



Master of Science
Physician Assistant Studies

Academic Standards¹

Responsible Party	Program Director and Principal Faculty
Minimum Review Frequency	Annual
Associated Forms	None
ARC-PA Associated Standards	A3.15a-g
Initial Effective Date	11/19/2021
Last Review Date	11/19/2021
Next Review Date	09/01/2023

Rationale

One of the overarching goals of the Pfeiffer University Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MS-PAS) is to educate servant leaders who will successfully demonstrate entry level mastery of the Competencies of Physician Assistant Practice. To ensure that students are successfully achieving the expected competencies; they will be formally and frequently evaluated using a variety of assessment tools.

The program has developed this policy to provide appropriate guidance and feedback to those students who struggle to meet established instructional objectives and expected competencies. This policy guides administrative decisions and procedures regarding student progress, remediation and deceleration. All academic plans concerning student progress, remediation and deceleration will be individualized and implemented when deficiencies are identified.

Progression in the Program

Progression and continuance in the Pfeiffer University MS-PAS is not only based on scholastic achievement, but also professional performance and the ability to meet all requirements of the program.

All students must:

- Successfully complete each required course/rotation with a grade of 70.0% or higher and maintain an overall GPA of 3.0
- Successfully complete all examinations (written, practical, oral, simulation, and OSCEs) with a 70.0% or higher
- Comply with program standards of conduct and guidelines for ethical conduct

Progression from the Didactic Phase to the Clinical Phase

Clinical Phase Readiness Evaluation

In order to progress to the clinical phase of the program, the student must pass each element of the Clinical Phase Readiness Evaluation (CPRE) with a 70.0%. The CPRE is a program designed assessment that will be administered two weeks before the end of the didactic phase of the program, and will consist of the following:

- 120 question multiple choice question examination which follows the PANCE topic and task blueprint
- Perform one complete history and physical examination with written submission



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- Perform one focused OSCE with written SOAP note
 - Focused History
 - Focused Physical Examination
 - Order and interpret diagnostic studies
 - Differential Diagnosis
 - Treatment plan
 - Follow-up and or referral

Remediation of the Clinical Phase Readiness Evaluation

If a student fails to score a 70.0% in any element of the CPRE:

- The student will meet with their faculty advisor to review areas of weakness and deficiency
- An individualized remediation plan will be formulated
- The student will be re-evaluated one week after the original CPRE was administered

Failure to score a 70.0% in the second CPRE the student will be referred to the APPRC to determine an individualized remediation plan, which may include a five (5) week deceleration with a prescribed plan of study. This may result in a delay in the student's completion of the program and graduation.

Degree Completion

All students must:

- Successfully complete each required course/rotation with a grade of 70.0% or higher and maintain an overall GPA 3.0
- Successful completion of the Graduate Research Project
- Complete the Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Test (PACKRAT) for self-assessment only
- Comply with program standards of conduct and guidelines for ethical conduct
- Successfully complete each element of the Summative Evaluation with a grade of 70.0% or higher
- Complete the Pfeiffer University MS-PAS National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants Board Review Course

Time to Completion

Currently enrolled MS-PAS students are expected to complete all curricular components in twenty-seven consecutive months, and in the prescribed sequence.

Deceleration ***MAY ONLY*** be offered to a student:

- Due to poor academic and/or professional performance.
- Upon recommendation of the Academic and Professional Performance Review committee
- For a maximum of 12 months

Please see Deceleration Policy below.

Remediation of Didactic Courses (with the exception of Clinical Medicine I, II and III)

General Considerations

All students in the Pfeiffer University MS-PAS program will, at all times, possess one of five states of academic standing:

- Good Academic Standing
- Academic Probation Level I
- Academic Probation Level II
- Academic Separation
- Academic Dismissal

Each student will start the didactic phase of the program in “Good Academic Standing”.

A score of <70.0% on any assessment is considered a failing grade for the assessment.

Academic plans concerning remediation will be tailored to each student and may include but is not limited to obtaining instructor verification confirming 100% attendance of classes, writing a reflective summary of covered concepts after each class, completing additional assignment(s) on select topics, attending instructor supplemental/tutoring sessions for specific courses and/or topics.

Definitions

Good Academic Standing

- The student has successfully passed all assessments with 70.0% or greater
- All students will meet with their assigned academic advisor at the midpoint of each semester.

Academic Probation Standing Level I (low risk)

- **Low risk:** score in any assessment between <80%. Risk level will be determined after each assessment.
 - **Low risk** students will be placed on “**Academic Probation Level I**”.
 - The Course Director notifies the student’s academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education and the Academic and the Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC).
 - Course Director will formulate, document and implement an individualized academic plan that facilitates student success in achieving the instructional objectives and expected course competencies.
 - The student will review and sign a commitment statement stating that the student is fully committed to completing all components of the individualized academic plan, to attending mandatory monthly meetings with the Course Director, and that all questions and concerns were addressed.
 - The student will be referred to the Graduate Student Success Center for additional guidance and advisement.

- Upon successful completion of all the components of the individualized academic plan the student will revert to Good Academic Standing.

Academic Probation Level II (high risk)

- **High risk:** score on any assessment <70%. Risk level will be determined after each assessment.
 - **High risk** students will be placed on “**Academic Probation Level II**”.
 - The Course Director notifies the student’s academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education and the APPRC.
 - Course Director will formulate, document and implement an individualized academic plan that facilitates student success in achieving the instructional objectives and expected course competencies.
 - The student will review and sign a commitment statement stating that the student is fully committed to completing all components of the individualized academic plan, to attending mandatory weekly or biweekly meetings with the Course Director, and that all questions and concerns were addressed.
 - The student will be referred to the Graduate Student Success Center for additional guidance and advisement.
 - Upon successful completion of all the components of the individualized academic plan the student will revert to Good Academic Standing.

Academic Separation

- **Academic Separation** is defined as failure of one course.
 - The Course Director notifies the student’s academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education, the Program Director and the APPRC.
 - The APPRC will review the student’s course documents confirming failure of the course.
 - The Program Director will then authorize Academic Separation and notify the Dean of the Division of Applied Health Sciences.
 - The student will then enter the Deceleration Process (Please see Deceleration Policy)

Academic Dismissal

- **Academic Dismissal** is defined as failure of two courses.
 - Students who fail two courses in the didactic phase will be dismissed from the program
 - The APPRC will review the student’s course documents confirming failure of the courses.
 - The Program Director will then authorize Academic Dismissal and notify the Dean of the Division of Applied Health Sciences.
 - If there is continued interest in the program; the student must re-apply and go through the entire admissions process.

Clinical Medicine I, II, III

Clinical Medicine I, II, and III are divided into modules, each module functions as its own “course” with specific instructional objectives, learning outcomes and expected competencies. Students must pass each module with a minimum score of 70%.

- ***If a student fails a module***
 - The Course Director notifies the student’s academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education and the Academic and the Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC).
 - Course Director will formulate, document and implement an individualized remediation plan that facilitates student success in achieving the instructional objectives and expected course competencies.
 - The student will review and sign a commitment statement stating that the student is fully committed to completing all components of the individualized remediation plan, to attending mandatory monthly meetings with the Course Director, and that all questions and concerns were addressed.
 - The student will be referred to the Graduate Student Success Center for additional guidance and advisement.
 - The student will be re-assessed two weeks after original module examination
 - If the student fails the re-assessment
 - An individualized remediation plan is re-formulated
 - The student will be re-assessed at the end of the course as follows
 - 50 multiple choice examination on failed module
 - Oral case presentation on failed module
 - Reflection essay
 - If the student fails second re-assessment
 - The student has failed the course, irrespective of the composite grade is decelerated and placed on Academic Separation standing.
- ***If a student fails two modules***
 - The Course Director notifies the student’s academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education and the Academic and the Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC).
 - Course Director will formulate, document and implement an individualized remediation plan that facilitates student success in achieving the instructional objectives and expected course competencies.
 - The student will review and sign a commitment statement stating that the student is fully committed to completing all components of the individualized remediation plan, to attending mandatory monthly meetings with the Course Director, and that all questions and concerns were addressed.
 - The student will be referred to the Graduate Student Success Center for additional guidance and advisement.
 - The student will be re-assessed two weeks after original module examination
 - If the student fails the re-assessment



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- An individualized remediation plan is re-formulated
- The student will be re-assessed at the end of the course as follows
 - 100 multiple choice examination on failed modules (50 each)
 - Oral case presentation on failed modules
 - Reflection essay
- If the student fails second re-assessment
 - The student has failed the course, irrespective of the composite grade is decelerated and placed on Academic Separation standing.
- ***If a student fails three modules***
 - The Course Director notifies the student's academic advisor, the Director of Didactic Education and the Academic and the Professional Performance Review Committee (APPRC).
 - Course Director will formulate, document and implement an individualized remediation plan that facilitates student success in achieving the instructional objectives and expected course competencies.
 - The student will review and sign a commitment statement stating that the student is fully committed to completing all components of the individualized remediation plan, to attending mandatory monthly meetings with the Course Director, and that all questions and concerns were addressed.
 - The student will be referred to the Graduate Student Success Center for additional guidance and advisement.
 - The student will be re-assessed two weeks after original module examination
 - If the student fails the re-assessment
 - The student has failed the course, irrespective of the composite grade
- Failure of Clinical Medicine I, II or III will result in Academic Deceleration and placed on Academic Separation standing.

Deceleration Policy

- **Definition**
 - The loss of a student from the entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the physician assistant program.
 - Note: The number of students in the program and those considered decelerated cannot exceed the maximum limit designated by our accrediting agency, the ARC-PA.
- **Procedure**
 - All students that are placed on Academic Separation will be offered a one-time opportunity to reenter at the point of the failed course.
 - The student has 5 business days from the date the final course grade is posted to submit their written acceptance of the one-time offer for deceleration to the Program Director via e-mail.
 - The student will receive a written response from the Program Director acknowledging the student's acceptance into deceleration.



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- An individualized academic plan of remediation will be discussed with the student.
- In order to be re-instated in the program the student must demonstrate competency in the knowledge and skills of all courses that were completed successfully.
- Reentry Requirements:
 - Because interruption of the educational process does not promote nor ensure currency of the medical knowledge needed to prepare the student to reenter at the point of the failed course, competency (covering the semester of the failed course and all prior semesters) must be proven by two examinations: a written and a clinical skills examination given the semester prior to the point of the failed course.
 - Competency must be demonstrated with a minimum of a 70% on the written examination **and** a minimum of 70% on the clinical skills examination in order to be permitted to reenter and progress to the next semester.
 - The objectives for both examinations will be the same as those presented during the didactic year. The dates for both the written and clinical examinations will be arranged by the faculty.
 - Upon successful completion of **each** examination the student will reenter at the point of the failed course
 - The failed course must be successfully repeated (the next semester it is offered) with a minimum of a 70% in order to progress to the next semester.
 - The student must audit all the courses that are offered in the semester that the failed course is offered.
 - Failure to successfully complete all reentry requirements listed above will result in dismissal from the Program.
 - After a period of five years, students may reapply to the program.
 - Decisions on reentry will be made utilizing the Physician Assistant Admissions Ranking System.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Score	GPA
A	89.5-100	4.0
B	79.5-89.45	3.3
C	69.45-79.45	3.0
Fail	<69.5	2.9

Summary of the Remediation Policy for Didactic Courses (Except Clinical Medicine I, II and III)

Good Academic Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ No failing grades➤ Meets all the expected competencies in all the didactic and clinical courses	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ No remediation needed	Duration of Academic Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ N/A
Academic Probation Standing Level I	Strategy	Duration of Academic Standing

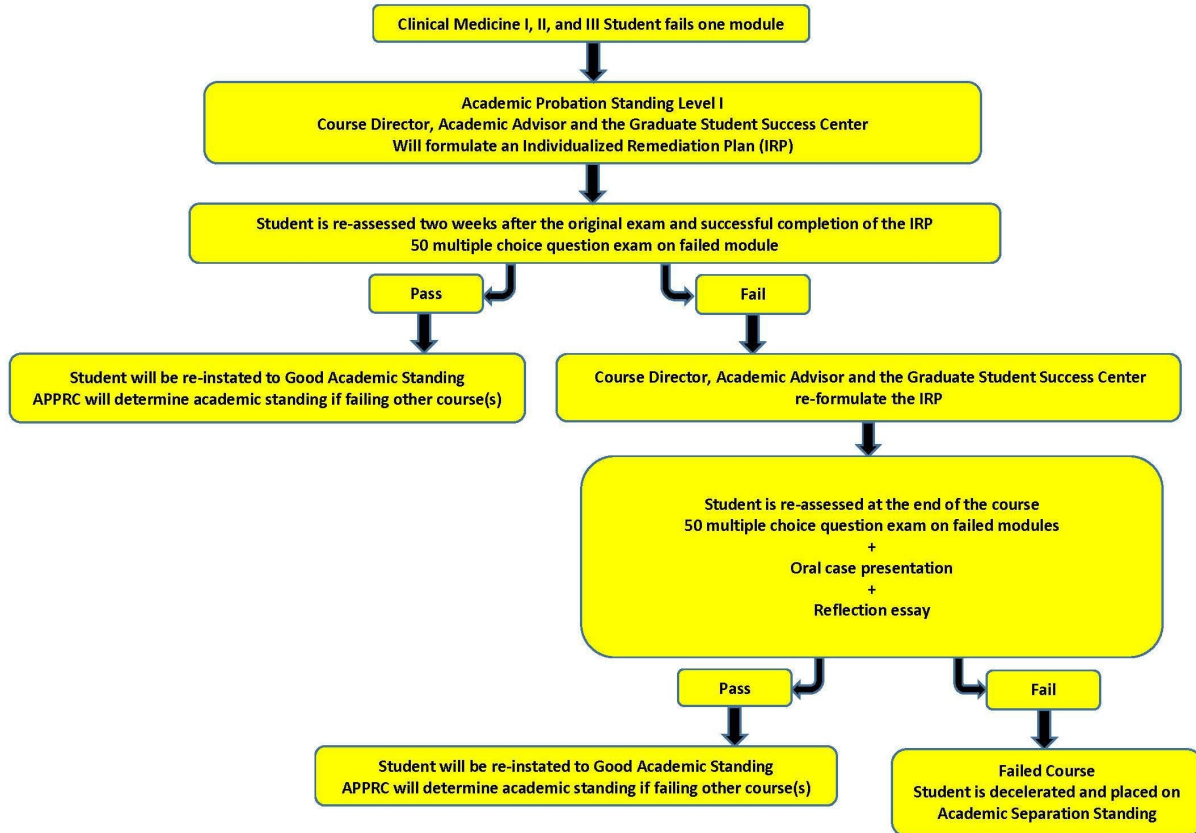


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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Score on any assessment between 74-76.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Referral to Graduate Student Success Center ➤ Formulation of individualized academic plan ➤ Mandatory monthly meeting with Course Director where remediation was necessary ➤ Mandatory monthly meeting with Academic Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Upon successful completion of the course in question the MS-PAS Academic and Professional Performance Review Committee will review all remediation documents and make recommendations regarding the student's academic standing
Academic Probation Standing Level II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Score on any assessment <74% 	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Referral to Graduate Student Success Center ➤ Formulation of individualized academic plan ➤ Mandatory weekly or bi-weekly meeting with Course Director where remediation was necessary ➤ Mandatory monthly meeting with Academic Advisor 	Duration of Academic Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Upon successful completion of the course in question the MS-PAS Academic and Professional Performance Review Committee will review all remediation documents and make recommendations regarding the student's academic standing
Academic Separation Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Student fails one course 	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The student will be removed from the current cohort ➤ An individualized academic plan of remediation will be discussed with the student ➤ In order to be re-instated in the cohort the student must demonstrate competency in the knowledge and skills of the courses that were completed successfully through a variety of assessment tools ➤ This assessment will be administered towards the end of the semester prior to the semester when the failed course is offered within the course sequence of the program 	Duration of Academic Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The student must wait until the failed course is offered within the course sequence of the program.
Academic Dismissal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fails two courses 	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The student will be dismissed from the program. 	Duration of Academic Standing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If there is continued interest in the program; the student must re-apply and go through the entire admissions process.

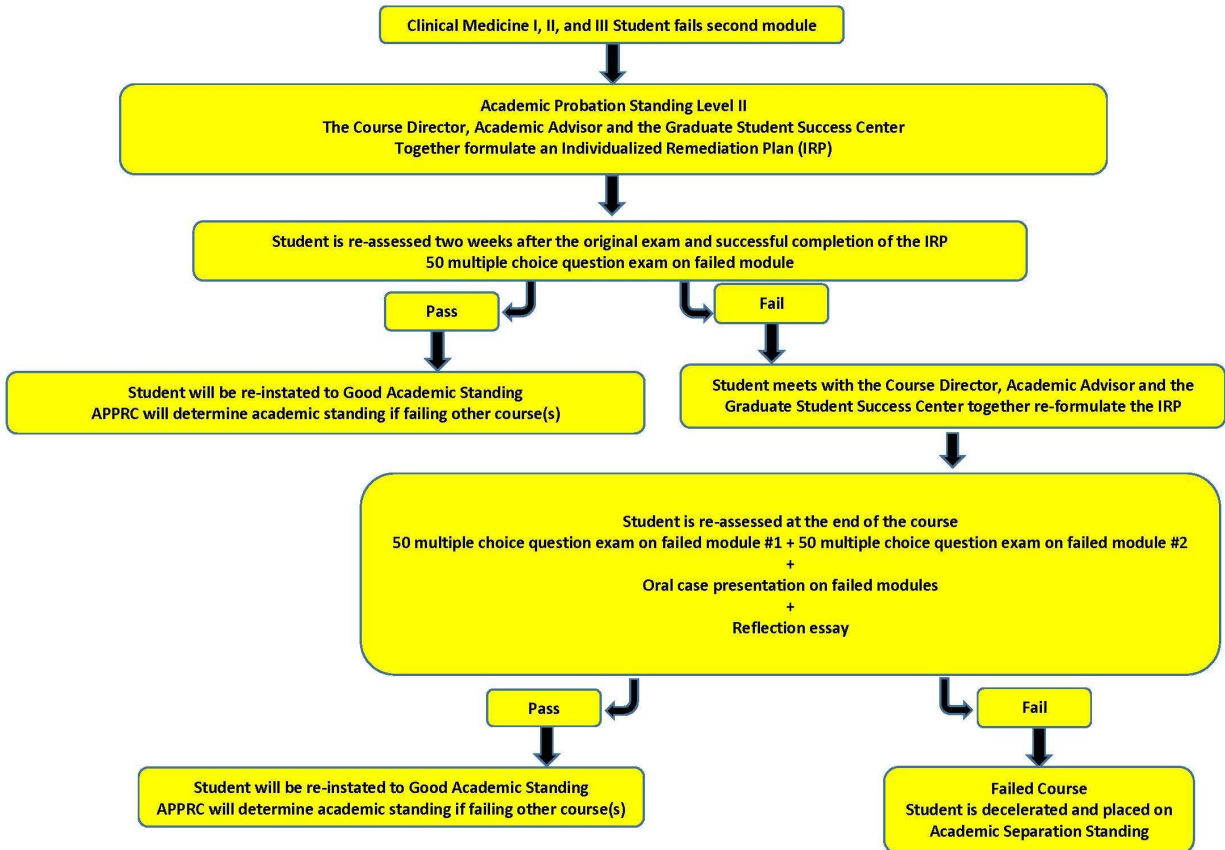
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Summary of Remediation Policy for Clinical Medicine I, II and III



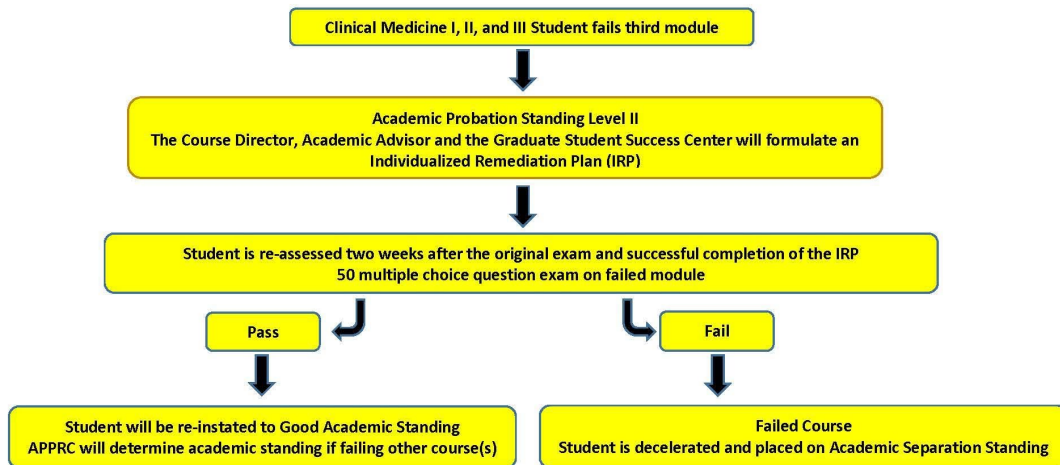
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Summary of Remediation System for Clinical Medicine I, II and III



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Summary of Remediation System for Clinical Medicine I, II and II



Clinical Phase Remediation

Written Case Presentation

- If a student fails to score a minimum of 70% on the Written Case Presentation, the student will meet with their academic advisor to review deficiencies. The student must re-submit the Written Case Presentation with the corrections by 11:59 PM on the Friday of Clinical Seminar. The highest grade the student will receive is a 70%.

Critical Appraisal of an article related to the written case

- If a student fails to score a minimum of 70% on the Critical Appraisal of an article related to the written case, the student will meet with their academic advisor to review deficiencies. The student must re-submit the Critical Appraisal with the corrections by 11:59 PM on the Friday of Clinical Seminar. The highest grade the student will receive is a 70%.

EOR Examination

- The program uses the PAEA EOR standardized exams to evaluate the medical knowledge gained in core clinical rotations.
 - The exams are PASS/FAIL
 - Scores one and a half (1 ½) standard deviations below the mean are considered as FAIL
- Failure of one EOR examination will result in the following:
 - Review areas of weakness
 - Individualized remediation plan of study
 - Student will be re-assessed on the following Monday after Clinical Seminar Days
 - If the student passes the repeat examination, then he/she may move unto the next rotation
 - If the student fails:
 - Repeat the failed rotation at the end of the clinical phase of the program.
 - Failure of the repeated SCPE will result in a referral to the MS-PAS Academic and Professional Performance Review Committee for consideration of Academic Dismissal Standing
- Failure of two SCPEs
 - Review areas of weakness
 - Individualized remediation plan of study
 - Student will be re-assessed on the following Monday after Clinical Seminar Days
 - If the student passes the repeat examination, then he/she may move unto the next rotation
 - If the student fails:
 - Will result in a referral to the MS-PAS Academic and Professional Performance Review Committee for consideration of Academic Dismissal Standing

OSCE

- If a student fails to score a minimum of 70% on the OSCE, the student will meet with their academic advisor to review deficiencies. The student will be re-evaluated on Friday afternoon of Clinical Seminar. The highest grade the student will receive is a 70%.

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Preceptor Evaluation

- If a student fails to score a minimum of 70% on the Preceptor evaluation, the DCE or a designee will meet (in person or virtually) with the preceptor to discuss the reasons why the student received the failing grade, and gather any supporting documents from the preceptor and their staff.
- The DCE will then meet with the student to discuss the Preceptor Evaluation on Friday afternoon of the Clinical Seminar.
- If there are no evidence of extenuating circumstances, the student must repeat the clinical rotation at the end of clinical phase of the program. This may result in delay of completion of the program and graduation.
- The student may appeal to the APPRC by means of the appeals process. The student must request the appeal by 11:59 PM (EST) the Sunday after the Clinical Seminar. Please refer to Appeals Process in this handbook.

Summative Evaluation

The Pfeiffer University MS PAS program conducts a summative evaluation of each student within the final four months of the program. The purpose of the summative evaluation is to verify and validate that each student has successfully achieved the **Learning Outcomes and Expected Competencies** established by the program; and are necessary to enter clinical practice. The assessments composing the summative evaluation correlate with all didactic and clinical curricular components of the program. The elements of the summative evaluation are as follows:

- 120 Multiple Choice Examination
- Performance of a Complete Physical Examination
- Documentation of a Complete History and Physical
- Successful completion of an OSCE assessment
- Documentation of a SOAP note for the OSCE scenario
- Formulation of a research question on the chosen scenario, using the PICO format; and Critical Appraisal of one article related to the research question
- Formulation of a performance improvement plan regarding a challenge identified on SCPE#5
- 500 word reflection essay on their role as a Physician Assistant regarding one of the following topics:
 - Health Disparities
 - Social Justice in Medicine
 - Community Health Advocacy

Students must demonstrate entry level competence and score a minimum of 70% on each of the necessary assessments. If a student fails to achieve this benchmark:

- The student will meet with their academic advisor to review areas of weakness and deficiency
- An individualized remediation plan will be formulated
- The student will be re-evaluated on Friday afternoon of the following Clinical Seminar

Failure to achieve the established benchmark on the re-assessment will result in a referral to the APPRC, which may recommend deceleration or dismissal from the program.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed at the annual program retreat.

¹ ARC-PA Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education A 3.15a-g