



Area: University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine PA Program, Tulsa
Title: Academic Standards and Progression

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I. Terminology

Student Progress Committee (SPC) – The PA program committee applies program standards and procedures to each student’s overall academic performance and makes recommendations to the Program Director in accordance with this policy.

Academic Delay – Period of time needed to remediate a failed course/rotation. As a general rule, this period is included in the phase in which the failed course/rotation took place.

Academic Probation – The PA program's assigned academic status given to a student who fails to demonstrate satisfactory academic standards and progress as detailed in this policy.

Clinical Delay – A delay in the completion of the clinical phase by four (4) months or less.

Clinical Phase - The phase of the PA program comprised of clinical rotations and courses outlined in the course of study, senior summative examination, and all remediation actions and courses related to courses included in the phase.

Cumulative GPA - The calculated GPA for all letter grade courses for which a student has been assigned a grade since matriculation into the PA program. The cumulative GPA is generally referred to as the OUHSC GPA on official University transcripts.

Deceleration – The loss of a student from the entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the PA program.

Didactic Phase – Preclinical phase of the PA program comprised of courses outlined in the course of study, and all remediation actions and courses related to courses included in the phase.

Dismissal - Removal from the PA program such that reapplication and readmission is necessary for a student to return. For further information refer to the OUHSC Student Handbook.

Good Academic Standing – A designation assigned to a PA student who meets the retention requirements as set forth in this policy.

Matriculation- The initial enrollment for admission of a new student entering the PA program.

Remediation – Specific supplemental assignment for academic deficiencies identified through the PA program's assessment of individual performance within the Program Curriculum.

Special Studies Course– An enrolled course that includes specific assignments and studies designed to remediate a course granted an Unsatisfactory final course grade.

Satisfactory Final Course Grade - A course grade of “C” or better in a letter graded course/rotation or “S” in a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded course/rotation.

Term GPA – The calculated GPA for all letter grade courses enrolled in for a given term. The term GPA is calculated and evaluated when all respective final course/rotation grades are made available to the SPC.

Term – A predefined subdivision of the academic year used to organize the program course of study and to periodically assess a student's academic performance. The terms in the PA program curriculum may not align with the terms of other OUHSC programs.

Unsatisfactory Final Course Grade - A course grade of “D” or “F” in a letter graded course/rotation or “U” in a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded course/rotation.

II. GPA Calculation

Only courses assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, F are used in calculation of a student's term and/or cumulative GPA. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory graded courses are not used in the calculation of a student's GPA; however, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) for a course will be included in consideration of PA program academic progression and retention standards, academic probation, clinical delay, deceleration, and dismissal.

III. Academic Requirements

A. PA Program Academic Progression and Retention Standards

The following standards are required of students for progression and retention in the PA program:

Didactic Progression:

1. Students will be in compliance with all University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, College of Medicine, and School of Community Medicine PA Program Policies.
2. Students will have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the completion of each didactic semester.
3. Students currently assigned Academic Probation in the didactic phase will have obtained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater or have demonstrated sufficient academic improvement.
 - In the absence of compelling justification to deviate, the standard used to determine “sufficient academic improvement” should include the attainment of a term GPA of 3.0 or greater.
3. Students will have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the end of the didactic phase, including the completion of a Special Studies course if required, to advance to the clinical phase of training.
4. Students will have earned a satisfactory final course grade on all didactic courses, or successfully remediated a course, as referenced in the Remediation Policy, in order to progress to the clinical phase.

Clinical Progression:

1. Students will have earned a satisfactory final course grade on all clinical courses, or successfully remediated a course, per the Remediation Policy.
2. Students will have earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher in order to advance to the preceptorship rotation.
5. Students will successfully complete (with satisfactory final course grades) all aspects of the program in 48 months or less from the time of initial matriculation.

B. Graduation

Students who satisfactorily complete the 30-month program will be awarded the Master of Health Sciences (MHS) in Physician Assistant Studies. To qualify for graduation, students must:

- Follow an approved course of study leading to the completion of all master’s requirements;
- Complete satisfactorily all professional courses with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher; no course or rotation below a C, and satisfactorily complete a final Summative Evaluation involving a comprehensive written examination, an observed assessment of history taking, physical examination and diagnostic skills, and an evaluation of professionalism by clinical faculty members;
- Complete satisfactorily the required 131 semester credit hours in the curriculum;
- Complete satisfactorily the required components of the program within 48 months or less from the time of initial matriculation.

- Repeat, as approved, and earn an acceptable grade for any required course or rotation in the professional program for which a failing grade (D or F) had been issued;
- Complete, at a minimum, the last 48 credit hours in the professional program within the College of Medicine
- Complete successfully Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS);
- Receive a favorable recommendation for degree conferral from the PA Promotion and Graduation Committee;
- Be recommended for conferral of the master's degree by the University Faculty Senate;
- Settle all financial accounts with the University; and
- Submit a properly completed and signed graduation clearance form to the Office of the Registrar.

IV. ACADEMIC ACTION

The SPC will monitor the Academic Progression of all PA students and make Academic Progression recommendations to the PA Program Director through the application of this policy to student academic performance.

A. Academic Retention

A student meeting the standards as listed in Section III-A (PA Program Academic Progression and Retention Standards) will be recommended for academic progression and retention in the PA program unless other compelling academic and/or professionalism deficiency is present.

B. Academic Probation

For the purposes of this policy, Academic Probation is the academic status assigned to a student that fails to demonstrate satisfactory academic standards and progress using criteria detailed in this policy and the Remediation Policy. The SPC monitors performance and makes academic status recommendations at the completion of each term.

1. Academic probation is a formal notification of unsatisfactory academic progress when a student obtains a GPA below the minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA during any semester of the didactic phase. When a student is placed on academic probation, it is noted in the student's academic file in the program office and on the student's transcript. At the end of the probationary semester, the student will be returned to good academic standing if the cumulative GPA returns to 3.0 or higher.

If the GPA continues below the minimum 3.0 GPA required by the program, the SPC may elect to continue the probationary status for an additional semester, assuming the student demonstrated sufficient academic improvement by achieving a term GPA of 3.0 or greater. Alternatively, the SPC may make a recommendation to the Dean for dismissal of the student from the PA program. Recommendation for dismissal may also occur if the student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 during any subsequent semester of the program or the student fails a PA program course.

If mathematically impossible to obtain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater at the end of the didactic phase or clinical phase following completion of the Special Studies Course, the SPC will recommend to the Dean that the student be dismissed from the program.

2. Academic Probation is also a formal notification of unsatisfactory academic progress when a student fails to achieve a passing grade in a course. Refer to the Remediation Policy for details.

C. Dismissal

Dismissal entails the removal of the student from all academic courses and the University. Dismissal may or may not be preceded by probation or suspension and is noted on the student's transcript. The student who has been dismissed can re-apply for admission but is not guaranteed re-entry into the PA program.

The following conditions may result in the SPC's recommendation for dismissal of a student from the PA Program:

1. A student on Academic Probation obtaining a cumulative GPA less than 3.0 the subsequent semester and failing to demonstrate sufficient academic improvement in academic performance during that subsequent semester.

- In the absence of compelling justification to deviate, the standard used to determine "sufficient academic improvement" should include the attainment of a term GPA of 3.0 or greater.

2. Failure to achieve a passing final course grade or successfully remediate a failed course component may justify recommendation for dismissal based on review of overall student academic performance.

3. A cumulative GPA less than 3.0 at the completion of the didactic phase curriculum including all requirements, courses, assignments, remediation actions, and Special Studies course.

4. A cumulative GPA less than 3.0 at the completion of the clinical phase curriculum including all requirements, courses, assignments, summative exams, remediation actions, and Special Studies course.

5. Failure to complete all Program requirements for graduation within 48 months of initial matriculation.

6. Violation of University, College, or Program Policies of a nature warranting dismissal.

7. Failure to meet the minimum requirements for graduation imposed by the Program and University.

V. ACADEMIC APPEALS

The OU School of Community Medicine PA Program follows the Student Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures as described in the OUHSC Faculty Handbook (Appendix C), which details the basis, criteria, and process regarding academic appeals.

<https://provost.ouhsc.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/HSC-Faculty-Handbook>