and Acceptance of Transfer Credit (N/A)

13.11.2 Credit through Experiential Learning (N/A)

13.11.3 Competency-based Assessment (N/A)

## **14. END OF TERM ACADEMIC STANDING**

14.1 A student is in good academic standing when progressing normally in the curriculum and attaining an overall grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 3.0.

14.2 Faculty will notify the student, the registrar, and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education of any midterm weak or failures.

14.3 A student is considered on academic probation when their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of a quarter.

14.4 A student is dismissed from the academic program when their cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for any two quarters and/or they do not successfully Complete all academic requirements (see Section 18).

## **15. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

15.1 Students enrolled at Salus University are expected to make, at minimum, satisfactory academic progress by remaining in good academic standing (see Section 14.1). A student who is experiencing academic difficulty should, at their earliest opportunity, speak with the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education regarding their performance.

15.1.2 The student may choose to contact the Center for Personal and Professional

Development regarding personal counseling opportunities, or other related matters at any time.

## **16. ENROLLMENT**

- 16.1 Under usual circumstances, a matriculated student must complete all didactic coursework in no more than one year (not including approved Leaves of Absence). The Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education must approve any exceptions to the total length of program.

## **17. REMEDIATION and RE-ENROLLMENT**

- 17.1 The student is responsible for remediation of a failed course. The student has up to two attempts to remediate the course. The remediation plan will be communicated to the student by the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education. The highest possible grade for a student who re-enrolls in or remediates a course is a "B" grade.
- 17.2 Student remediation will have fees assigned to each course determined by the Registrar. A student must pay all fees in full in advance of the remediation activity.
- 17.3 A student who fails a course remediation two times will be dismissed from the program (see Section 18).

## **18. COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS (CAP)**

- 18.1 The Committee is selected by the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/ Dean of International and Continuing Education. The Committee is composed of four faculty members, with at least one faculty member that instructs in the program. There are three voting members and one non-voting Chair of the Committee. The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/ Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education appoints the Chair of the Committee.

18.2 The Committee on Academic Promotions is responsible for hearing an appeal for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on the criteria outlined in the End of Term Academic Progress Evaluation. The Committee on Academic Promotions 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
- Reinstatement the student, either immediately, or at a future date if warranted by exceptional circumstances.

18.2.1 If the Committee's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the Committee on Academic Promotions 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
- Recommend academic, medical, or psychological evaluation

The Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education will review the conditions put forth by the Committee on Academic Promotions. This process is to ensure feasibility of enacting the conditions and to determine the student final curriculum/course scheduling and requirements.

18.2.2 A student who is required to re-enroll and repeat a course is responsible for the academic/clinical work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the course reenrollment. The student is responsible for tuition and related educational costs associated with required course re-enrollment.

18.2.3 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 controlled patient care activities. A student appealing their dismissal may continue participation in all academic activities unless otherwise prohibited, until the formal appeals process is exhausted. Remediation exams or re-enrollment may occur only after the student is formally reinstated.

## **19. REINSTATEMENT AND DISMISSAL APPEAL**

### **19.1 Reinstatement Without Appeal**

19.1.1 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may be reinstated to the program, upon a consensus recommendation at the Academic Progress Meeting and with the approval of the Dean of the Department of International and Continuing Education without having to formally appeal to the Committee on Academic Promotions. 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.

### **19.2 Reinstatement with Appeal**

19.2.1 If a student dismissed for academic reasons chooses to appeal their dismissal, the appeal and request for reinstatement must be addressed, in writing and in English, to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Promotions and submitted to the Registrar's Office within three (3) business days after the notification of the dismissal. Included in this letter of appeal should be a written explanation of why the student believes their appeal for reinstatement should be considered and granted by the Committee on Academic Promotions. The letter may include additional supporting documents or enclosures.

19.2.2 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.

### **19.3 Conduct of the Appeal Hearing**

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

19.3.2 Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control, which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. 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 on Academic Promotions as part of the written statement of appeal. This may include letters from physicians or other health-care providers, obituary notice or a copy of a death certificate.

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

- 19.3.4 A primary focus of the Committee on Academic Promotions is to determine the student's potential for future academic success. Extenuating circumstances alone may not provide sufficient reason for reinstatement of the student.
- 19.3.5 The Committee on Academic Promotions grants reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced the student can make marked improvement in their academic performance. The student has the right to provide written letters (in English) of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.
- 19.3.6 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.
- 19.3.7 Requests for an extension to an appeal should be in writing and in English by the student, addressed to the Chairperson of the Committee on Academic Promotions, and submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least three (3) business days prior to the scheduled hearing.
- 19.3.8 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 normally heard.
- 19.3.9.1 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.
- 19.3.9.2 The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording will remain 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 in English must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. A fee will be charged to cover the transcription expense.
- 19.3.9.3 Any member of the Committee may recuse or decline participation in any hearing because of conflict.
- 19.3.9.4 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 the scheduled hearing.

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

19.3.9.6 The student shall be promptly notified in writing, and in English of the action of the Committee on Academic Promotions, including all requirements set forth by the Committee, within five (5) business days following the hearing.

19.3.9.7 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 Advisement and Assistance Available to Student Regarding CAP**

19.4.1 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 another online communication 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 their 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 two (2) business days in advance.

19.4.2 The Dean of Student Affairs is available to:

- Explain to the student the actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions;
- Inform the student 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 the student the steps in the appeals process.

#### **19.5 Appealing a Decision of CAP Not Involving Dismissal**

19.5.1 Students may appeal non-dismissal actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions in the form of a letter (in English) directed to

the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. 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 them of the actions of the Committee on Academic Promotion.

- 19.5.2 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs must consider every case in which a student requests an appeal. The Provost 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.
- 19.5.3 The student may also elect to have forwarded to the Provost written statements in English from faculty members or other directly related individuals in support of their appeal. The Provost, after consulting with faculty and administrators, will consider and rule on the appeal.
- 19.5.4 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 Provost 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.
- 19.5.5 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs' decision on the appeal may uphold, modify or reverse any previous decision. The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Provost concerning the appeal. The decision of the Provost regarding the appeal of a decision of the Committee on Academic Promotions not involving dismissal is final.
- 19.6 Appealing a Decision of CAP Involving Dismissal**
- 19.6.1 The student may appeal to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs when the decision of the Committee on Academic Promotions is to dismiss the student. The request must be made by the student, in writing and in English and addressed to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and must be limited to an administrative review, indicating alleged improprieties in the process/hearing by/before the Committee on Academic Promotions, or new information which was unavailable to the student at the time of the hearing before the Committee on Academic Promotions.
- 19.6.2 The request is not to be used for additional fact finding. New information, which was available, but not presented to the Committee on Academic Promotions will not be considered.
- 19.6.3 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 them of the actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions. The purpose of the appeal is to ensure the appropriate procedure has been adequately followed so that the opportunity clearly existed to introduce mitigating or other circumstances.

- 19.6.4 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs may serve alone or may select up to three members of the faculty, administrative staff or others, as they deem 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) business 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).
- 19.6.5 In their absence, the Provost/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 Committee on Academic Promotions, and, if necessary, testimony by the appropriate Committee Chairperson or other individuals, as deemed appropriate by the Provost or the Chair of the Advisory Committee.
- 19.6.6 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 Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Advisory Committee.
- 19.6.7 Upon completion of their investigation, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs shall render their decision or the decision of the Advisory Committee in writing, to the student.
- 19.6.8 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.
- 19.6.9 The student may participate in all academic activities until all appeals have been exhausted.
- 19.7 The decision of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is final. There are no further appeals within the University.

## **20. PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS**

20.1 Graduation and awarding of the Master of Science in Clinical Optometry degree is 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 demonstrate the professional attributes and conduct necessary for the practice of optometry and failure to do so could lead to dismissal for non-academic reasons.

## **21. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

21.1 Refer to the *Student Leave of Absence Policy* on Salus University's website for detailed information about leaves of absence.

### **21.2 Program Placement upon Return from a Leave of Absence**

21.2.1 Upon returning from a Leave of Absence, regardless of the type, the student's permanent record and status is reviewed by the Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education. A repeat of course(s), clinical observation, or other academic conditions may be required if deemed necessary. Additional fees for repeated work will also apply.

## **22. WITHDRAWAL**

22.1 The following sets forth policy guidelines for student withdrawal from the program. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of the student and of the University. Unusual problems, not anticipated by this document, may arise. They will be reviewed and handled according to the individual circumstances.

22.2 A student may withdraw voluntarily from the program at any time. A student who wishes to withdraw must communicate directly with the Dean of Student Affairs. The student must notify in writing of the withdrawal and the reason(s) for the withdrawal.

22.3 The official records of a student who does not formally withdraw from the program will not be released until the student obtains the required signatures on the withdrawal form and returns the form to the Office of the Registrar.

22.4 A student who wishes to seek readmission to the program must follow the procedures outlined in *Section 23 - Readmission* of this policy.

22.5 If the student is granted readmission, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education will determine the content of the student's academic program, entry point, conditions, and requirements pertinent to the readmitted student's curriculum.

## **23. READMISSION**

23.1 A student who has been dismissed for academic or non-academic reasons or a student who has withdrawn from the program may seek readmission to the program.

23.2 A student in any of these categories who wishes to be readmitted to the program at Salus University should re-apply to the Office of Admissions in the manner as any new applicant. Application procedures are outlined in the University catalog and online on the University website.

## **24. STUDENT RECORDS**

### **24.1 Student Records and Files**

24.1.1 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 university'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.

24.1.2 Salus University maintains a Permanent Record File on each student. Included in a student file are the original application form, the undergraduate and graduate record, if applicable, and the letter of acceptance. After the enrollment of the student at Salus University, the student file contains course enrollment forms, grades, letters of correspondence concerning the student, letters indicating actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions, communications concerning scholarships, and other correspondence relating to the student's education at Salus University.

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

24.1.4 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 subsequent amendments.

## **24.2 Examination of Student Records**

- 24.2.1 A student, by means of written request to the Dean of Student Affairs and the Registrar, may examine their 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 which 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 as it relates to them. 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.
- 24.2.2 A student may obtain a copy of their student record. The costs of photocopying or duplicating records shall be borne by the student.
- 24.2.3 A student may challenge the accuracy of information contained in their record, or may challenge that information if a record represents an undue invasion of the student's 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 made in writing. If a change in grade is submitted, the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education must indicate in writing the reason for doing so and complete the appropriate Change of Grade Form.
- 24.2.4 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.

## **24.3 Transfer of Student Information**

- 24.3.1 The student will be notified of the transfer of any information within the student file to persons or institutions other than those associated with or affiliated with Salus University. Such information may be transferred only:
- 24.3.1.1 By reason of a valid subpoena or judicial order of a court;
- 24.3.1.2 To federal or state educational agencies, provided the agency requests the information in writing and specifies the purpose for acquiring the information;

- 24.3.1.3 To organizations responsible for the accreditation of Salus University;
- 24.3.1.4 Upon written request of the student to persons they designate (e.g., educational institutions, hospitals, and licensing boards).
- 24.3.1.4.1 It must be noted that the University or program is not permitted to send to other agencies or individuals copies of non-Salus University transcripts, admission test scores, National Examination 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.
- 24.3.2 The Office of the Registrar will prepare a transcript of the student record based upon information in the student file. The student must request in writing the persons, institutions, or licensing boards to which the letters or transcripts are to be sent. The student may also request a copy of the transcript(s) and may challenge the accuracy of the information to be transmitted. The initial challenge should be made to the Registrar, who prepares the letter or transcript, with the ultimate appeal to the Dean of Student Affairs.
- 24.3.3 The records of students shall be kept under the name used for admission to Salus University unless the student files a *Change of Name Form* with the Office of the Registrar while in attendance at the University. Names cannot be modified after the student's graduation.
- 24.4 Release of Information (Grades, Tests, Scores, etc.)**
- 24.4.1 Official grades can be transmitted from Salus University to another institution only through the Office of the Registrar. The program may not transmit grade information on behalf of the Office of the Registrar to another institution, department, individual faculty member, registrar, etc.
- 24.4.2 If a student requests a letter of recommendation, the individual faculty member may state only the grade earned in the course(s) and a narrative that describes the faculty member's first-hand knowledge and experience of the student. Information obtained from outside sources will not be included.
- 24.4.3 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. However, any posted scores must contain a statement to the effect that they do not constitute a final course grade.
- 24.4.4 When posting grades, faculty members will follow federal and state laws that prohibit the posting of scores, grades, or other information that can in any way identify a student.

24.4.5 Scores on examinations and assignments may be given to students on an individual basis (i.e., placed in the student's standard (WHAT IS A STANDARD?) in a "sealed" manner, or posted electronically).

**24.5 Transcripts**

24.5.1 Only the final grades appears on the transcript. If a student fails a course, the grade appears on the transcript as well as the re-enrollment grade(s) when applicable (see Section 21). The final transcript grades issued at graduation cannot be modified or challenged except for clerical errors.

**25. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

25.1 Salus University complies with federal and state regulations regarding students with disabilities. The University is committed to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities at the University, in order to participate freely and actively in all facets of University life. Salus University, therefore, will make an effort to provide students with reasonable academic accommodations. Students requesting academic accommodations should contact the Office for Academic Success (OAS). Students have the responsibility for requesting assistance and for providing documentation of conditions that may warrant academic accommodations. Once the OAS has determined a student has a disability-related need for accommodation, the the OAS and the student will address those needs with the student's course instructor(s) and the Director of the MSc in Clinical Optometry degree program/Dean of International and Continuing Education to inform them of the specific accommodations.

25.2 A student who does not register each semester with the OAS is not permitted to receive accommodation and may not petition the course instructor(s) directly.