



**College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program**

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM ACADEMIC POLICY  
Class of 2020

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 This academic policy applies to all College of Health Sciences, Physician Assistant (PA) 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 College of Health Sciences, Physician Assistant Program, in conjunction with the Salus University Academic Policy Committee, Educational Policy Curriculum Committee (EPCC), Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, and the Registrar have developed this policy to uphold the educational standards of Salus University and the College of Health Sciences for all students.
- 1.3 Unless otherwise stated, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is the individual charged with rendering final interpretations of the policy and deciding whether to grant exceptions to the policy.

## 2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with his/her departmental staff, are charged with the oversight of the curriculum and other academic matters. The Office of Academic Affairs creates and modifies the curriculum, in conjunction with the physician assistant faculty and the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee. 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 Physician Assistant Program and his/her faculty and staff are charged with the administration of all PA Program curricula, courses, and modules.
  - 2.2.1 The Director of Didactic Education is charged with general oversight and responsibility for all didactic education within the curriculum.
  - 2.2.2 The Director of Clinical Education, in collaboration with the Clinical Coordinator, is charged with general oversight and responsibility for all clinical education within the curriculum.
- 2.3 The Director of the Physician Assistant Program, in collaboration with the Medical Director, Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation, and Principal Faculty, is responsible for monitoring the progress of

PA Program students, and developing remedial programs when it is deemed necessary to ensure a student's academic success.

- 2.4 The Director of the Physician Assistant Program is responsible for the Program's organization, administration, fiscal management, continuous assessment, strategic development and accreditation process as well as other responsibilities, as delegated and assigned by the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- 2.5 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is charged with the administration of matters related to admissions and academic counseling.
- 2.6 The Vice President/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, tutoring services, and special events. The Dean of Student Affairs oversees the Office of Admissions, the Center for Personal and Professional Development, the Office of Academic Success, and the Office of the Registrar. Under the auspices of the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining the students' permanent records.

### 3. ADMISSION PREREQUISITES

- 3.1 Specific prerequisite requirements can be found in the current University catalog, the PA Program brochure, as well as on the Salus University website under *Physician Assistant Program, Application Process, Criteria and Prerequisites*.
- 3.2 Successful completion of prerequisite courses is required in all instances before a student may matriculate, unless an exception has been approved by the Program Director.
- 3.3 Advanced Placement Policy: The Salus University Physician Assistant Program does not grant advanced placement based upon transfer of credits for academic work completed at other institutions of higher learning or prior experiential learning. All courses within the curriculum are required. Matriculating students who have withdrawn or been dismissed from the Program may be awarded advanced placement depending upon the designed remediation plan related to their readmission.

## 4. UNIVERSITY AND PROGRAM ACADEMIC CALENDARS

- 4.1 The University Calendar provides the beginning and ending dates for each term as well as University holidays.
- 4.1.1 The PA Program 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.
- 4.2 Any travel or other commitments scheduled on days reserved for academic activities may result in penalty (Please refer to 5.1-5.3.2 Attendance).
- 4.3 The PA Program Academic Calendar is distributed no later than 7 days prior to the start of the term.
- 4.4 Instructors and student cohorts need prior approval from the PA Program Director or his/her designee in order to change the PA Program Academic Calendar once it has been published.
- 4.5 The PA Academic Calendar is subject to change due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. faculty illness or inclement weather). Students are notified promptly of any changes via google calendar and email notification.

## 5. ATTENDANCE

- 5.1 Attendance at all learning activities (e.g. lectures, labs, small group sessions, meetings, clinical experiences) being fundamental to academic success, is mandatory. This applies to face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous on-line activities. Accordingly, students are required to attend every class for which they are scheduled.
- 5.2 A syllabus will be distributed for each didactic and clinical course and will describe the course requirements, expected learning outcomes and objectives grading policy and attendance policy.
- 5.3 The consequences of unexcused absences will be determined by the course director in conjunction with the Program Director and may result in a professionalism grade deduction, warning or citation. An unexcused absence from a didactic year exam or quiz will result in the student completing the assessment for a **maximum grade of 65**. Repeated unexcused absences may result in a course grade of Failure (F) upon review by the Program Director.

5.3.1 A student is expected to inform the PA Program Director or their designee of family or medical situations that may result in extended class absences. The Office of Student Affairs must also be notified.

5.3.2 Attendance and absences as described in this policy apply to all scheduled examinations.

#### **5.4 Excused Absences: Activities Not Involving Clinical Rotations (Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences-SCPEs)**

5.4.1 Class participation is defined in individual course syllabi. A student absence is defined as missing a class/lecture/group activity or the inability to meet the minimum criteria for participation set forth in the syllabus.

5.4.2 Any student who is absent from a required activity must complete and submit an absence-approval request form with required documentation to the Dean of Student Affairs. These forms may be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.

5.4.3 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit proper documentation **within 48 hours** to the Dean of Student Affairs upon their return. The Dean of Student Affairs will inform the Program Director and the appropriate course director(s) of all PA student approved or unapproved excused absences.

5.4.4 For an anticipated absence, a student is required to submit documentation **at least 2 weeks prior** to their absence to the Dean of Students Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs will then inform the Program Director regarding the excused absence. If a student is aware of an anticipated excused absence, the student should do everything in their power to complete the coursework in a timely manner.

5.4.5 **One excused absence will be permitted for each semester in the didactic year. One excused absence is defined as one day.** Should a student require more than one excused absence per semester, the Director of Didactic Education must review and approve the request.

5.4.5.1 **One excused absence will be permitted for the third year student cohort during the fall session. One excused absence is defined as one day.** Should a student require more than one excused absence during the summer session, the Director of Clinical Education and/or the Clinical Coordinator must review and approve the request.

5.4.6 Excused absences may include, but are not limited to the following:



- 5.4.6.1 A statement from the healthcare provider that, at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under their care and too ill to take the examination or to attend class.
- 5.4.6.2 A statement from the healthcare provider that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.
- 5.4.6.3 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.
- 5.4.6.4 Documented failure of normal or auxiliary means of transportation.
- 5.4.6.5 Personal event such as student's marriage.
- 5.4.6.6 Childbirth (maternity and paternity policy of Salus University takes precedence).
- 5.4.6.7 Educational or professional considerations, e.g., attendance at a professional meeting. The Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs will apply the Student Academic Travel Policy as outlined in the Salus University Student Handbook.
- 5.4.6.8 The determination of whether an absence not specifically covered above is excused shall be decided by the Dean of Student Affairs in consultation with the Program Director.
- 5.4.7 All work missed during an excused absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the PA Program course directors, prior to receiving a grade for the course.
  - 5.4.7.1 All work must be completed within a period of time designated by the PA Program course directors. Unfinished work resulting in a grade of Incomplete (I) must be resolved as outlined in section 9.6.
- 5.4.8 If absences are excessive, a student may be required to take a leave of absence.

## **5.5 Excused Absences from Clinical Rotations (Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences-SCPEs)**

- 5.5.1 Part of the PA Program education is learning the values necessary to be a competent Physician Assistant. One of these is a sense of responsibility and obligation to commitments. Students make a commitment to patient care for all clinical assignments. Failure to immediately inform the health care team of

an absence, and its reason, demonstrates insensitivity to this important professional value. There may be instances where timely communication with the team is nearly impossible; however, casual attitudes regarding this responsibility will not be tolerated. This portion of the academic policy applies to all clinical/patient care activities.

- 5.5.2 Attendance is mandatory at all patient care activities.
- 5.5.3 A student must inform the PA Program Clinical Coordinator and/or the Director of Clinical Education and their preceptor of any absence immediately, unless the student is physically unable to communicate (please refer to the Clinical Year Manual for a detailed explanation).
- 5.5.4 Any student who is absent from a required clinical activity must complete and submit an absence-approval request form with required documentation to the Dean of Student Affairs. These forms may be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.
- 5.5.5 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit proper documentation **within 48 hours** to the Dean of Student Affairs following their return. The Dean of Student Affairs will inform the Program Director of all PA student approved excused absences.
- 5.5.6 For an anticipated absence, a student is required to submit documentation **two weeks prior** to his/her absence to the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs will inform the Program Director of all PA student approved anticipated excused absences. If a student is aware of an anticipated excused absence, the student should do everything in their power to complete the coursework in a timely manner.
- 5.5.7 **One excused absence will be permitted per quarter during the clinical phase of the program. One excused absence is defined as one day.** Should a student require more than one excused absence per quarter, the Director of Clinical Education and/or Clinical Coordinator must review and approve the request.
- 5.5.8 Acceptable reasons for "excused "absenteeism may include the following:
  - 5.5.8.1 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 his/her clinical rotation.
  - 5.5.8.2 A statement that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.

- 5.5.8.3 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.
- 5.5.8.4 Documented failure of normal and auxiliary means of transportation.
- 5.5.8.5 Personal event such as student's marriage.
- 5.5.8.6 Childbirth (maternity and paternity policy of Salus University takes precedence).
- 5.5.8.7 For educational or professional considerations, (e.g., attendance at a professional meeting), the preceptor in conjunction with the Clinical Coordinator and the Program Director must grant approval. If granted, the length of the approved absence will be determined as part of the review process. These requests must be made at least **two weeks prior** to the desired event.
- 5.5.9 Any excuse not specifically covered above shall be addressed and resolved by the Dean of Student Affairs in consultation with the Program Director.
- 5.5.10 All work missed during the absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the preceptor, Clinical Coordinator, and Director of Clinical Education prior to receiving a grade for the rotation (supervised clinical practice experience). If make-up time extends beyond the term, the student will receive an Incomplete (I) until the required work is completed. Please refer to section 9.6 about Incomplete (I) grades.
- 5.5.11 All work must be completed within a period of time designated by the Clinical Coordinator and the Director of Clinical Education.
- 5.5.12 A student may appeal to the Physician Assistant Program Director, if they feel that the policy is not being honored or equitably enforced.
- 5.5.13 If absences are excessive, as determined by the Program, a student may be required to take a leave of absence and/or repeat the course. If the student has not taken appropriate measures to withdraw from the course, the student may receive a failing grade (F) in the course.

## **5.6 Unexcused Absences from Clinical Rotations (Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences-SCPEs)**

- 5.6.1 An "unexcused absence" is any absence that does not meet the criteria for excused absence as outlined in section 5.4.6.

- 5.6.2 Should a student fail to meet professional responsibilities because of consistent lack of attendance or lateness, they may receive a professionalism grade deduction, warning or citation, or be placed on academic warning, probation, or suspension by the PA Program Director. The matter may then be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions for review and further action. A pattern of unexcused absences, lateness or early departure from clinical rotation activities could also result in dismissal from Salus University for unprofessional conduct.

## 6. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING E-MAIL

- 6.1 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 regularly check their Salus University email account during weekends, breaks, holidays and other unassigned times for the duration of their matriculation within the Program.
- 6.2 Students are required to use their Salus University email account when communicating with faculty, staff and administrators at Salus University unless otherwise advised. 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 Salus University email accounts.

## 7. ADDRESSING COURSE CONCERNS

- 7.1 Course concerns/problems should be initially discussed with the instructor and, if necessary, course director. If the concerns are not resolved satisfactorily, then they should be brought to the attention of the Director of Didactic Education/Director of Clinical Education or Clinical Coordinator and ultimately the PA Program Director. Students should feel free to discuss concerns with the Program Director without fear of retaliation from Program faculty or staff.
- 7.2 In the event that the Program Director is the course instructor or is otherwise a direct participant in the underlying dispute, the situation should be discussed with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. As above, students should feel free to discuss their concerns with senior administration without fear of retaliation.
- 7.3 Classroom discrimination or sexual harassment concerns should be brought to the immediate attention of the Physician Assistant Program Director, the University Affirmative Action Officer, and/or the Dean of Student Affairs.

## 8. EXAMINATIONS

- 8.1 General Policies-Please see Examination Protocol and Item Challenge Policy in PA Program Student Handbook.
- 8.1.1 Examinations provide the opportunity for instructors and students to assess academic progress. The policies stated in the sections below refer to both on-campus and online courses.
- 8.1.2 Examination Protocol and Item Challenge Policy is outlined in the PA Program Student Handbook. Students are responsible for understanding these rules. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Program Director or the Office of Academic Affairs.
- 8.1.3 Infractions of the examination protocol are considered serious offenses. Students guilty of infractions will be penalized in an appropriate manner, including the possibility of expulsion from Salus University. These matters will be referred to the Judicial Committee for review and further action.
- 8.1.4 Exam policies and procedures for a course will be included in the course syllabus, which will be made available at the beginning of each academic term.
- 8.1.5 Course directors will include in the course syllabus the relative weights assigned to various examinations/assignments, and evaluation procedures used in determining the final grade.
- 8.2 Schedules**
- 8.2.1 Examination schedules are determined by the course director and are identified in each syllabus and on the Program's Academic Calendar.
- 8.2.2 Examination schedules are subject to change for academic or unanticipated reasons.
- 8.2.3 In the event of extremely harsh weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about school closing via the RAVE system. Students should consult the PA Student Handbook for additional information regarding an emergency school closing. Students scheduled for clinical experiences should abide by the recommendations made by their assigned clinical site regarding attendance during inclement weather. If students have questions they should call and email the designated Physician Assistant Department support personnel for clarification. Students should call the PA Program at 215-780-1515 between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm EST.

### **8.3 Examination Attendance**

- 8.3.1 Students are required to take examinations as scheduled. If a student is ill and is unable to take the examination, they must notify the course director, Director of Didactic or Clinical Education and Dean of Student Affairs prior to the exam and have their clinician submit a written verification of care. In cases of other emergencies (e.g. severe illness or death of immediate family member), the course director, Program Director and Dean of Student Affairs should be notified and may authorize absence from the exam. An unexcused absence from a didactic year exam or quiz will result in the student completing the assessment for a maximum grade of 65. (Please refer to section 5 Attendance). Please see section 9.3 for the policy on Clinical Rotation grades.
- 8.3.2 A student must be registered for any given course before they may take the course examinations. No credit will be received for any course for which the student is not formally registered. The Registrar's Office is responsible for ensuring that only registered students receive a grade in a particular course.

### **8.4 National Examinations**

- 8.4.1 Upon graduation, passage of the PANCE is required for initial practice in all 50 states. The Program will provide instruction on the structure of the PANCE, eligibility requirements and the administration process of the examination.
- 8.4.2 A student should consult the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) website for general information and registration procedures.

## **9. ASSESSMENT AND GRADES**

9.1 All students are expected to pursue the highest standards of academic excellence.

9.1.1 Grading System: The Program will, at the conclusion of a course or term will submit a final grade for each student to the Registrar based on the following:

Grade	Range	Interpretation	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour
A	(93.00 – 100)	Indicates exceptional performance	4.00
A <sup>-</sup>	(90.00 – 92.99)		3.70
B <sup>+</sup>	(87.00 – 89.99)		3.30
B	(83.00 – 86.99)	Indicates good performance	3.00
B <sup>-</sup>	(80.00 – 82.99)		2.70
C <sup>+</sup>	(77.00 – 79.99)	Indicates minimally acceptable performance	2.30
C	(73.00 – 76.99)		2.00
C <sup>-</sup>	(70.00 – 72.99)	Credit earned but below desired standards	1.70
F	(< 69.99)	Failure: Indicates unsatisfactory performance	0.00

**\*\*Other Designations (carrying no quality points)**

F (FAILURE)	Unsatisfactory performance **Reenrollment in the course is required in order to secure credit	
H (HONORS)	Indicates outstanding performance	
P (PASS)	Indicates performance meeting all competencies or requirements	
I (INCOMPLETE)		
R	(DEFERRED/course work IN PROGRESS)	
W	(WITHDRAWAL)	

9.1.2 Grade Point Average: See 9.11 A student's cumulative grade point average is the weighted mean value of all grade points. Grades are used to calculate grade points by multiplying the number of credits for each course by the specified grade point value assigned to the letter grade. The total number of grade points divided by the total number of credits is used to determine the grade point average.

9.1.3 Following completion of the summative evaluations, the PA Principal Faculty will present its recommendations for progression and graduation to the Academic Progress Committee.

## 9.2 Failing Grades (F)

9.2.1 Failure of more than one course in any one didactic semester will result in dismissal of the student from the PA Program.

9.2.2 A grade of "C-" or greater must be obtained in each course.

9.2.3 If a student obtains a term or cumulative GPA of less than 2.80, they are placed on academic probation. If a student is unable to raise the cumulative GPA to

2.80 or greater in the subsequent term, they are subject to dismissal from the Program.

9.2.4 All academic deficiencies (grade of "F") must be remediated prior to beginning of clinical rotations (supervised clinical practice experiences-SCPEs). A cumulative GPA of 2.80 is required to progress to the clinical year of the Program.

9.2.5 The PA Program Director, in conjunction with the Directors of Didactic and Clinical Education, and Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation, will determine the re-examination schedule to assess remedial education.

### 9.3 Clinical Rotation (Supervised Clinical Practice Experience-SCPE) Grades

9.3.1 At the conclusion of a clinical rotation, grades are rendered for each enrolled student, as described in Section 9.1.1 above.

#### 9.3.1.1 End of Rotation Examinations:

At the end of every core rotation, the student will take the corresponding PAEA End of Rotation™ multiple choice examination, based upon a defined set of learning objectives/topic areas. **The minimum passing grade is a scale score of 371.**

Failure to receive a passing grade on the end of rotation examination will require the student to meet with the Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation and the Clinical Coordinator or Director of Clinical Education for a faculty-directed plan of remediation. Remediation will include a detailed review of exam performance, discussion of identified areas of strengths and weaknesses, and approaches to focused areas of study. A second assessment will be administered at a time determined by the Clinical Team in the best interest of the student. If the student receives a passing grade on the second attempt examination, and all other requirements for the rotation are met, then the highest grade that can be earned for this second assessment is a 70. Failure of the second examination will result in a failure of the clinical rotation. A failure of the clinical rotation will require the student to adhere to a structured, faculty directed remedial plan and successful completion of all requirements of a repeated clinical rotation. This may result in a delayed graduation and associated additional costs are the responsibility of the student.

The student can fail a maximum of one end of rotation examination within the clinical year and receive the opportunity to remediate and retest. If the student fails an additional end of rotation examination then it is an automatic failure of



that rotation. Failure of the rotation will require the student to repeat all components of the clinical rotation. The replacement site will be determined by the Clinical Team. *Any combination of TWO failed rotations will result in dismissal from the Program and referral to the CAP (Committee on Academic Promotions).*

#### 9.3.1.2 Preceptor Evaluation:

A minimum score of 70% must be achieved on this evaluation to pass the rotation. Students who receive more than six (6) "fair" grades on the expected competency domains are required to review areas of deficiencies with the Clinical Team and develop a plan for improvement. Remedial intervention will be instituted for these students. Students receiving below 70% or failing any of the professionalism components of the evaluation will receive a failing grade for the rotation and will have to repeat **ALL** components of the rotation.

#### 9.3.1.3 **Any combination of TWO failed clinical rotations will result in dismissal from the Program and referral to the Committee on Academic Promotions.**

9.3.1.4 At the conclusion of a clinical course, components of the final grade are recorded. However, these grades are not reported to the Registrar until the completion of the quarter.

9.3.1.5 Failures in a clinical course must be addressed through remediation and subsequent reassessment, or re-enrollment as determined by the Director of Clinical Education and the PA Program Clinical Coordinator. The timing for remediation or reenrollment will be determined by the Director of Clinical Education and the PA Program Clinical Coordinator. Failure to comply with the remediation/reenrollment plan will result in dismissal from the program for academic reasons.

9.4 Credit by Transfer (CR): Credits by transfer are not accepted in the Physician Assistant Program.

9.5 Audit (AU): The PA Program does not permit courses to be audited unless it is part of a remediation plan or re-enrollment criteria.

## 9.6 Incomplete (I)

9.6.1 The temporary designation "Incomplete"(I) may be used when a complete course evaluation cannot be rendered because a component of the course was not completed due to an excused absence.

- 9.6.1.1 An Incomplete (I) grade may be given only when the work in a course is not completed and when the faculty determines that a passing grade in the course is attainable.
- 9.6.2 Incompletes must be resolved within 30 calendar days after the end of the term in which the "I" grade was received.
- 9.6.2.1 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or their designee may grant an additional 30 calendar day extension period, if written documentation is provided by the student and/or faculty member confirming that "extenuating circumstances" continue to exist. If unresolved after a total of 60 days, the Registrar will change the "I" grade to an "F" unless the student has been granted a Withdrawal from the course and/or a Leave of Absence from the program.
- 9.6.2.2 All incompletes (I) in pre-requisite courses must be removed prior to beginning the subsequent course.
- 9.6.4 When the Incomplete (I) designation is used, the faculty member will submit to the Registrar, in writing, the reason for the designation of the "Incomplete" and the student's academic standing in the course.
- 9.6.6 The final grade of a student who receives an "Incomplete" is the decision of the course director in conjunction with the Director of Didactic or Clinical Education and the Program Director.

## **9.7 Deferred (R)**

- 9.7.1 In certain courses, where the normal work of the course extends beyond the scheduled period, a deferred grade (R) may be granted to any student enrolled in the course with prior approval from the course director and PA Program Director.
- 9.7.2 The grade of "Deferred" (R) may also be assigned with the approval of the PA Program Director if all required work in a course is completed, but a grade is unable to be determined and additional time is required to consider or investigate a grade.
- 9.7.3 For students not in good academic standing, when the "Deferred" (R) designation is used, the course director or the Office of Academic Affairs will make available to the Registrar, in writing, the tentative student grade based on the student's performance to date.

9.7.4 The Registrar will transmit this information to the Committee on Academic Promotions for all students not in good academic standing (i.e. dismissal, probation, and warning). This additional information will assist the Committee on Academic Promotions in evaluating student performance in borderline cases.

## 9.8 Withdraw (W)

9.8.1 Withdrawal from a Required Course: A student may not withdraw from required course(s), or the entire curriculum without the approval of the Program Director. The desire to avoid a low grade is not an acceptable reason for withdrawal from a course. A student who submits a course withdrawal form after the midpoint of the term will be graded withdrawal passing (WP) or withdrawal failure (WF) based upon their standing in that course. Please refer to the University website under *Compliance and Policies, Consumer Disclosures* for information regarding withdrawal procedures, refunds, and return of aid.

9.8.1.1 Withdrawals from any clinical activity are subject to the approval of the Program Director.

## 9.9 Grade Mediation and Adjudication

9.9.1 A student who has a concern or complaint about a reported grade in a course should first discuss grading practices and determinations with the assigned course director. It is expected that the student and the course director will address any misunderstandings and will attempt to achieve consensus on any disagreements over grades.

9.9.2 On rare occasions, circumstances may develop in which a student and course director disagree about a student's grade. The student may then appeal the grade decision, in writing, to the PA Program Director.

9.9.2.1 The Program Director's decision is final. There is no further appeal within the University.

9.9.2.2 In the event the Program Director teaches the course in question; the written appeal is made to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

9.9.3 Any challenge of a course grade must be made **within 7 calendar days** from the date the grade is posted.

9.9.4 All grades are considered permanent if not challenged within the time frame specified in 9.9.3.

9.9.5 The original grade assigned by the course director 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.

9.9.5.1 A grade change will be recorded in accordance with section 9.10 of this policy  
– Change of Grade

## **9.10 Change of Grade**

9.10.1 Once submitted to the Registrar, no grade, except that of Incomplete (I) or Deferred (R) may be changed without the mutual written consent of the course director and the Program Director.

## **9.11 Grade-Point Average (GPA)**

9.11.1 A student's cumulative grade point average is the weighted mean value of all grade points earned by the student in all courses taken for letter grade within the University.

9.11.2 Cumulative grade point average is calculated utilizing only courses taken within each degree program.

9.11.3 Grades are converted to grade points by multiplying the number of credits for each course by the specified formula assigned to the letter grade. For example, an A=4 credit points, a B=3 credit points, a C=2 credit points, and an F=0 credit points (an A in a four-credit course earns the student 16 grade points (4 x 4.00); a B in a four-credit course earns 12 grade points (4 x 3.00), and so on).

9.11.4 The total number of grade points divided by the total number of credits is used to determine the grade point average.

## **10. REMEDIATION**

10.1 Remediation is defined as a special comprehensive evaluation on the subject, after a period of a prescribed learning experience. (Please also refer to Remediation Policy posted in Blackboard in PA Class of 2020 under the information tab.)

10.2 A student repeating credits through remediation is required to re-register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar.

- 10.3 The remediation plan will take place during a prescribed period to be determined by the Program Director in collaboration with the Medical Director and the Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation, course director, but not in the same semester in which the student was registered in the original course.
- 10.4 The highest grade that can be earned through remediation is a grade of "C" or "P" (pass) depending on the grading scale.
- 10.5 A grade of "F", not remediated, will result in dismissal of the student for academic reasons. In all cases of remediation, the **original grade will remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the new cumulative grade point average.**
- 10.6 **A course may be remediated only once.**
- 10.7 A remediation fee will be applied for which the student is responsible.
- 10.8 Additionally, under certain circumstances, the Physician Assistant Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP) and/or the Director of the PA Program can mandate that the student remediate a grade of "C-." The student will then remediate the course in accordance with the stipulation set forth in writing by the PA Program Director.
- 10.09 The student must realize that remediation of a course may result in a grade lower than the original grade. For example, an original earned grade of "C-" may become an earned remedial grade of "F".

## 11. RE-ENROLLMENT

- 11.1 Under certain conditions a student may be required to re-enroll in a didactic course, (for example, but not limited to, CAP recommendation, course failure, protracted leave of absence, etc.)
- 11.2 A student repeating credits is required to register for those credits through the Office of the Registrar. Re-enrollment may be accomplished through any one of the following mechanisms selected by the PA Program Director or the CAP:
  - 11.2.1 Attending and satisfying all course requirements, including attendance at special examinations, independent study projects, research projects, or seminar attendance.
  - 11.2.2 A student re-enrolled may be required by the faculty to audit specified courses which they deem essential for success. (i.e. if the student is re-enrolled in

Clinical Medicine, he/she may be required to audit Physiology and Pathophysiology, and Pharmacology).

- 11.3 Re-enrollment in a didactic course must be completed **within one year** of the conclusion of the term in which the unsuccessful remediation attempt was earned.
- 11.4 The new grade earned is recorded on the transcript. If this is for a course failure, the highest grade that can be earned by re-enrollment is dependent on the grading scale defined in the Physician Assistant Academic Policy (10.4).
  - 11.4.1 Re-enrollment may result in a grade lower than the original grade earned.
  - 11.4.2 With re-enrollment, the **original grades earned will remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the new grade point average.**
  - 11.4.3 If a grade of "C-" or better is not achieved through re-enrollment for a previously failed course, the student will be dismissed from the PA Program.
- 11.5 A re-enrollment fee will be applied and the **student is responsible for all associated costs and fees.**
- 11.6 A student who re-enrolls in a course/clinical rotation for a previously failed course and does not achieve a grade of "C-" or better and/or a cumulative GPA of 2.80 will be dismissed from the PA program and be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions for further review and action.
- 11.7 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs may mandate a second re-enrollment in a course/clinical rotation. A re-enrollment fee will be applied for which the student will be held responsible.

## **12. ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS (ALSO SEE #18)**

- 12.1 **Requirements for Progression in and Completion of the PA Program**  
The following must be successfully completed for progression in the physician assistant program. Success is defined by achieving a grade of "pass" in all pass/fail courses and evaluations, a grade of "C-" or better in all graded courses, and a cumulative GPA of 2.80 or better on a 4.00 scale.)
  - Successful completion of each didactic and clinical course defined by a grade of "C-" or better and an average cumulative GPA of 2.80 or greater on a 4.00 scale.

- Successful completion of the didactic phase of the Program with an average cumulative GPA of 2.80 or greater on a 4.00 scale in order to progress into the Clinical Phase of the Program. If the student does not meet the minimum GPA requirement, the student will be dismissed from the Program and be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP).
- Successful completion of the core competency examination at the conclusion of the didactic phase of the Program (70% or better is required to pass). Should a student fail the core competency examination, they will complete a defined, comprehensive remediation under the direction of their faculty advisor as determined by the Program Director, Medical Director, and Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation. This may result in a delay to the start of the clinical year. If the student fails the second attempt after the prescribed remediation, the student will be dismissed from the Program and be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP).
- Successful completion of all rotations (supervised clinical practice experiences-SCPEs) defined by a grade of "C-" or better and an average cumulative GPA of 2.80 or greater on a 4.00 scale.
- Successful demonstration of all technical skills listed in the Clinical Passport.
- Successful completion of Capstone 1 and 2 courses (70% or better on each).
- Successful completion of the Summative Written and Practical Examinations (70% or better is required for each) administered within the final four months of the Program. Should a student fail the summative examination, they will complete a defined, comprehensive period/plan of remediation under the direction of their faculty advisor as determined by the Program Director, Medical Director, and Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation. This may result in delay of graduation. If the student fails the second attempt after remediation, the student will be dismissed from the Program and be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP).
- Demonstration of acceptable professional behavior throughout the didactic and clinical phase, both in and out of the classroom and clinical setting. Professionalism grading rubric performance and preceptor evaluations of the student will be utilized to assess the student meeting this requirement.

12.2 Academic Progress Meetings are conducted by the Registrar in conjunction with PA program faculty to assess the academic achievement and potential of all students at the midpoint and conclusion of each academic term. During the Academic Progress meeting, recommendations will be made to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs students for advancement or graduation.

### 13. END OF TERM ACADEMIC STANDING

- 13.1 The course director will evaluate the performance of all students registered within a course both during and at the end of each grading period.
- 13.2 The academic standing of each student will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Program Director, Medical Director, Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation, Directors of Didactic and Clinical Education, to determine what academic difficulties are being experienced.
  - 13.2.1 At the end of each academic term the performance of all students is evaluated and grades are sent to the Registrar for entry onto the student's record.
  - 13.2.2 Categories of Academic Standing include the following:
    - 13.2.3 *Satisfactory Academic Standing* – Students are in satisfactory academic standing when progressing normally in the curriculum and attaining a term grade point average and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 2.80.
    - 13.2.4 A student must be in satisfactory academic standing prior to beginning supervised clinical practice experiences.
    - 13.2.5 *Academic Warning* – A student may receive a notice of academic warning if their cumulative or term GPA is below 3.00. Academic warning is an indication to the student that their academic performance is in danger of falling below minimum acceptable academic expectations.
    - 13.2.6 *Academic Probation* – A student is considered on academic probation when:
      - A. The student's term or cumulative GPA at the end of an academic term falls below 2.80.
      - B. The student receives a failing grade (F) in any course/clinical rotation.
    - 13.2.7 Academic Probation status for students with grade point averages below 2.80 is removed by achieving a cumulative grade point average of 2.80 or greater in the subsequent semester.
    - 13.2.8 When students are placed on Academic Probation, they are required to meet with the Center for Personal and Professional Development, and their faculty advisor. The student is expected to take action to resolve his or her academic difficulties with the assistance of the Center for Personal and Professional Development and his/her advisor. Failure to meet with the Center for Personal and Professional Development and/or the faculty advisor may result in the



student being brought before the Committee on Academic Promotions and possible suspension or dismissal.

### **13.2.9 Academic Dismissal**

13.2.9.1 A first-year student will be dismissed from the academic program when their cumulative GPA is below 2.0 at the end of the fall semester or their cumulative GPA is below 2.80 at the end of the summer semester.

13.2.10 A student is dismissed from the academic program when their term GPA is below 2.80 for two consecutive terms; or they receive a failing (F) grade in any course for any two terms, consecutive or not.

13.2.11 If a student receives a failing grade (F) in a didactic course which is remediated and failed a second time, this will result in an Academic Dismissal.

13.2.12 Following faculty submission of grades, the Office of the Registrar will make official entry of the grades into the student record and the student will be notified in writing about their academic performance for the semester.

13.2.13 If a student is not making satisfactory progress in the Program, they will receive notification from the Office of the Registrar. The student will be required to meet with their academic advisor, the Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation and/or the Program Director.

13.2.14 A student is expected to take action to resolve their academic difficulties with the assistance of the individuals and services available to the student.

### **13.2.15 Dismissal for Other Reasons**

13.2.15.1 In addition to the academic reasons for dismissal listed above, the Program reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student, at any time, for what the University Faculty and Administration may believe to be compelling reasons.

13.2.15.2 These reasons may include, but are not limited to, the student's demeanor, base knowledge, character, as well as any form of cheating, plagiarism, unprofessional conduct or failure to pass a required criminal background check. Students receive instruction on the Salus University Student Code of Conduct and Program's expectations regarding professionalism during initial orientation and are provided online access of the University and Program policies for which they are required to sign an acknowledgement/receipt as evidence of understanding. This information is available on the University website and on Blackboard. Additionally, professionalism is taught and assessed within the PA Program.

- 13.2.15.3 Violation of the Code of Conduct of the University is viewed by the Program as evidence that the student is not suited to a professional career and constitutes adequate cause for dismissal regardless of academic performance.
- 13.3 Failure to comply with directives from the Program Director may result in dismissal of the student from the academic program. The matter may then be referred to the Committee on Academic Promotions for review and further action.
- 13.4 Professional conduct is the keystone of the physician assistant profession. As such, unprofessional conduct is not in keeping with the tenets of the profession or the University. Any student receiving two (2) "Records of Concern about Unprofessional Behavior" citations is dismissed from the program.

#### **14. COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS**

- 14.1 Composition of the Committee on Academic Promotions (CAP)
- 14.1.1 The Committee is composed of four faculty members (three voting members and a Chairperson of the Committee). A tie may occur if one of the voting members chooses to abstain. In that instance the Chairperson of the Committee may vote. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs appoints the Chairperson of the Committee.
- 14.1.2 The Dean of Student Affairs, the Registrar, a representative from the Center for Personal and Professional Development and the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs are ex-officio, nonvoting members of the Committee on Academic Promotions.
- 14.1.3 The three voting faculty members of the Committee on Academic Promotions must be present to consider an appeal for reinstatement.
- 14.1.4 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs may select a faculty member to serve as an alternate member of the Committee on Academic Promotions, 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.
- 14.2 Responsibilities of the Committee on Academic Promotions:

- 14.2.1 The Committee will hear an appeal for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on criteria outlined but not limited to Section 13 (End of Term Academic Standing).
- 14.2.2 The Committee on Academic Promotions will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal.
- 14.2.3 The Committee may review grades, scores, evaluations, and summaries concerning professional development, professional behavior, and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control that are submitted by the student and/or faculty. The Committee on Academic Promotions may request additional material as needed. All written material for consideration by the Committee for Academic Promotions **must be submitted 48 hours prior to the scheduled hearing.**
- 14.2.4 The Committee shall then make a decision either to:
- 14.2.4.1 Uphold the dismissal, or
- 14.2.4.2 Reinstate the student, either immediately, or at a future date if warranted by exceptional circumstances.
- 14.2.5 If the Committee's decision is to reinstate the student, the prerogatives of the Committee on Academic Promotions may include, but are not limited to, requiring the student to:
- 14.2.5.1 Participate in behavioral modification exercises supervised and directed by the Center for Personal and Professional Development;
- 14.2.5.2 Enroll in a course of study;
- 14.2.5.3 Continue matriculation on a decelerated program;
- 14.2.5.4 Repeat specific courses or direct service activities even if previously passed;
- 14.2.5.5 Repeat an academic year of study;
- 14.2.5.6 Obtain academic counseling;
- 14.2.5.7 Obtain academic, medical, or psychological evaluation.
- 14.2.5.8 Participate in periodic substance abuse screenings.

- 14.2.6 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs and the PA Program Director will review the stipulations put forth by the Committee on Academic Promotions. This process is to ensure feasibility of enacting the stipulations and to determine the student's final curriculum/course scheduling and requirements.
- 14.2.7 Students who are required to re-enroll and repeat a course are responsible for the academic/direct service activities work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the course reenrollment. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee, in consultation with the faculty for that course, will outline alternate conditions for said re-enrollment in writing.
- 14.2.8 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons and is appealing their dismissal may not participate in any clinical experiences, practicum activities or complete any assessments. Students may, however, continue participation in didactic course work unless otherwise prohibited until the formal appeals process is exhausted.
- 14.2.9 Re-enrollment may occur only after the student is formally reinstated.
- 14.2.10 The faculty and the Offices of Academic and Student Affairs will closely monitor the performance of all reinstated students. Their continuance in the Program will depend on their compliance with the terms of their reinstatement.

## 15. REINSTATEMENT AND DISMISSAL APPEAL

### 15.1 Reinstatement without Appeal

- 15.1.1 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may be reinstated to the PA Program, upon the recommendation of the Faculty and the Program Director and with the approval of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, without having to formally appeal to the Committee on Academic Promotions.
- 15.1.2 A student will be so notified in writing with the conditions of reinstatement **within five (5) business days** of the date of the Faculty Meeting.

### 15.2 Appeals for Reinstatement

- 15.2.1 A student who is dismissed for academic reasons and not granted reinstatement without appeal (see section 15.1.1) will have a personal hearing

for appeal automatically scheduled with the Committee on Academic Promotions, unless the student waives this right to a hearing.

15.2.2 A student who is dismissed for academic reasons (see section 13.2.9) must notify the Office of the Registrar in writing, **no later than three (3) business days** prior to his/her scheduled hearing as to whether:

15.2.2.1 A student who wishes to appeal the dismissal. The appeal should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Committee on Academic Promotions and submitted to the Registrar. Included in this letter of appeal should be a written explanation of why the student feels that their appeal for reinstatement should be considered and granted by the Committee on Academic Promotions. The student must also indicate if they will appear in person before the Committee on Academic Promotions, or

15.2.2.2 A student who wishes to waive the right of appeal.

15.2.3 A student who fails to contact the Office of the Registrar **three (3) business days** prior to the scheduled hearing will forfeit the right to his/her scheduled appeal.

15.2.4 If the student chooses not to make a formal appeal, the Registrar must make a formal notation in the student's Permanent Record File.

15.2.5 The student must submit all other information and supporting documents in writing to the Chairperson of the Committee on Academic Promotions, via the Office of the Registrar, **at least two (2) business days prior** to his/her scheduled appeal.

15.2.6 The student may also make an oral presentation to the Committee during the appeal hearing; however, such a presentation is not required.

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

### 15.3 Conduct of the Appeal Hearing

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

15.3.1.1 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 healthcare providers, obituary notice or a copy of a death certificate.

- 15.3.2 The student should realize that unsatisfactory performance based on poor or unwise judgment, (e.g., spending too much time on strictly nonacademic activities such as participation in student activities, and/or poor study habits) is not an acceptable explanation for poor academic performance.
- 15.3.3 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 Committee on Academic Promotions grants reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced that the student is capable of making marked improvement in their academic performance.
- 15.3.4 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.
- 15.3.5 The appeals process is not a formal legal proceeding. Although a student may seek and retain legal counsel at the student's own expense, the role of legal counsel is limited to advising the student. Legal counsel may attend the hearing but may not actively participate in the hearing as an advocate to examine witnesses, to make opening or closing statements, to direct discussion or to present the student's case on his or her behalf. Securing the availability of counsel at the scheduled hearing date and time 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, at least two (2) business days in advance of the hearing.**
- 15.3.6 The student's academic standing is reviewed at the Academic Progress meetings. Appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after Academic Progress meetings. The hearing will be scheduled based on the availability of Committee members and may include evenings or weekends.
- 15.3.7 Requests for an extension to an appeal should be in writing by the student, addressed to the Chairperson of the Committee on Academic Promotions and submitted to the Office of the Registrar **at least two (2) business days prior to his/her scheduled hearing.** Extensions may be granted when the presence of

extenuating circumstances has been established clearly, or when a strong case has been made that additional information pertinent to the appeal cannot be made available by the time the appeal would be heard normally.

- 15.3.8 The hearing will be private. The Chairperson will determine the number of persons to be admitted to the hearing. Those attending will treat all information confidentially. The Chairperson, on a need-to-know basis, will address any requests for information concerning a hearing made by other University administrators.
- 15.3.9 The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording remains the property of the College of Health Sciences and the University, and will be secured by the Office of the Registrar. If the student appellant wishes to obtain a transcribed copy of the hearing, a written request must be submitted to the Registrar. A fee will be charged to cover the transcription expense.
- 15.3.10 Any member of the Committee may recuse or decline participation in any hearing because of conflict.
- 15.3.11 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 and must be approved by both a majority of the voting Committee members and the Chairperson 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 their scheduled hearing.**
- 15.3.12 The Office of the Registrar will provide the complete Program file and academic record of each dismissed student for review by member 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's academic record, potential, personal characteristics, and/or ask such individuals to appear before the Committee.
- 15.3.13 The student shall be promptly notified in writing 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.** 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.

## 15.4 Counseling and Assistance Available to Students

15.4.1 The Dean of Student Affairs is available to:

15.4.1.1 Interpret the actions of the Committee on Academic Promotion for the student.

15.4.1.2 Inform students of recommendations concerning unsatisfactory academic performance and/or behavioral concerns, but will not attribute comments to specific faculty members.

15.4.1.3 Review with students the steps in the appeals process.

15.4.2 The Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development and his/her staff are also available to provide a student with counseling services.

## 15.5 Appealing a Decision of the Committee on Academic Promotions Not Involving Dismissal

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

15.5.2 Students may appeal non-dismissal actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions in the form of a letter directed to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

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

15.5.4. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs must consider every case in which a student requests an appeal.

15.5.5. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs 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.

15.5.6 Students may also elect to have forwarded to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs written statements from faculty members or other directly related individuals in support of their appeal.

15.5.7 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, after consulting with the members of the Committee on Academic Promotions, will consider and rule on the appeal.



15.5.8 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.

15.5.9 Should the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs 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 Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs' decision on the appeal may uphold, modify or reverse any previous decision.

15.5.10 The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs concerning the appeal.

15.5.11 **The decision of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is final.**

15.5.12 There is no further appeal within the Program.

## **15.6 Final Due Process Appeal for a Student Whose Dismissal has been Upheld by the Committee on Academic Promotion**

15.6.1 The student may appeal to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs when the decision of the Committee on Academic Promotions is to uphold the dismissal.

15.6.2 The request must be made by the student in writing and addressed to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and must be limited to an administrative review, indicating alleged improprieties in the hearing 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. 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.

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

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

15.6.5 The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs may serve alone or may select up to three members of the faculty or administrative staff or others, as deemed appropriate, as an ad hoc appeals committee.

- 15.6.6 The Advisory Committee shall commence to consider the appeal **within five (5) working days** after receipt of the written notice of appeal (not including the day of receipt of the appeal letter by the Office of the Registrar). In the absence of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, the President of the University will appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.
- 15.6.7 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/Vice President of Academic Affairs or the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.
- 15.6.8 The student may elect to forward to the Office of the Registrar written statements in support of the appeal. The student shall be given the opportunity to appear in person before the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or the Ad Hoc Appeals Committee.
- 15.6.9 Upon completion of its investigation, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs shall render his/her decision or the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee on Appeals in writing to 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.
- 15.6.10 The student shall be accorded full student rights and privileges until all appeals have been exhausted with the exception of participation in patient care activities and completion of assessments.
- 15.6.11 **The decision of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is final.**  
There are no further appeals within the University.

## 16. STUDENT RECORDS

### 16.1 Student Records and Files

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

- 16.1.2 Salus University maintains a Permanent Record File on each student. Included in a student file is the CASPA application form and the letter of acceptance. Subsequent to the enrollment of the student at Salus University, the student file contains course enrollment/remediation documentation, grades, letters of correspondence concerning the student, letters indicating actions of the Committee on Academic Promotions, formal academic and /or behavioral disciplinary action taken against the student, communications concerning scholarships, met requirements for program completion and other correspondence relating to the student's education at Salus University.
- 16.1.3 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.
- 16.1.4 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 as subsequently amended. Virtru protection is used for all email correspondence to ensure confidentiality of student information.

## **16.2 Examination of Student Records**

- 16.2.1 A student, by means of oral or written request to the Dean of Student Affairs and the Registrar, may examine his or her student records at Salus University. These records shall be made available to the student for review as promptly as possible. The records shall be examined in the office in which they are kept, under observation of administrative personnel, and shall not be altered, destroyed, or removed from the office. Material in records 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 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.
- 16.2.2 A student may obtain a copy of their student record. The costs of photocopying or duplicating records shall be the student's responsibility.
- 16.2.3 Students may challenge the accuracy of information contained in a record or may challenge that information if a record represents an undue invasion of privacy. In the case of a challenge, the student should meet with the faculty

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

16.2.4 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.

### **16.3 Transfer of Student Information**

16.3.1 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 the reasons listed below 16.3.1.1-16.3.1.4.

16.3.1.1 By reason of a valid subpoena or judicial order of a court;

16.3.1.2 To federal or state educational agencies providing the agency requests the information in writing and specifies the purpose for acquiring the information;

16.3.1.3 To organizations responsible for the accreditation of the Salus University;

16.3.1.4 Upon written request of the student to persons he or she designates (e.g., educational institutions, hospitals, and licensing boards, etc.).

16.3.1.4.1 It must be noted that the University is not permitted to send to other agencies or individual copies of non-Salus University transcripts, admission test scores, or 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, which originally provided such information.

16.3.2 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 Registrar, who prepares the letter or transcript with the ultimate appeal to the Dean of Students Affairs.

16.3.3 Letters of clinical evaluation are the responsibility of the Program Director.

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

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

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

16.4.2 If a student requests a letter of recommendation, the individual faculty member may state only the grade A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, or F in didactic courses or P, or F in direct service activities received in the course and a narrative, but not the items mentioned in the previous paragraph (numerical score, etc.).

16.4.3 Copies of examinations with or without answers may be viewed by the student at the instructor's discretion and under close supervision. Curves, distribution, etc., may be posted at the instructor's discretion. However, any posted scores must contain a statement to the effect that they do not constitute a grade.

16.4.4 Federal and state laws prohibit the posting of scores, grades, etc., that can in any way identify a student. All grades in the PA Program are posted on Blackboard.

16.4.5 Students have a direct access to their grades through an electronic platform.

#### **16.5 Transcripts**

16.5.1 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) (see section 11). The final transcript grades issued at graduation cannot be modified or challenged except for clerical errors.

## 17. ENROLLMENT

17.1 The University 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 requirements for the degree or program have been completed.

## 18. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESSION (SEE #12)

18.1 A student enrolled at Salus University is expected to make, at minimum, satisfactory academic progress. (See Section 12.1 Requirements for Progression in and Completion of the PA Program)

18.2 A student who is experiencing academic difficulty should, at their earliest opportunity, first speak with the Course Director and the Academic Faculty Advisor regarding his/her performance. It may be necessary to refer the student to the PA Program Director, Medical Director, Director of Educational Competency and Strategic Innovation, Academic Coordinator, and/or Clinical Coordinator if appropriate.

18.2.1 Secondly, the student should contact the Center for Personal and Professional Development regarding personal counseling opportunities, or other related matters.

18.2.2 Satisfactory academic progress through the various health professions education programs is an eligibility criterion for all students who receive Title IV student financial assistance. Students must carry a minimum of half the number of credit units when enrolled in a semester or quarter, whichever one applies, when enrolled to possess full time student status for financial aid purposes.

18.2.3 A course not taken for a grade is not counted for these purposes.

18.2.4 A student must complete the entire program within **4 years** (not including approved Leaves of Absence) and must present evidence of continuing to make satisfactory academic progress at all times. The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs must approve any exceptions to this total length of program.

## 19. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The following sets forth policy guidelines for student "Leave of Absence" from the University. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of students and of the University. Unusual problems, not

anticipated by this document, undoubtedly will arise. They will be judged and handled according to the individual circumstances.

## **19.1 Notification of Absence**

19.1.1 Students are obligated to notify the Office of Student Affairs and the appropriate faculty, promptly of any illness or family emergency that necessitates any absence from school.

19.1.2 If circumstance requires a student to be absent from the Program for two or more weeks, consideration of a Leave of Absence would be discussed with the Dean of Student Affairs.

19.1.3 If continued absences occur, the student's status must be clarified with the Registrar with respect to matriculation at the University.

## **19.2 Request for a Leave of Absence**

19.2.1 A student seeking a leave of absence must submit a written request to the Dean of Student Affairs and Program Director.

## **19.3 Grant or Denial of a Leave of Absence**

19.3.1 Only the Dean of Student Affairs may grant or deny a leave of absence.

19.3.2 The Dean of Student Affairs may deny a request for a leave of absence, if granting of the leave is inconsistent with the policy guidelines set forth herein.

## **19.4 Reasons for Leave of Absence**

19.4.1 A leave of absence may be granted if a student is unable to continue studies because of medical or emergency family issues.

19.4.2 The Dean of Student Affairs may approve one of the following types of Leaves: Administrative, Emergency Family, Medical and/or Suspension.

## **19.5 Administrative Leave**

19.5.1 Upon written request of a student, the Dean of Student Affairs may grant an Administrative Leave of Absence. This leave may not exceed a period of twelve (12) months.

19.5.2 The reason a leave is desired should be stated in the request. Reasons for taking an Administrative Leave of Absence include, but are not limited to

financial distress of a student necessitating full-time employment.

19.5.3 The total amount of time that can be taken as an Administrative Leave of Absence is one calendar year. At the end of that time, if additional leave is desired, it should be requested in writing. The request will then be subject to review and approval by the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee.

## 19.6 Emergency Family Leave

19.6.1 Upon written request by a student, the Dean of Student Affairs may grant an Emergency Family Leave

19.6.2 The reason a leave is desired should be stated in the request. Reasons for taking an Emergency Family Leave include, but are not limited to, the student is needed at home to assist with an ill family member, the students must leave the University to handle business matters outside of the country, etc.

19.6.3 The total amount of time that can be taken as Emergency Family Leave of Absence is a **total of twelve (12) months** during the student's entire academic tenure at the University.

19.6.4 At the end of initial leave, if additional leave is desired, it should be requested in writing. The request will then be subject to review and approval by the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or their designee.

## 19.7 Medical Leave

19.7.1 A Medical Leave of Absence may be granted by the Dean of Student Affairs, upon written request of the student and written opinion of the student's physician or other health care provider that a medical leave is necessary.

19.7.2 A Medical Leave of Absence may be granted if a student is unable to continue studies because of the student's personal health issues. Maternity, paternity and adoption leaves are included in this section and will be processed in a manner consistent with the Medical Leave of Absence policy.

19.7.3 A Medical Leave of Absence may be granted for a period **not to exceed a total of twelve (12) months**. The Dean of Student Affairs may grant an extension to a leave for a period of up to a maximum of 12 additional months upon the written recommendation of the student's health care provider and/or the Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development.



- 19.7.4 Return to active student status from Medical Leave of Absence, must be supported by a physician or other health care provider's letter. The student also must notify the Office of the Registrar in writing of his/her intent to return to the University.
- 19.7.5 The University reserves the right, at its own expense, to have the student examined by a physician to confirm the opinion of the student's physician in requesting the Leave of Absence, or upon the student's request to return to the academic program.
- 19.7.6 If the student's health does not permit resumption of studies at the end of two calendar years of approved leave, matriculation will be terminated. The student may apply for readmission at a later time (see section 21– Readmission).
- 19.7.7 If the student is accepted for admission, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or their designee will determine the student's entry point into the curriculum.

## **19.8 Suspension/Leave of Absence**

- 19.8.1 In instances of serious illness, physical and/or mental, wherein members of the faculty or administration believe that a student should not continue studies, and wherein the student cannot or will not request a Leave of Absence, the Dean of Student Affairs may elect to suspend the student or place the student on a "Medical Leave of Absence." A Suspension/Medical Leave of Absence should not exceed twelve (12) months.
- 19.8.2 A student who has been placed on such suspension or leave must make their request to return and re-enter the curriculum in writing to the Dean of Student Affairs and file this letter with the Office of the Registrar. The student must provide written verification from a physician or other health care provider, subject to approval by the Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development, that the student's health permits them to resume their academic program.
- 19.8.3 Upon the written recommendation of the physician(s), and/or health care providers, the Dean of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee may extend this leave for up to one additional twelve (12) month period.
- 19.8.4 If the student's health does not permit the resumption of studies at the end of the second full year, matriculation will be terminated. Application for readmission may be made at a later time (see section 21 – Readmission).

19.8.5 If the student is accepted for readmission, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee will determine the student's entry point into the curriculum.

19.8.6 The University reserves the right, at its own expense, to have the student examined by a healthcare provider to determine the student's health status prior to granting the Suspension/Medical Leave of Absence and/or upon the student's request to return to the academic program.

## **19.9 Leave of Absence Record**

19.9.1 The Dean of Student Affairs should ensure that a student completes the written "Leave of Absence" form making explicit the reason(s) that the leave is being requested.

19.9.2 Upon receiving notification of an approved leave, the student should acknowledge the receipt of the Dean of Student Affairs' letter and accept or decline the terms noted therein.

19.9.3 A leave becomes official when it is entered into the student's record retained in the Office of the Registrar.

## **19.10 Program Placement Upon Return from a Leave of Absence**

19.10.1 Upon returning from a Leave of Absence, regardless of the type, the student's permanent record and status is reviewed by the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and/or their designee(s). A repeat of module(s)/block(s) or portions of the curriculum previously completed successfully, or other academic and/or clinical conditions may be required or applied, if deemed educationally necessary. Additional fees for repeated work may also apply which remains the student's responsibility.

## **20. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

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

20.1.1 A student may withdraw voluntarily from the University at any time. A student who wishes to withdraw must personally meet with the Dean of Student Affairs and must notify the Dean of Student Affairs in writing of the withdrawal and indicate the reason(s) for the withdrawal.

- 20.2 The official records of a student who does not formally withdraw from the institution will not be released until the student has obtained the required signatures on the withdrawal form and returned the form to the Office of the Registrar.
- 20.3 A student who wishes to seek readmission to the Physician Assistant Program must follow the procedures outlined in Section 21 of this policy (Readmission).
- 20.4 If the student is granted readmission, the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and/or their designee(s) will determine the content of the student's academic program, entry point, conditions, and requirements pertinent to the readmitted student's curriculum.

## **21. READMISSION**

- 21.1 Student Dismissed for Academic Reasons/Student Who has Withdrawn
  - 21.1.1 A student in either of these categories who wishes to be readmitted to the University should re-apply to the Office of Admissions in the same way as any new applicant. Application procedures are outlined in the University catalog.
- 21.2 Student Dismissed for Non-Academic Reasons
  - 21.2.1 A student in this category should submit their application directly to the Provost/Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **22. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 22.1 Graduation and the awarding of degrees are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of both academic and behavioral requirements. The latter include the standards of conduct described in the Salus University Code of Conduct and the state laws and regulations governing the target profession.
- 22.2 The student must successfully complete the entire required curriculum with a cumulative grade point average of 2.80 or better. The student must also successfully pass all summative examinations, as well as having satisfactorily completed all required courses with a C- or better.
- 22.3 The professional physician assistant must exhibit high principles and character because of the level of confidence and trust that society places in providers and the unique relationship that exists between students, patients and the professionals who serve them.

- 22.4 The student must have demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the faculty, emotional maturity and stability and the professional attributes desirable for the targeted professional practice.
- 22.5 The student must be of good moral character and must have demonstrated integrity and honesty through their personal behavior. For example, misconduct such as cheating on examinations, falsifying clinical data, or activities constituting criminal behavior may result in the denial of the degree, even though the individual has satisfactorily completed the academic program.
- 22.6 The Program reserves the rights to place on probation, suspend or expel from the institution any student who willfully violates any rule or regulation of the University or the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or other state, Federal, or local government, whether or not convicted in a criminal court.
- 22.7 Upon satisfactory completion of the above academic and behavioral standards set by the University, and the target curriculum, the faculty will recommend candidates to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs for the appropriate degree.
- 22.8 Students are responsible for understanding all requirements for graduation and completing them within the time dictated by the program curriculum.

## 22.9 Graduation with Honors

- 22.9.1 Honors for exceptional work by a student after completion of the academic and clinical program is indicated by the designation of the award of the master's degree with:
- **Summa Cum Laude** (3.90 -4.00) for exceptional academic/clinical work
  - **Magna Cum Laude** (3.70 -3.89) for superior academic and clinical performance
  - **Cum Laude** (3.50 -3.69) for excellent academic and clinical performance

## 23. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- 23.1 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 so that they can 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 of Academic Success (Room W103J, Phone: 215-780-1314).

Students have the responsibility for requesting assistance and for providing documentation of conditions that may warrant academic accommodations. Once the Office of Academic Success has determined that a student has a disability-related need for accommodations, the Program Director and the student will address those needs with the student's course instructor(s) and the appropriate and inform them of the specific accommodations.

*23.2 A student who does not register with the Office of Academic Success is not permitted to receive accommodation and may not petition the course director.*

## Acknowledgement

I have read the Salus University Physician Assistant Program Academic Policy. By affixing my signature below, I attest that I understand the contents and terms outlined in this document and agree to adhere to all of the policies and procedures in the manual throughout my tenure at Salus University.

I also understand that if I do not abide by all of the policies and procedures of the Physician Assistant Program Academic Policy, I will accept and abide by the consequence of such actions as recommended by the PA Program and/or University officials.

I also understand that my rights, responsibilities and conduct as a student in the Physician Assistant Program are regulated by policies and procedures of Salus University and the Office of Student Affairs.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_