

FSU Physician Assistant Program

Policy - Academic Performance and Professionalism Progression

Origin Date: June 2018

Last Evaluated: June 2018

Responsible Party: Program Director

Minimum Review Frequency: Annually

Approving Body: Policy and Procedures Committee, Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee

DPAM Associated Forms:

Academic Performance Summary Clinical Phase

Academic Performance Summary Didactic Phase

Academic Intervention Form

Behavioral and Professional Evaluation Form

Student Self-Assessment of Behavior and Professionalism

Professionalism Concern/Violation Form

Graduation Verification Checklist/Evaluation Form

Remediation Plan and Outcomes –Didactic Form

Remediation Plan and Outcomes – SCPE Form

Technical Standards Attestation

Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

ARC-PA Associated Standards:

- **A3.11** - The program must define, publish and make readily available to faculty and students policies and procedures for processing student grievances and allegations of harassment.
- **A3.17** - The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include:
 - a) any required academic standards
 - b) completion deadlines/requirements related to curricular components
 - c) requirements for progression in and completion of the program
 - d) policies and procedures for processing student grievances
 - e) policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal
 - f) policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration
 - g) policies and procedures for processing allegations of harassment
- **A3.19** - Student files kept by the program must include documentation:
 - c) of student performance while enrolled
 - d) of remediation efforts and outcomes

- e) of summaries of any formal academic/behavioral disciplinary action taken against a student and
- f) that the student has met requirements for program completion
- o **C3.02** - The program *must* document student demonstration of defined professional behaviors.
- o **C3.03** - The program must monitor and document the progress of each student in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations on requirements and procedures related to academic performance, professionalism, and progression.

Definitions

Academic Intervention: The process of identifying at-risk students early to promote successful acquisition of the requisite knowledge to be successful.

Remediation: The process of addressing deficiencies in a student's knowledge and skills, such that the correction of these deficiencies is measurable and can be documented.

Deceleration: The loss of a student from an entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the Physician Assistant program.

Good Standing: Indicates a student who is not on academic or professionalism probation.

Leave of Absence: A period of time a student is granted to be away from his/her studies while maintaining the status of current student.

Withdrawal: A student-based decision that results in a student exit from the program. A student must reapply to the program to regain admission.

Dismissal: A program-based decision that results in a student exit from the program. A student must appeal dismissal to regain admission.

Policy Statement

Required Academic Standards

Attendance and participation requirements are outlined in the Student Attendance, Participation, and Inclement Weather policy.

Students enrolled in the FSU Physician Assistant Studies program must maintain adherence to the program standard of academic performance and professionalism.

Requirements for Progression

1. After admission notification and prior to matriculation, students must meet the following

- to progress to the didactic phase:
 - Successfully complete the admission requirements including submission all required immunizations and proof of health insurance
 - Successfully complete the FSU PA Program Orientation.
2. Due to the sequential nature of the curriculum, students must successfully complete all courses for a given semester before becoming eligible to take courses in the subsequent semester. Students must successfully complete all courses in the didactic phase before they may progress into the clinical phase of the program. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Academic Performance and Professionalism Progress Review Committee.
 3. Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences offered during the clinical phase of the program do not follow the semester calendar. Due to timing, as well as complexity of evaluative measures incorporated, student performance is assessed by the Clinical Coordinator at the completion of each Supervised Clinical Practice Experience to determine progression to the next rotation.
 4. At the conclusion of each semester, in both the didactic and clinical year, the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee reviews each student's academic and professional performance. Students must be recommended for progression by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee to be eligible to take courses in the subsequent semester and continue their progression through the program. In the event a student is identified to be at risk for Academic/Professionalism probation or dismissal at any time during the program, including Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences, the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee may convene more frequently to determine appropriate academic/professionalism intervention.

Guidelines used to determine progression from semester to semester include the following:

Semester to Semester Progression - Didactic Phase:

- a. Achieve a minimum overall 3.0 GPA
- b. No more than one (1) course grade below a "B" within the semester
- c. No course grades below "C"
- d. Obtain established minimal grades for Observed Standardized Clinical Examinations/OSCEs
- e. Achieve minimum established score for all formative and summative evaluations/examinations
- f. Documented demonstration of professionalism

Progression from Didactic Phase to Clinical Phase:

- a. Achieve a minimum overall 3.0 GPA
- b. No more than two (2) course grades below a "B"
- c. No course grade below "C"
- d. Obtain established minimal grades for Observed Standardized Clinical Examinations/OSCEs

- e. Achieve minimum established score for all formative and summative evaluations/examinations
- f. Documented demonstration of professionalism

Please note any grade below “C” and more than two (2) grades below the level of “B” within the didactic phase will trigger dismissal from the program. See dismissal section below.

Clinical Phase to Completion:

- a. Achieve a minimum overall 3.0 GPA
- b. Successfully complete all Supervised Clinical Practical Experiences/SCPEs
- c. No more than one (1) course below the level of “B”
- d. No course grade below the level of “C”
- e. Obtain passing grades on all end of SCPE examinations
- f. Achieve minimum established score for all formative and summative evaluations/examinations
- g. Documentation of professionalism

Please note any grade below “C” and more than one (1) grade below the level of “B” within the clinical phase, including the summative course will trigger a dismissal from the program. See dismissal section below.

- 5. In the event that a student does not meet the above criteria, is remediating a course or course component, or may be on academic or professionalism probation, the student may progress to the subsequent semester at the discretion of the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee.

Requirements for Graduation

To graduate from the PA Program and earn a Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree, students must:

- 1. Successfully complete all course work according to program defined academic standards including demonstration of meeting all Program Learning Outcomes.
- 2. Achieve a minimum overall 3.0 G.P.A. (Grade Point Average) with no more than two (2) grades below “B” during the didactic phase and one (1) grade below “B” during the clinical phase.
- 3. Successfully pass all components of the summative evaluation.
- 4. Demonstrate they have met program expectations and acquired the competencies needed for entry into clinical PA practice with patients seeking: medical care across the lifespan, women’s health, care for conditions requiring surgical management, care for behavioral and mental health conditions.
- 5. Submit a completed graduation application to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- 6. Be in good academic standing. In the event that a student is on academic probation as he/she enters the final semester, he/she must complete the final semester with the required overall G.P.A. of 3.0 to be awarded the degree.
- 7. Be in good professional standing. In the event that a student is on professionalism probation as he/she enters the final semester, he/she must successfully meet

- program-established conditions prior to the end of the final semester to successfully transition off professionalism probation prior to graduation.
8. Complete all requirements for graduation within 6 years of the original date of matriculation.
 9. Have no incomplete grades
 10. Approval of the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee

Students should apply for graduation one term before all requirements for the MMS degree are complete. The graduation application is available on the FSU PAWs system.

Course Director Role in Supporting Student Success – Didactic Phase

Course Directors play a key role in supporting student success by identifying at-risk students as early as possible during the semester. Students will not be allowed to remediate course assessments to improve their grade (see *Remediation* below). When students are deemed to be at risk, **academic interventions** should be initiated by the Course Director to promote student success and provide students the support they need to earn a final passing course grade. It is up to each individual Course Director to work with the student to determine how this may be best accomplished given the course objectives and outcomes and the individual student's strengths and weaknesses in learning course content. Course Directors are responsible for providing the initial contact with those students deemed to be at risk. It is then the responsibility of the student to schedule a meeting with the Course Director to discuss strategies for success. Failure to do so may be reflected in the student's professional behavior evaluation. In the spirit of self-directed learning, it is the responsibility of the student to implement the suggestions made by the Course Director in a way that best accommodates their learning style.

Process:

- The Course Director has the flexibility to determine when there is a need for academic intervention. However, if a student receives two didactic course assessments below 80%, the Course Director should initiate academic intervention to ascertain all possible factors contributing to a low assessment score (e.g., foundation of knowledge, ineffective study strategies, test-taking errors, reading, comprehension, or attention issues, poor time management, personal problems, etc.).
- A signed **Academic Intervention Form** outlining proactive strategies for success will be completed and will be submitted to the Academic Coordinator for inclusion in the student's official file and for review at the next scheduled Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee Meeting.

The Course Director also has the ability, at any time, to initiate a referral for remediation if the issue requires intervention beyond minimal academic intervention that can be agreed upon between the student and the Course Director and requires reasonable time, resources and support. For those instances which require extended time, resources or support, the student should be referred to the Academic Coordinator who will initiate, in collaboration with the Academic Advisor and Course Director, a formal remediation plan which will be put in the students file for review at the next scheduled Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee Meeting. See remediation below.

Course Director Role in Supporting Student Success - Clinical Phase Academic

Given the nature and complexity of educational activities on clinical rotations, a comprehensive, multifaceted process for evaluating student progress has been designed. The components each serve to assess different skills acquired by a student during clinical training. Therefore, Academic Intervention during the clinical year will occur on a case-by-case basis including, but not limited to, unsatisfactory marks on mid-rotation evaluations, professionalism issues, and/or an unsatisfactory or below “meets standard” scores on an end of rotation Clinical Performance Evaluation. In the event that an academic intervention is initiated (Academic Intervention Form completed) by a Course Director or a student is referred to the Clinical Coordinator by a Preceptor for intervention on academic/skills deficiency during the clinical phase of the program, the Academic Intervention Form is completed and forwarded to the Clinical Coordinator to be kept in the students file and reviewed by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee similar to the process outlined for the didactic phase.

At any time, the Course Director or Clinical Coordinator have the ability to initiate a formal remediation referral if the academic intervention requires extended time, resources and intervention. In this case, the Clinical Coordinator in collaboration with the Course Director or Preceptor will develop a formal remediation plan and forward a copy to the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee for review at the next scheduled meeting.

Required Academic Standards

To remain in good academic standing, normal academic progress in the didactic phase of the Physician Assistant Studies program requires all students to achieve a minimum 3.0 G.P.A. each semester and no more than one (1) grade below the level of “B” in any semester, no more than two (2) grades below the level of “B” in the didactic year, and no more than one (1) grade below the level of “B” during the clinical year.

Assessment and Minimum Grade Standards

90-100%	A
80-89.9%	B
70-79.9%	C
<60%	F

Computation of Grade Point Average

Grade Point Average is the ratio expressed by the sum of the quality points divided by the sum of credits attempted. Pass/Fail grades are not a component of the Grade Point Average.

The Quality Point values of these grades are:

Grade	Quality Points per Credit Hour
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A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
F	0.0

Remediation

Student progress is monitored and documented in a manner that promptly identifies deficiencies in knowledge or skills and establishes means for remediation as described herein:

1. A student receiving a "C" in a didactic course or "C" grade in a SCPE course, a failed end of rotation exam or failed OSCE will remediate the identified area(s) of deficiency. The specific remediation plan developed is at the discretion of the Course Director in collaboration with the Academic Advisor for didactic courses and the Clinical Coordinator with collaboration of the Academic Advisor and possibly Preceptor for SCPE courses and may include but is not limited to:
 2. Reading assignments.
 3. Written completion of selected course learning objectives with reference citations.
 4. Written response to selected exam items with reference citations.
 5. Problem-based learning exercises focused on area(s) of weakness.
 6. Written self-reflection exercise.
 7. Individual faculty-led tutoring (especially skills related deficiencies). Skills review and assessment
 8. Repeating a portion of or the entire SCPE
9. Students will be reassessed after completion of the outlined remediation plan with an emphasis on areas of poor performance. The assessment activity may vary depending on the nature of deficiency and degree of remediation necessary. A successful remediation plan will include:
 - a. Composition/nature of assessment and the student performance required for successful remediation of material.
 - b. Date in which assigned activities are due.
10. The responsible Course Director or faculty member must document remediation efforts and outcomes and submit documentation to the Academic Coordinator to be filed in the student's official file.
11. The Course Director must notify the Academic Coordinator or Clinical Coordinator of any student needing remediation. The AC and CC will be responsible to notify the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee of any remediation plan. To ensure adequate rigor and consistency within the program, the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee must approve remediation plans and remediation reassessments prior to implementation.
12. Unsuccessful remediation efforts will be forwarded to the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee for review. The Committee may recommend appropriate courses of action, which may include the entire range of possible outcomes up to and including dismissal from the program.

Professional Behaviors

Required Professional Behaviors

Students must display a professional attitude. Expectations include, but are not limited to, those defined by the National Board of Medical Examiners as follows:

- Adheres to institutional policies and procedures
- Admits errors and assumes responsibility
- Advocates for the individual patient
- Arrives on time for scheduled activities and appointments
- Conveys information honestly and tactfully
- Demonstrates sensitivity to power inequalities in professional relationships
- Fulfills responsibilities in a timely manner
- Maintains composure during difficult interactions
- Maintains thoroughness and attention to detail
- Modifies behavior based on feedback
- Requests help when needed
- Responds promptly to communication requests
- Acknowledges limits of one's own knowledge
- Responds receptively to diverse opinions and values
- Demonstrates humility
- Maintains the confidentiality of test material

Evaluation of Professional Behaviors

The Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee evaluates students' professional behavior at the completion of every semester of the didactic and clinical phase of the program, by documented feedback from the students designated faculty advisor, Course Directors, Clinical Coordinator (including input from the clinical preceptors). During this evaluation, the committee will meet and assess each student's professional behavior using the following criteria:

Respect: Students are expected to treat all patients, faculty, program staff, clinical preceptors, and fellow students with dignity and respect. Conflicts should be resolved in a diplomatic and reasoned manner. Students should be sensitive and tolerant with regard to diversity in the student and patient population. Physician Assistant training involves a close working environment with other students and includes physical examination of fellow students and discussion groups that may reveal information of a personal nature. These situations must be approached with respect for the privacy, confidentiality, and the feelings of fellow students. The program will not tolerate incivility by any member of the PA community. Examples of incivility include rude, sarcastic, obscene, disruptive or disrespectful remarks or behavior, verbal or physical threats, or damage to property.

- Sensitive/responsive to needs of others
- Sensitive/responsive to culture, age, gender and disabilities of others
- Puts others interests before own
- Provides assistance/comfort to others

Flexibility: Physician assistant training involves instruction from practicing clinicians with unpredictable schedules. At times lectures or clinical sessions may need to be adjusted with short notice. We believe the advantages of utilizing practicing clinicians outweigh this inconvenience and ask students to be flexible and tolerant of changes.

- Attends required activities/arrives on time
- Reliable, dependable, completes tasks fully and in timely manner
- Accepts appropriate share of team work
- Self-motivated, organized, and prepared
- Accountable to patients, society, and the profession
- Adapts well to stressful/changing circumstances

Behavior: Students are expected to behave in a responsible, reliable and dependable manner. The student must project a professional image in manner, dress, grooming, speech and interpersonal relationships that are consistent with being a medical professional. The student should recognize his/her personal limitations and biases, whether they are intellectual, physical or emotional and strive to correct them. He or she must demonstrate the professional and emotional maturity to manage tensions and conflicts and should seek professional help when necessary. Success in the Physician Assistant profession requires certain behavioral attributes including: empathy, discipline, honesty, integrity, the ability to work effectively with others in a team environment, and the ability to address a crisis or emergency situation in a composed manner.

- Respectful, cooperative (team player), builds atmosphere conducive to learning
- Acknowledges and values diversity, talents, skills, contributions of others
- Communicates effectively (verbal and written)
- Good interpersonal skills (develops appropriate professional relationships with peers, faculty, physician supervisors and other health care providers)
- Recognizes/maintains appropriate boundaries
- Displays tact and self-control

Integrity: Integrity is the quality of consistency and steadfast adherence to a defined code of ethics. It includes honesty and soundness of mind and body. Students are expected to demonstrate integrity by following all policies in the GWU Student Handbook, including those pertaining to academic dishonesty and unethical behavior. Physician Assistant students are also expected to display the highest ethical standards commensurate with work as a health care professional. These are outlined in the *Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession* published by the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

- Accurately portrays personal qualifications

- Displays professional presentation (dresses appropriately and good personal hygiene)
- Performs in accordance with regulatory and legal requirements (follow the rules), as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- Committed to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices
- Recognizes limitations and seeks, accepts and incorporates constructive feedback
- Behaves honestly/appears trustworthy

This process will incorporate the following steps:

- Students are provided the opportunity to complete a self-assessment prior to meeting with their advisor to discuss the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee assessment.
- Advisors will meet one-on-one with student advisees to provide feedback on Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee and student self-assessments.
- If there are any areas of concern, the faculty member and the student can together address ways of improving those areas.
- If there are any problem areas identified, the student may be required to meet with both the advisor and the Academic Coordinator/Clinical Coordinator or Chair/Program Director to discuss specific steps for improvement. Such steps may include, but are not limited to, referral to appropriate resources, developing a contract regarding behavioral modification, on-going advisory meetings and other means of assisting the student to improve problem areas.
- The form is reviewed with the student, signed and dated by both the Advisor and the student, and filed in the student's record. By the end of the didactic education phase of the program the student will have had three (3) "Behavioral and Professional Evaluations" and by the end of the clinical year a total of at least (2) Fall and Spring "Behavioral and Professional Evaluations".

Behavioral concerns observed throughout the program will be documented on a Professionalism Concern/Violation Form. A Professionalism Concern is indicated to identify and document concerns and patterns of professional behavior violations. Professionalism Concerns do not constitute immediate adverse action. A Professionalism Violation is indicated when the observed behavior constitutes a greater concern requiring a meeting of the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee to determine the need for immediate intervention.

Anytime a Professionalism Form is issued the student must be notified. In the event that a Professionalism Concern or a Professionalism Violation is issued, the faculty member must meet with the student to discuss the identified behavioral concern at which time the student will be provided an opportunity to respond and provide their comments to the form. Once reviewed and completed, these forms will be placed in the student's file to inform the behavioral evaluation process by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee.

Professionalism Examples

Professionalism Concern:

- Tardiness or absence without appropriate notification/approval.
- Student verbal communication that indicates a lack of respect
- Student use of unprofessional language (swearing)
- Student use of potentially discriminatory or demeaning language (speak ill of a patient, use of joke that could reasonably be considered demeaning or discriminatory)

Professionalism Violation:

- Evidence of cheating on an assignment or test
- Student intoxication or presumed intoxication from alcohol, prescription, or other drugs
- Student communication or interaction that is openly discriminatory, demeaning, or could reasonably be physically or emotionally harmful to another

During the clinical phase, students are also assessed via preceptor evaluations and direct observation by faculty on clinical site visits.

Academic Dishonesty

It is the policy of the FSU that any form of academic dishonesty by a PA student shall be dealt with by referral to the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but **are not limited to:**

- Copying test answers or other assigned non-group work from classmates.
- Plagiarism of another's work.
- Recording or transmitting test questions or test materials.
- Accessing previous program exams and collaborating on graded assignments unless expressly permitted to do so.

Once reviewed by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee, the student may also be referred to the University's director of Student Conduct & Community Standards for adjudication and disposition.

Academic Probation

Students will be placed on Academic Probation in the following circumstances:

- When a student fails to achieve the required 3.0 cumulative G.P.A. or 3.0 semester GPA.
- When a student earns two final course grades of "C" during the didactic phase of the program.
- When a student earns one (1) "C" final SCPE grade during the clinical phase of the program.

Professionalism Probation

Students may be placed on Professionalism Probation following an unacceptable professionalism assessment by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee when they do not demonstrate acceptable professionalism behaviors as evidenced by one or more of the following:

- Receiving professional behavioral concerns documented on the student professionalism evaluation.
- Receiving a “Below Expectations” or “Unsatisfactory” mark in the professionalism category of the Preceptor Evaluation of Student.

Procedure for regaining good standing following placement on Professionalism Probation:

- In order to return to good standing following placement on Professionalism Probation, students must refrain from demonstrating any of the professionalism deficiencies listed above during the probationary period. The probationary period will last from the time the student is placed on professionalism probation until the end of the following semester at which time the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee will conduct a formal professional evaluation.

Dismissal

Students will be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program in the following circumstances:

1. When a student earns a “F” grade in any of the required courses.
2. When a student earns more than two (2) final course grades below “B” during the didactic phase of the program.
3. When a student earns more than one (1) final grade below “B” in a SCPE course or during the clinical phase of the program.
4. When a student fails to reach a 3.0 after two consecutive semesters of academic probation for <3.0 GPA
5. When a student fails to meet post-acceptance requirements in the manner specified in the Admissions policy.
6. For conduct that would render them ineligible to participate in clinical rotations.
7. When a student is unable to meet the minimum technical standards necessary to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies of an entry-level physician assistant.
8. When it is no longer possible for the student to complete all program requirements for graduation within 6 years of their original date of matriculation.
9. When the student exhibits behavior detrimental to their profession, including failure to demonstrate ethical and/or professional behavior and academic dishonesty.
10. Students found to be cheating are subject to automatic dismissal.
11. Any additional professional violations following placement on professionalism probation.

Students may be dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program in the following circumstances as determined by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee:

1. When a student has one unsuccessful remediation effort.

2. When their behavior poses a threat to the standards of orderly operation, scholarship, and conduct.
3. When they have violated principles related to academic integrity and plagiarism as outlined by FSU Community Standards Policy Statements.
4. When their behavior poses a threat to the mental or physical well-being of others.
5. For any gross violations of professional conduct as determined by the Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee.

Students dismissed from the Physician Assistant Program have the right to appeal the decision according to the dismissal appeals policy outlined in the Graduate Catalog (<https://www.frostburg.edu/admissions-and-cost/graduate/online-graduate-catalog-2018-2020.php>)

Conduct Violations and Harassment

The FSU Physician Assistant Program adheres to the same policy adhered to by FSU University. This can be found in the FSU Community Standards Policy Statement found at <https://www.frostburg.edu/about-frostburg/student-affairs/policystatements.pdf>.

It is the responsibility of all members of the University community to create a safe and inclusive environment that is free from Gender-Based Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking. Individuals who report violations of this policy in good-faith will be protected from Retaliation.

This policy applies to all reported incidents of Prohibited Conduct and supersedes and replaces the University's Sexual Harassment Policy, PN 1.004.

For more information on the University policy on Gender-Based Harassment and Violence including reporting information visit https://www.frostburg.edu/titleix/_files/pdfs/gender-based-harassment-and-violence-policy---updated-july-28,-2017.pdf

Student Grievances

Academic Grievances

The PA Program abides by FSU University policies related to Academic Grievance, as outlined in the *FSU Graduate Catalog*.

Appeals Process for grievances unrelated to grade grievance or dismissal appeal

The Department of Physician Assistant Medicine recognizes due process and the rights of a student to appeal Program decisions/actions affecting Academic and Professionalism Progress Committee within the Program. Student appeals must be based upon the Program's failure to follow established policies or procedures. Any appeal must be based on evidence that a factual or procedural error was made or that some significant piece of information was overlooked. An appeal must be addressed in writing at each level of appeal and must be presented in the following prescribed sequence to the appropriate staff. An appeal does not guarantee a change in the decision.

1. All appeals must be submitted to the Program Director in writing within five working days of the Program action/decision being appealed.

2. Appeals will be reviewed by the appropriate program or university committee which most appropriately is identified to review the grievance. When appropriate, the Program Director will refer the grievance to the CLAS Dean if there is no university or program committee established to provide a fair and objective review of the grievance. A decision will be rendered to the student within five working days of receipt of the appeal. Students will be invited to attend the meeting at which the appeal is considered to present their case and respond to any questions the committee or Dean may have. As this meeting is a purely academic proceeding, no legal counsel will be allowed to attend or participate. The appellant student may, however, request participation by other students or non-program faculty with approval of the Program Director. Proceedings may not be recorded in any manner (audio, video, digital, etc.)
3. Students who wish to challenge the Program's appeal decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or if appropriate the Provost. This appeal must be initiated within five working days of the Program's appeal decision and must be submitted in writing.
4. Students who wish to challenge the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences appeal decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs within 5 working days.
5. The decision of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will be considered final and become effective upon ratification by the President.

Deceleration

The FSU PA curriculum is designed to be delivered on a full-time basis to students in a cohort. There is no formal deceleration plan or option to complete the curriculum on a part-time basis.

Leave of Absence

A student in good academic standing may request a leave of absence due to occurrence of such events such as a medical problem, serious personal problem(s), or pregnancy.

Students requesting a leave of absence must apply in writing to the Program Director. In the event of a medical problem or pregnancy, the request should be accompanied by a letter from a healthcare provider describing the nature of the condition for which the leave is requested and the estimated length of time needed for recovery.

After consultation with the student, the Program Director will decide whether or not the leave is to be granted and the conditions under which the student may return to school. The Program Director reserves the right to consult with the Program Faculty and/or Academic Progress and Professionalism Review Committee for consideration of the leave of absence request. A student requesting a leave of absence must go through the following procedure:

1. Request in writing a leave of absence from the Program Director.
2. The student must personally meet with the Program Director to discuss the reason for the leave.

3. After consulting with the student, if it is determined that the leave of absence will be granted, the Program Director will assist the student through the official leave of absence procedure at the PA Program level. The Program Director will send an official letter to the student indicating that the leave of absence has been approved and specifying the terms of the leave. The terms of the leave of absence will be determined by the Program Director and reviewed with the student, including the following elements:
 - a. Implications for resuming the curriculum (course requirements and sequencing issues)
 - b. Duration of the leave (no longer than 12 months)
 - c. Method for demonstrating academic readiness upon return to the Program
 - d. Method for demonstrating ability to meet the technical standards upon return to the Program
 - e. Need to repeat criminal background check and/or urine drug screen prior to return (at the student's expense)
 - f. Curriculum or policy revisions to which the student will be subject upon return to the Program
4. Upon receipt of the official letter from the Program Director, the student must provide the letter including the defined terms for the leave of absence, Program Director approval of the leave, and a note from his/her healthcare provider (if applicable) to the Graduate Services Office. The Graduate Services Office then assists the student with completing University administrative leave of absence processes related to financial aid, student accounts, and registration status. If a student does not return from the leave of absence at the specified time, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the program and will be responsible for all accrued fees and financial obligations.

If the leave is approved, the official start date of the leave of absence will be stipulated by the Program.

Director's approval letter. In the event the student is incapacitated and unable to initiate the request, the Program Director may facilitate this process.

Any tuition reimbursement will be in accordance with the institutional refund policy. A Leave of Absence may result in a student graduating after the remainder of their cohort, not being able to participate in the graduation ceremony with their original cohort, and other program and university-related events.

Withdrawal

- Students are permitted to withdraw from the program at their discretion following the University defined procedure.
- Withdrawal from an individual course will not allow a student to progress in the program as per the requirements for progression (see Requirements for Progression and Graduation section) and therefore constitutes withdrawal from the program.
- To officially withdraw from the University, a student must report to the Graduate Services Office. Students wishing to withdraw should also consult with the Office of

Financial Aid to determine if stipulations associated with the financial aid package will lead to changes in the financial statement.

Approved By: Policies and Procedures Committee, Academic and Professionalism Progress Review Committee

Modified:

Next Review: Spring 2019