

# ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The physician assistant program is a 27-month, 126 semester hour course of study leading to a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree.

The didactic portion of the PA program is designed in a sequential fashion, with each term building on the previous term's coursework. All required assignments for each class must be completed by the end of the term in order to progress to the following term. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed on Academic Probation and necessitate Remediation. Failure to remediate successfully may result in deceleration or dismissal.

The program must be completed within 5 years of initial entry/matriculation.

## Policies and procedures for progression in and completion of the program

Requirements for progression and completion of the program depend on the student demonstrating the learning outcomes and competencies, including professionalism, for each course, and for the program overall during the summative evaluation. Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA per term as well as overall, will result in being placed on Academic Probation.

If the student fails to meet criteria for progression and decelerates, all coursework/required program components must be completed within five years of initial matriculation. Only courses taken and credits received in the graduate programs at Bryant University are included in the computation of the grade-point average. Quality points are determined by multiplying credits by grade points. Grade points are listed in the table above. The grade-point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total quality points earned by the total credits completed

## Policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration

### 1. Progression in the didactic phase

In order to progress through the didactic phase of the program, students must maintain an average of 3.0 GPA per term and must pass each course with a "C" letter grade. Students that do not achieve an overall 3.0 GPA will be placed on academic probation. Students must demonstrate continual improvement to remain in the program as defined as an improving GPA. Students who fail to improve their overall GPA from the previous term will be referred to the ASRC for recommended dismissal.

Students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA at the completion of the didactic year to begin clinical rotations. Any student who fails to achieve this 3.0 GPA cannot proceed and must be recommended by the ASRC for dismissal from the program.

In addition to having an overall 3.0 GPA, all students are required to pass a summative examination prior to entering supervised clinical practice experiences. Remediation for failure of the summative examination is required and will consist of a retest of information similar in both content and construction to the original summative examination. Students will be referred to the Academic Support and Remediation Committee with

a recommendation for dismissal for failure to successfully complete the didactic phase summative examination.

The graduate school does not allow grade substitutions for failed courses. All completed courses will be reflected on student transcripts as received by the program. Students who repeat a course due to deceleration must be considerate of this when returning for the following cohort and must continue to complete all minimum GPA requirements.

### 2. Progression in the clinical phase

In order to progress through the clinical phase of the program, students must maintain an average of 3.0 GPA per term and must pass each SCPE with an overall grade of a "B" as passing letter grade (83%).

Students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA to be considered for graduation. Any student who fails to achieve this will not be permitted to graduate from the university graduate school.

If the student fails to meet criteria for progression and decelerates, all coursework/required program components must be completed within five years of initial matriculation. Only courses taken and credits received in the graduate programs at Bryant University are included in the computation of the grade-point average. As in the didactic coursework, all failing courses are maintained on the student transcript and cannot be substituted for repeat or remedial coursework. All final grades will be calculated into the overall student cumulative GPA.

In the same manner as the didactic phase, all students are required to pass a clinical summative examination prior to completing supervised clinical practice experiences before a recommendation for graduation is given to the Program Director. Remediation for failure of the summative examination is required for program completion and will consist of a retest of information similar in both content and construction to the original summative examination. Students will be referred to the Academic Support and Remediation Committee with a recommendation for dismissal for failure to successfully complete the didactic phase summative examination.

### 3. Remediation for a failed didactic or examination

A test score of < 75% will result in a notification of the ASRC. Upon posting of final grades, students who failed an exam must make an appointment to meet with the director of academic success to address the low score and to develop a study/remediation plan. The student will be assigned a remediation learning assignment based on the course objectives for that exam to be completed within five (5) calendar days of notification of exam failure.

At the end of the term, the ASRC will review all exam scores and replace the two (2) lowest with a 75% provided the student has successfully completed the remediation assignments. No more than two (2) remediation assignments will be permitted to replace exam failures. Failure of the remediation assignment will result in individual counseling and the remediation score cannot be applied to that individual examination.

### 4. Remediation for a failed course in the didactic curriculum

Minimum passing grade for each course during the didactic year is a "C" (i.e. 75% or above) and an overall GPA of 3.0 must be maintained for each term in the didactic year. Failure of a course will result in the student being placed on Academic Probation. The student will be followed by the ASRC and will meet with the student advisor and director of academic success to outline the remediation plan. The student will then complete

a comprehensive remediation exam, which must be completed within ten (10) calendar days of the notification of course failure.

Failure of the comprehensive course exam will result in failure to progress to the next term and referral to the ASRC for recommendation of deceleration or dismissal. Passing the comprehensive exam will allow the student to progress to the next term, however, the student will remain on Academic Probation.

No more than two (2) failing courses can be remediated during one term. Failure of more than two (2) courses during any term will result in a recommendation for dismissal.

#### 5. Remediation for a failed Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE)

During the clinical year, the minimum required grade to pass each SCPE is a "B" (i.e. 83% or above). Failure to obtain a "B" will necessitate repeating the failed rotation after the remediation plan has been successfully completed. The student's faculty advisor, the Director of Academic Success, and the Director of Clinical Education will develop the remediation plan. Failing the remediation plan or failing the repeat rotation will result in dismissal. No more than one (1) clinical rotation may be repeated: more than one failed SCPE will result in referral to the ASRC for dismissal.

Students will repeat the deficient rotation during a block as deemed appropriate by the scheduling of the Director of Clinical Education in accordance with availability of preceptors. Students who fail SCPE will be notified, in writing, when all academic requirements have been submitted, graded, and a cumulative grade is calculated. In most situations, students will report to their pre-assigned next SCPE as designated to allow for a remediation plan to be developed. Students will be notified by the completion of the proceeding SCPE of the date and location of their remediation rotation as well as any additional academic requirements, including the remediation plan, that will be required to fulfill the requirements of the failed SCPE.

### Deceleration

Failure to successfully fulfill the requirements of the assigned remediation plan after having failed a class/course during the didactic portion of the program may result in deceleration, where the student will have to make up the class during the next regularly scheduled offering. Since PA courses are offered in a sequential fashion, each building on the previous courses, failure to pass a class during the didactic year will result in the student not being able to proceed to the next terms' courses. The student will therefore have to join the next year's class/cohort.

During the clinical year, the student who fails a SCPE and remediates successfully will have a delayed graduation date, but does not have to furlough for a year to rejoin clinical rotations as is necessary in the didactic year. All students failing initial coursework requiring repeat courses (deceleration for academic year) or SCPE's (clinical year) will incur additional tuition expenses that are not eligible for federal financial aid assistance. Any student that requires deceleration or remediation must present to the university financial aid office to discuss financial obligations for course completion and graduation. Failure to comply with university financial obligations could delay certification for graduation.

### Leave of Absence

By virtue of Bryant's PA program design as a 27 month plan of study, admitted students are expected to proceed through the program with the cohort they were admitted with at the beginning of their PA studies.

Stated differently, students, upon admission, are expected to complete their PA degree requirements by continuous enrollment in the time specified by the program in which they entered.

Although leaves of absence from the PA program are discouraged, it is recognized that occasionally there are significant life-altering events that may result in the need for a student to suspend continuous enrollment from their respective program on a temporary basis.

Consequently, any student who, prior to completion of the PA Program requirements, seeks to decline registration for an upcoming semester may do so by registering for a Leave of Absence (LOA) by completing an official LOA form with the Registrar's Office. A PA student on a leave of absence may re-enter the program in a subsequent year, at the beginning of the same academic term in which they began their LOA. Students will be required to complete all coursework from that term. Additionally, students will have the option to attend courses from the previous terms, if desired. Students are still required to complete their program within a five year time frame from admission.

Dependent upon the official starting date of the LOA, students may be required to return portions of their federal and private loan awards, according to the requirements stipulated by their written agreements with the individual lenders.

Students must notify the PA Program Director of their intention to re-enroll by October 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year prior to their planned re-enrollment.

### Cancellation of Classes

Cancellation/delay of classes due to weather conditions will be announced over local radio and television stations. A detailed message will also be available by calling the University's emergency line at (401) 232-6002.

The announcement to cancel or delay classes will also be available on the university website at [www.bryant.edu](http://www.bryant.edu). When individual classes are cancelled, students will be notified via their Bryant e-mail accounts.

Any cancelled classes will be rescheduled by the Program and may occur outside of normal scheduled class hours, to include evenings and weekends.

### Credit Hour

Each academic term is twelve weeks in length, however, the semester hours assigned represent workload equivalent to sixteen calendar weeks.

### Grading System

The graduate programs use the following grading system:

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
F	0.0

## Grade Replacement Policy – Didactic Year

For failed PA courses during the didactic year, there is no grade replacement or substitution allowed. All students who have failed a didactic course and require deceleration will be required to repeat the course the following year as previously discussed. For the purposes of program and university graduation requirements, this grade will remain on the student transcript and the failing grade is calculated into the overall student GPA. Students will continue to be required to maintain the 3.0 GPA overall to progress to the clinical phase of training.

## Grade Replacement Policy – Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPEs)

During the clinical year, the minimum required grade to pass each SCPE (clinical rotation) course is a “B” (83%). Failure to obtain a “B” will necessitate repeating the failed rotation. Failing the repeat clinical rotation will result in dismissal. No more than one clinical rotation may be repeated; failing more than one clinical rotation will result in dismissal. The repeated SCPE is subject to this Grade Replacement Policy:

- For any one SCPE, this grade replacement option may only be used once – a failed SCPE may only be repeated one time. Also, credit for a repeated course may be used only once.
- This policy can be applied to a maximum of one SCPE – no more than one SCPE may be repeated.
- For purposes of GPA calculation, the grade earned during the first SCPE enrollment will stand until the recording of the final grade in the second enrollment is completed. When the second enrollment is completed, the grade for that second enrollment will become the grade used in all GPA calculations.
- The transcript will record both course enrollments and the grade earned in each enrollment. The first attempt will be marked with an X to indicate grade replacement (e.g., XF, XC).
- Students will not be allowed to apply the grade replacement policy to a course in which there has been documented academic dishonesty that has not been reversed on appeal.
- If a student takes an approved leave of absence from the PA Program during a clinical rotation, the student will receive a grade of “Incomplete (I)” for that SCPE and may not restart the PA Program prior to the start of the next term; the soonest the student could resume clinical rotations would be whichever established SCPE block occurs first in the next term. The Incomplete SCPE must be repeated prior to completion of the program and will likely take place at the same clinical site.
- All PA Program courses and requirements must be completed within five (5) years of matriculation, per PA Program policy.

This Grade Replacement Policy is unique to the SCPE (clinical rotation) courses in the PA Program and is applied automatically upon completion of the repeated (remediation) SCPE.

## Student Employment

Employment by the student while enrolled in the program, while not prohibited, is strongly discouraged. The program is one of intense study with educational activities routinely scheduled from Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm during the didactic year (not including independent study) and becomes even more rigorous and time intensive during clinical rotations the following year. Absences secondary to work are not considered excused. Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional behavior and may result in grade penalties and potential deceleration

and/or dismissal if professional and academic standards are not met. Students who have been placed on Academic Probation are prohibited from working during their time on probation. Non-adherence to this policy will risk immediate dismissal. Students are not required to work for the Physician Assistant program.

## Graduation Requirements

In order for the program to certify students for graduation, candidates must have an overall 3.0 GPA, have successfully completed all required coursework in the five (5) year time frame, completed both the didactic and clinical year summative written and practical examinations successfully, and complied with any documentation requirements of the program (i.e., student evaluations, portfolios, or exit surveys).

### Honors at Graduation

To graduate with honors, a student must attain a grade point average of 3.75 or better.

### Pi Alpha

Pi Alpha is the national Physician Assistant honor society organized for the promotion and recognition of both PA students and graduates. Membership signifies the inductee's significant academic achievement and honors them for their leadership, research, community/professional service and other related activities. The society also encourages a high standard of character and conduct among students and graduates. Current students of accredited PA programs with chapter status through Pi Alpha may be considered for student membership by demonstrating the following: minimum GPA of 3.5 and excellence in research, publishing, community/professional service, or leadership activities.

## Academic Honesty Policy

A high standard of conduct is expected. A graduate student's education is the result of his or her initiative and industry. Each Bryant graduate student, accordingly, understands that to submit work that is not his/her own is not only a transgression of University policy but also a violation of personal integrity.

The academic community, therefore, does not tolerate any form of “cheating” – the dishonest use of assistance in the preparation of outside or in-class assignments. Such violations including, but not limited to, plagiarism are subject to disciplinary action. To preserve its commitment to the high standards of intellectual and professional behavior, Bryant University will respect intellectual excellence and expect intellectual honesty.

Refer to the Physician Assistant Program Student Manual

## Academic Dismissal

Student progress is tracked weekly by the Academic Support and Remediation Committee (ASRC). Upon recognition of a student's failure to meet minimum standards for progression, the ASRC will notify the Program Director. The Program Director will prepare a Letter of Dismissal for signature by the Provost. The Provost will make the final decision based on the information provided by the PA Program and forward the signed letter back to the Program Director. The Letter of Dismissal shall be hand delivered to the student by the Program Director. In the event that the Letter of Dismissal cannot be hand delivered to the student, it will be mailed to the student's permanent address of record via Registered Mail. The process for appeal will be outlined within the Letter of Dismissal.

## Academic Grievance

Grievances related to grades should be first directed to the course coordinator who assigned the grade. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, the student may submit a written appeal to the Academic Support and Remediation Committee for further evaluation. Students may further appeal in writing to the Provost.

## Non-Academic Grievance

Grievances that do not involve academic progress must be submitted in writing to the Provost.

## Final Appeal

For academic and non-academic grievances, the final authority for dismissal falls under the authority of the Provost. Any student facing dismissal from the program may request that their grievance be forwarded to the Provost for final review.

## Graduate School Code of Conduct

Bryant University is an educationally purposeful community – a place where faculty, staff and students work together to strengthen teaching and learning on campus. The campus is a place where high standards of civility are set and violations are challenged. Bryant University is a community whose members speak and listen carefully to each other. Bryant University is a place where the sacredness of each person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued. Bryant University clearly states both its academic and social expectations. All must accept their obligations as citizens of the Bryant community and expect to be held accountable for behavior as individuals and members of groups. The university is a caring community where the well-being of each member is supported and where service to others is encouraged. All students are expected to obey applicable local state and federal laws as well as the policies of the university. These policies are found in the Graduate Catalog and the University Policy Manual. All students are subject to disciplinary action for violations. Graduate violations of policy shall be adjudicated by the Graduate Disciplinary Committee.

## Behavior and Discipline

The University expects students to assume responsibility for their actions. It also has an equal obligation to protect its educational purpose and the interests of its student body; therefore, it must be concerned with the actions of individuals or groups that are in conflict with the welfare and integrity of the University or in disregard for the rights of other students, faculty, or other members of the University community.

Complete guidelines and policies are found in The Student Handbook. When students enroll at Bryant University, it is assumed that they have a serious purpose and a sincere interest in their own social and intellectual development.

It is also assumed that students familiar with the regulations, procedures, and policies set forth at Bryant University have accepted them as a “way of life” during their stay at the University. They are expected to learn to cope with problems intelligently, reasonably, and with consideration for the rights of others; to obey laws and ordinances of the nation, state, and community of which they, as well as the University, are a part; and to conduct themselves peaceably in espousing changes they may consider necessary. As students prize rights and freedoms for themselves, they are expected to respect the rights and freedoms of others.

Students are subject to federal, state, and local laws as well as University rules and regulations. A student is not entitled to greater immunities or privileges before the law than those enjoyed by other citizens generally. Students are subject to such reasonable disciplinary action as deemed appropriate, including suspension and expulsion in appropriate cases for breach of federal, state, or local laws, or University rules or regulations. The principle extends to conduct off campus that is likely to have adverse effects on the University, or on the educational process, or which stamps the offender as an unfit associate for other students.

## Non-Academic Dismissal

Students are expected to obey applicable local, state and federal laws as well as the policies of Bryant University and are not entitled to greater immunity or privilege before the law than that enjoyed by ordinary citizens. As they prize rights and responsibilities for themselves, students are expected to respect the rights and responsibilities of others. For infractions of laws, regulations, policies and standards, students may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University. Such disciplinary action may be imposed for violations which occur off campus when the violation may have an adverse effect on the educational mission of the University. Violations of University Student Code of Conduct will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct outlined in the current Bryant University Student Handbook.

Violations of the PA Program Honor Code will not be tolerated. Students accused of engaging in non-professional behavior are subject to non-academic probation or dismissal. The student or faculty member who suspects non-professional behavior or violation of the honor code are required to notify the suspected party of the offense as well as notify the Graduate Faculty Advisory Committee (medical) of the offense. The GFAC (medical) will investigate the offense and make a recommendation to the Program Director.

The Program Director will determine if the offense should be managed by the Program or if it meets a violation of the University Code of Conduct.

If an offense meets the tenets of the University Code of Conduct, the case shall be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Suspected criminal activity shall also be reported to DPS. If an offense violates the PA Program Honor Code, but does not require reporting to the Dean of Students, the PA Program Director, working with the GFAC (medical) shall determine if the offense warrants probation or dismissal. A student placed on non-academic probation shall have a letter placed in their academic file and shall meet with their advisor to determine a remediation plan. If the student fails to remediate, or commits further offenses, the case shall be forwarded to the Interim Provost for a recommendation for dismissal.

A student case that warrants dismissal shall be forwarded to the Interim Provost for a recommendation for dismissal. The Provost will make the final decision based on the information provided by the PA Program and forward the signed letter back to the Program. The Letter of Dismissal shall be hand delivered to the student by the Program Director. In the event that the Letter of Dismissal cannot be hand delivered to the student, it will be mailed to the student's permanent address of record via Registered Mail. The process for appeal will be outlined within the Letter of Dismissal.

## Harassment

### Protection from Harassment – Policy Statement

Bryant University is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment which supports respect for the individual and for academic

freedom, where all members of the community can work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from sexual or other types of harassment. It is the policy of Bryant University that no member of the University community, including faculty, staff, students, volunteers, interns, and third party contractors, may subject another to sexual or any other type of harassment.

Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference or orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, ethnicity, disability, veteran or marital status undermines the basic principles of the Bryant community and will not be tolerated.

Harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome verbal, electronic and/or physical conduct directed toward an individual or regarding an individual's race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference or orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, ethnicity, disability, veteran or marital status that has the purpose or effect of humiliating and/or intimidating an individual or hindering and/or interfering with work performance, academic status, or college life. In particular, sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and all other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic status; or submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in which to work or learn.

Bryant University considers harassment a very serious matter. Any person found to be engaging in harassment, including sexual harassment, or who aids and abets or incites such conduct, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from an educational program of the University. Further, any retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

### Reporting Procedures:

Bryant University encourages the reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. To encourage persons to come forward, the University provides several channels of communication, information, and complaint resolution as outlined below.

### Information, Counseling and Advocacy:

Anyone may seek advice, information or counseling on any matter, including matters relating to harassment, without having to lodge a complaint. Names and telephone numbers of these resources are listed below:

Counseling Services: 401-232-6045

Health Services: 401-232-6220

Student Affairs: 401-232-6046

Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students: 401-232-6046

Associate Vice president for Human Resources: 401-232-6011

The full policy and reporting procedures can be found in the Bryant University Student Manual and on the Bryant Website.

### Informal Complaint Process:

Either verbally or in writing, notify the offender firmly and promptly that his or her behavior is unwelcome. While dealing informally with a problem

of harassment may resolve the matter more expeditiously and more confidentially, no action can be taken by the University when it is not aware of the harassing conduct. Hence, informal complaint procedures should not be used for severe or habitual cases of harassment.

### Formal Complaint/Reporting Process:

When a formal complaint is received, the University will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

The investigation will include a private interview with the person(s) filing the complaint and with witnesses. The person(s) alleged to have committed harassment would also be interviewed. When the investigation has been completed, the results of that investigation, to the extent appropriate, will be shared with the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the University will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where appropriate, will impose disciplinary action.

## Information Services Network Acceptable Use Policy

All members of the Bryant University community who use the University computing, information, and communication resources must act responsibly. Every user is responsible for the integrity of these resources under their control. All users of University-owned or University-leased Information Services systems must respect the rights of other users, respect the integrity of the physical facilities and controls, and comply with all licenses and contractual agreements. More information on Information Services Network Acceptable Use Policy can be found at [http://infosec.bryant.edu/acceptable\\_use.html](http://infosec.bryant.edu/acceptable_use.html).

### E-mail

The University's electronic mail services are University facilities and are intended for use for teaching, learning, research, and administration in support of Bryant University's mission. Bryant University e-mail services may not be used for personal business or personal gain except as permitted by other University policies.

### Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

The Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17 U.S. Code) governs the making of copies of copyrighted material. UNAUTHORIZED COPYING IS PROHIBITED! The person using this equipment is liable for any infringement and can be prosecuted or held liable for monetary damages.

### Bryant.edu Domain Name

According to the guidelines of the managing body of the top-level .EDU domain space, a registrant of a name in the .EDU domain may not use the .EDU domain for commercial purposes. The use of the "BRYANT.EDU" in any commercial related transaction is a violation of those guidelines. Any student using the "BRYANT.EDU" in any electronic service (e-mail, web, etc.) for commercial purposes jeopardizes his/her privilege to use those services.

### Acceptable use of E-mail

The University's electronic mail services are University facilities and are intended for use for teaching, learning, research, and administration in support of Bryant University's mission. Bryant University e-mail services may not be used for personal business or personal gain except as permitted by other University policies.