

POLICY FOR ACADEMIC PROGRESSION OF STUDENTS IN DOCTOR OF PHARMACY DEGREE PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program maintain academic standards necessary for successful progression to graduation and meet standards of practice within the profession of pharmacy. The PharmD Program Academic Performance Committee is responsible for oversight of individual student performance and progression. The committee is also responsible for review and revision of policies and procedures related to academic progression as required to maintain program excellence.

Background

All Doctor of Pharmacy courses, activities and requirements of the program have been developed to enable students to gain the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful within the profession of pharmacy. It is the mutual responsibility of each student, the faculty and staff, and the APC to ensure that the student achieves minimal academic standards in all coursework and successfully completes all other program requirements to maintain a status of good academic standing and successfully achieve the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. To this end, these Policies and Procedures form a framework in which decisions regarding the academic progression of students within the PharmD program can be uniformly, but individually, made.

Students are required, at a minimum, to review these Policies and Procedures upon entry into the School of Pharmacy and at the beginning of each academic year, attesting this by electronic or other signature. Any situation that arises that is not specifically covered by these Policies and Procedures will be adjudicated by the dean, after consultation with the APC. These policies and procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis by the committee and revised when appropriate and needed.

I. General Policies

A. Professional Course Load, Grading and Schedule

Students in the PharmD program must carry a full course load during each academic semester, except by permission from the APC.

All School of Pharmacy courses must be taken for a letter grade except for courses of experiential learning, professional and career development, case conference and electives approved by the Curriculum Committee for alternative grading.

B. Grade Assignments at End of Semester

At the end of each semester, students will be assigned the grade earned in the course.

If there is incomplete work, a grade of "G" or "I" will be assigned. The Director of the PharmD Program will advise coordinators on the appropriate use of "G" grade designation.

As defined by the University [Grading and Records - University of Pittsburgh - Acalog ACMS™](#)), a "G" grade is assigned when class work is unfinished because of extenuating personal circumstances. This may be the case, for example, if a student misses one or more exams or assignments due to illness or excused absence. A plan for removal of the "G" grade must be developed by student and course coordinator and approved by APC.

1. Any "G" grade must be removed no later than July 15; any "G" grade that remains on a student's transcript after July 15 will automatically change to "NG".

2. The "NG" grade will remain on the record and the student will be required to re-register for the course the next time it is offered.

When unfinished class work exists that is not due to extenuating personal circumstances, an "I" grade is assigned. A plan for removal of the "I" grade must be developed by student and course coordinator and approved by APC.

1. Any "I" grade must be removed by the deadline stated in the plan and no later than July 15.
2. Any "I" grade that remains on a student's transcript after July 15 will change to the earned grade based upon the course syllabus criteria and student performance.

II. Academic Progression, Promotion and Academic Probation of PharmD Students

Promotion of a student to the next professional year of the PharmD program is dependent on successful completion of the previous professional year. The following outlines situations in which a student would not meet the criteria to progress in professional years or matriculate from the program.

A. Cumulative & Semester Grade Point Averages

Calculation of grade point average (GPA) will include all required professional courses and approved electives taken while enrolled in the PharmD program.

Cumulative GPA will be calculated at the end of each semester. All PharmD students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00. A student who fails to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 or above will be placed on academic probation and given one opportunity to repeat selected courses (determined by the APC) in order to raise their cumulative GPA above 2.00. A student failing to increase their cumulative GPA above a 2.00 during this period of academic probation will be dismissed from the PharmD program.

Semester GPA will be calculated at the end of each semester. A student with a semester GPA under 2.00 will be placed on academic probation and must achieve a minimum semester GPA of 2.00 or above during the following semester. A student failing to achieve a semester GPA of 2.00 or above in the following semester will remain on academic probation and given one opportunity to repeat selected courses in one or both semesters (determined by the APC). A student failing to earn a grade of "C" or above in the repeated courses or who does not repeat the courses will be dismissed from the program.

B. Course Performance & Assigned Grades

A student earning the following grades will not be eligible for promotion to the next professional year and will be placed on academic probation

1. One or more "F" grade(s) or Unsatisfactory ("U") grade(s) within a given semester
2. Two or more grades below "C-" within a given semester.

Academic performance in APC-determined coursework in subsequent semesters will determine length and outcome of academic probation (see below).

For a student meeting criteria B.1, or B.2 above:

If the inadequate performance occurs at the end of the fall semester a student may, with the approval of the APC:

1. take no courses during the subsequent spring semester and return to the school for the next fall semester to repeat the professional course(s) they performed inadequately in, as well as other professional courses as determined by the APC.

OR

2. continue into the subsequent spring semester, taking only some professional courses as determined by the APC. In the following fall and spring semesters, the student would repeat the courses of inadequate performance, as well as other courses, as determined by the APC. A student will not be permitted to take any core courses in the next professional year curriculum.

If the poor performance occurs at the end of the spring semester, the student may, with the approval of the APC:

1. take no courses during the fall semester and return to the school the next spring semester to repeat the professional course(s) they performed inadequately in, as well as other professional courses as determined by the APC.

OR

2. the student may choose to return in the fall semester to repeat any professional courses in which they performed marginally from the previous fall semester and/or take elective courses (if prerequisites for the electives have been met). In the following spring semesters, the student would repeat the courses of inadequate performance, as well as other courses, as determined by the APC. A student will not be permitted to take any core courses in the next professional year curriculum.

C. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning activities and requirements in the P1 through P3 years, called Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs), are embedded into specific courses.

A student earning a "U" final course grade in any experiential learning course in any program year is not eligible for promotion to the next professional year and will be placed on academic probation. A student earning two "U" final course grades in any experiential learning courses in any program year will be dismissed from the program.

A student who earns a "U" final course grade in any APPE rotation is placed on academic probation and must repeat the same type of rotation during either in an open (or "off") block or in a block after the last scheduled rotation for the P4 year. A student who fails to earn a passing grade in the repeated rotation or who earns a "U" grade in any subsequent rotation will be dismissed from the program.

Students may not start P4 Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotations until all P1, P2, and P3 course and program requirements have been successfully completed, including any course remediation. Any "I" or "G" grades must be successfully removed BEFORE the student will be permitted to start APPE rotations.

All "I" and "G" grades for the P2 year must be successfully removed at least 4 (or more, depending on the site) weeks prior to scheduled P3 experiential learning activities in order to provide sufficient time for site review of student materials.

D. Academic Probation Standing & Student Activities

Students on academic probation are deemed to not be in good academic standing and therefore are not permitted to participate in leadership roles in extracurricular activities at the School of Pharmacy including, but not limited to:

1. Holding an elected or appointed office or position in a student organization or school committee
2. Pledging a professional sorority or fraternity or holding a leadership position in the sorority or fraternity
3. Serving as a RxAmbassador or in any other school-funded role
4. Representing the University of Pittsburgh at local, regional, or national association meetings

E. Duration of Academic Probation

1. If academic probation is due to a GPA issue (see IIA above), the student will be on probation for the next two semesters of enrollment in core pharmacy courses.
2. If academic probation is due to grades of "F" or "U" or two grades below "C-" in a single semester (see II B1 or II B2 above), the student will be on probation until they are promoted to the next professional year.

III. Academic Matriculation

The APC will support, for graduation from the PharmD program, a student who is in good academic standing:

- Has successfully completed all course-based requirements including removal of any "I" or "G" grades
- Has achieved the defined GPA and grade requirements
- Has successfully completed all professional development experiences including dashboard documentation of curriculum and co-curriculum requirements and assessments
- Has successfully completed all experiential learning requirements

IV. Course Withdrawal

School course withdrawal procedures are in compliance with University policy. (See <https://www.provost.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Course-Withdrawal-AcadReg.pdf>). A student may withdraw from professional course(s) only after discussion with the Director of the PharmD Program and written permission has been obtained. Course withdrawal must be processed through the School Registrar within the time period specified by the University. A student is not permitted to "unofficially withdraw" by merely not attending classes.

Under no circumstances will withdrawal from a professional course be granted solely based on poor performance in the course, except in the event of resignation from the program (see separate policy). Course withdrawal may affect student academic standing; therefore, the APC chair will be notified following withdrawal confirmation.

V. Dismissal from the PharmD Program

A student will be dismissed from the PharmD program who does not show sufficient promise to justify continuation in the program. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Any student on academic probation who earns an "F" or a "U" (unsatisfactory) grade in any required or elective course OR grades below "C-" in any two courses (required or elective), within a given semester.
- Any student on academic probation who fails to achieve or maintain a minimum cumulative and/or semester GPA of 2.00 or above.
- Any student who receives "F" or "U" grades in two or more courses at any time during their P1 through P4 years.
- Any student earning two "U" final course grades in any experiential learning courses in any program years.

- One or more violation of conduct and professional standards as described in the University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct, the School of Pharmacy Code of Conduct and the Oath of a Pharmacist (<https://www.aacp.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/oath2024-fullpage.pdf>)

VI. Re-admission of Dismissed Students

A. Petition for Re-admission.

A student who has been dismissed (not permitted to register) from the program will not be considered for re-admission for at least **six months** after the date of dismissal. After this time, a student must apply for re-admission on a competitive basis with all other applicants for that year. Such students, if admitted, will be expected to follow a course of study determined by the APC and must conform to any curricular changes that have occurred since they were last enrolled.

B. Regulations for Re-admitted Students.

All re-admitted students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or greater and make satisfactory academic progress (i.e., not be placed on academic probation) for all remaining semesters to continue in the PharmD program. Re-admitted students' academic performance will be evaluated at the end of each semester; failure to meet the requirements for continuing in the PharmD program will result in permanent dismissal.

VII. Due Process and Right of Appeal

A student will be notified in writing (via electronic notice as well as certified mail) of any committee decisions for academic probation or dismissal from the PharmD program, including the reason for this action.

A student who wishes to appeal committee decisions should submit written evidence of extenuating circumstances to the APC chair **within 10 working days of the date of the letter from the APC**. A student may request to appear before the APC to further explain their situation. The appeal will be heard at a convened committee meeting and final decision communicated to the student within 10 working days.

Following unsuccessful appeal to the APC, a student may then directly appeal to the dean by providing written petition **within 10 working days of the committee's decision and communication upon the appeal**. At that time, the dean will consult with the APC and final decisions will be rendered.

VIII. Extenuating Circumstances

In highly unusual cases, the APC, in consultation with the dean, may make exceptions to this policy.

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