

 KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY College of Health and Human Sciences Physician Assistant Program	Effective Date: January 1, 2020
	ARC-PA Standards Addressed: A3.15a, c, d
POLICIES	
Responsible Party: Program Director	Revised: 10/24
Approved by: K-State PA Program Principal Faculty	
Subject: PA Program Student Attendance, Leave, Deceleration, Withdrawal, Dismissal, Participation, and Inclement Weather	
PURPOSE: To define the expectations for attendance, leave of absence, deceleration, withdrawal and participation in program activities.	
ARC-PA Associated Standards A3.15 - The program <i>must</i> define, publish, consistently apply, and make <i>readily available</i> to students upon admission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. any required academic standards c. policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration d. policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal 	
POLICY STATEMENT: Because PA education is a prelude to a professional career as a health care provider, all scheduled activities within the program require mandatory attendance. Consistent attendance, punctuality, and participation also reflect a student’s professionalism, and are considered academic standards. It is recognized that there may be extenuating circumstances that prohibit students from attending a required activity.	
<u>Attendance Expectations</u> Classroom attendance and attendance at all educational experiences is required, except for emergencies.	
<u>Didactic Phase</u> Attendance is required for all program lectures and activities unless otherwise explicitly stated, except for emergencies. The final determination of a “true emergency” will be at the discretion of the Program Director and/or Medical Director. Consistent attendance is a component of professional behavior. If a student must leave the program during the day when class is in session, the Academic Director or Academic Coordinator must be notified. Students may be required to present documentation of medical emergencies upon returning to the classroom.	
In the event of an absence, students must notify the academic coordinator prior to the activity	

that will be missed. It is recommended that students refrain from making other commitments during the hours of 8:00am - 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, unless the time slot in question is unequivocally specified as free time. Note: *Unscheduled Program Time* is not considered free time. The student is responsible for contacting the course directors to discuss make-up work, if applicable.

Business appointments, routine dental and medical appointments, weddings, graduations, routine family obligations, employment, travel, previous plans and other social events are **NOT** considered emergencies. These events must be scheduled during breaks, weekends or at times when classes or scheduled activities are not in session.

Students will be allowed one personal day per semester during the didactic year. A personal day cannot be scheduled during exam or check-off times. In order to schedule a personal day, the student must complete the *Request for Personal Day* form, located on Canvas. Once completed, the student is responsible for getting the signature of the Course Directors of the lectures that will be missed, along with the Academic Director's signature. Signed form should be turned in to the Academic Coordinator. The responsibility of notifying the Academic Director of anticipated absences rests entirely on the student. **There will be no make-up assignments or exams given for personal day usage.** It is expected that students will use good judgement with scheduling of the personal day.

The following are examples of reasonable occurrences for additional excused absences:

- a) Personal illness with provider's note or permission from course director
- b) Family emergencies
- c) Death in the immediate family
- d) Observance of a religious holiday

Students are responsible for contacting the course directors to discuss make-up assignments/exams, if applicable. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis. The PPP Committee will not consider absences as reasons for poor performance.

For all absences, the student **MUST** notify the Academic Director or Academic Coordinator either the night before, or no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of class on the day of the absence, by email, or by calling (785) 532-1566 and leaving a voicemail. This must be done for each day that the student is absent. A medical note for illness must be completed by a licensed physician, PA, or NP and submitted to the Academic Coordinator. This document cannot be issued by a family member or a nurse. All K-State students may seek medical care from Lafene Health Center.

All absences will be under review. After the review of the absence or if there are excessive absences, you may be required to meet with the PPP committee.

Clinical Phase

- Adherence to scheduled rotation hours and attendance at all R2C activities are mandatory. Failure to fulfill this requirement is considered in the evaluation of academic and professional performance and may result in a failing grade for the rotation.
- If a student must be absent or late for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to notify on each day:
 - The Preceptor or designated site contact person
 - The Clinical Director
- **Students must complete a minimum of 160 hours in each rotation. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a repeat of the rotation/delayed graduation.** The maximum number of allowed absences during a rotation is two days. Any student missing more than two days may be required to repeat the rotation, which may result in a delay of progression in training and graduation.
- Students are permitted four (4) excused absences for the clinical year; these include illness. At no time may excused absences be applied to R2C days. They should be planned and used for weddings, family events, sibling graduations, etc. It is highly advised against using more than one per rotation. Approval of the absence must be obtained from the preceptor. The preceptor and Clinical Director should be provided with the Clinical Absence Form in a timely fashion to allow for proper planning.
- A leave of absence may be granted by the Program Director for extended illness or absence from a rotation. The Program Director, on an individual basis, will consider all requests for a leave of absence submitted prior to failure of rotation.

Letter on Medical Clearance

Absences Greater than Three Days Due to Illness

- Absences greater than three days due to illness require that a medical clearance be provided to the Program from the student's health care provider upon return, stating that the student can resume all activities fully, without limitation, as required by the Program. Missed classroom time and clinical shifts must be made up. If they cannot be completed during the scheduled rotation period, the student will receive an incomplete "I" grade until the minimum requirements have been met. Any student under treatment for an ongoing issue (including pregnancy) must provide the Program with a medical clearance to continue in the Program and on clinical rotations.

Pregnancy

A student pregnancy is to be reported to the Program Director immediately upon medical confirmation. A statement from the obstetrician regarding her ability to continue in the PA Program is required. If an issue arises, the program will review each case individually, medical clearance is necessary to resume activities following a delivery. Missed course requirements due to pregnancy will be treated as any other absence. Pregnancy may result in delayed graduation and/or cohort deceleration, based on the timing within the curriculum.

Absence from Examinations

Each student is personally responsible for the consequences of his/her absence from an examination. Generally, only an acute illness may be considered an acceptable reason for absence from an examination. Any absence from an examination, due to illness, must be documented in writing by the student's health care practitioner who must be a licensed physician, PA, or NP. The health care practitioner may not be a member of the family. An excuse from the nurse is unacceptable. Failure by a student to provide the program's Academic Coordinator, upon the day of the student's return, written documentation of an illness, which is acceptable to the program faculty, will result in an examination score of zero being recorded for that student. An absence, without proper notification (refer to the general "Attendance" section of the handbook for related information) to the Academic Coordinator, is unexcused, and will result in a score of zero for the missed exam.

Participation

The PA program is committed to delivering a curriculum that will prepare the student to deliver optimal health care in an ever-changing environment. In our commitment to the process of continuous quality improvement, students are involved in course evaluations, supervised clinical practice evaluations, and faculty evaluations at the closure of each semester. As a future health care provider, the evaluation process will be a part of every continuing medical education course in which the practitioner participates to maintain his/her Physician Assistant license. Students are required to complete these evaluations for didactic courses and supervised clinical practice experiences.

Multiple modalities are utilized by the program to ensure program learning outcomes are being met, as mandated by ARC-PA. To maximize learning, students must actively participate in all learning activities, including required pre-class reading and preparation, class discussions, assignments, problem-based learning, team-based learning, case studies, and laboratory skill sessions. Failure to actively participate in program requirements is considered unprofessional behavior and may result in referral to the PPP committee.

Students are required to participate as a patient model during laboratory sessions and skills assessments. Students are expected to willingly participate in a professional manner. On occasion, it will be requested that students wear appropriate clothing that will easily facilitate physical exam by fellow classmates.

Students on clinical rotations are required to participate in all activities assigned by their clinical preceptor (e.g., attend lectures, conferences, educational programs, etc.) unless illegal or unethical. If a student feels an assignment is inappropriate, he/she should discuss their concerns with the Clinical Director.

At times, students will be responsible for facilitating the learning of their classmates (e.g., during TBL/PBL) and failure to put forth the best effort in these activities may result in referral to the PPP committee.

Policies and Procedures for Leave of Absence, Deceleration, Withdrawal, and Dismissal (in partial compliance of Standard A3.15d)

Leave of Absence

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

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 who are failing one or more courses at the time of request are not considered in good standing and will not be considered for a leave of absence. Nor will a student who is requesting a leave of absence be considered if they are on academic probation for any other reason, including a breach of professional conduct. The program grants no more than one leave of absence.

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 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 the PPP 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 request for leave of absence.
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
 - **Didactic Year:** A leave of absence during the didactic phase is ≤ 2 weeks in duration. The student is responsible for all missed lectures, assignments, exams, and clinical skill activities during that time. Only one leave of absence will be approved during the didactic year. Due to the rigorous, fast-paced and sequential curriculum, the student will be unable to make up missed work from a leave of absence >2 weeks in duration. In this situation, the student must request a voluntary deceleration into the next cohort in order to remain enrolled in the K-State PA Program.
 - **Clinical Year:** Due to the short duration of each clinical rotation and required

number of contact hours, a leave of absence during the clinical year is not available. If the student needs to take a leave of absence, the rotation will be cancelled and rescheduled, and will result in delayed graduation. See Attendance Expectations for more information regarding absences during the clinical year. The conditions for return will be documented by the Program Director and may include repetition of completed semesters.

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 School and the Registrar. The Graduate School 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.
5. 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.

Voluntary Deceleration

Voluntary deceleration is a leave of absence that is >2 weeks and up to 12 months in duration, which may be requested by a student in good academic standing, due to personal (non-academic) circumstances, such as illness, pregnancy, military leave, or personal or family issues that jeopardize the likelihood for successful completion of their studies. Students who are failing one or more courses at the time of request are not considered in good standing and will not be considered for a deceleration. Nor will a student who is requesting deceleration be considered if they are on academic probation for any other reason, including a breach of professional conduct.

The student must submit a written request for voluntary deceleration to the Program Director. Approval of deceleration and how it will affect future matriculation in the Program will be determined by the Progress/Promotion/Professionalism (PPP) Committee. Voluntary deceleration is only granted when extenuating circumstances justify the deceleration, and approval of deceleration allows the student to restart the Program with the next cohort of students. The decelerated student must comply with any revisions in curricular requirements, changes in fees/tuition, and changes to the Student Handbook of their new matriculating cohort. PA students will be required to repeat the didactic or clinical year course sequences in effect at the time of reentry and must comply with all policies and requirements in effect at time of reentry. The Program Director/Medical Director may allow a decelerated student in good academic standing to resume studies with the next matriculating class in the semester in which

the deceleration occurred. The student should note that deceleration would result in delayed graduation and additional tuition.

A student requesting a voluntary deceleration must follow this procedure:

- Request in writing a voluntary deceleration from the Program Director
- The student must personally meet with the Program Director to discuss the reason for the request.
- After consulting with the student, and the PPP committee, if it is determined that the voluntary deceleration 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 PPP and reviewed with the student, including the following elements:
 - Implications for resuming the curriculum (course requirements and sequencing issues)
 - Duration of the absence (no longer than 12 months)
 - Method for demonstrating academic readiness upon return to the Program
 - Method for demonstrating ability to meet the technical standards upon return to the Program
 - Need to repeat criminal background check and/or urine drug screen prior to return (at the student's expense)
 - Curriculum or policy revisions to which the student will be subject upon return to the Program
 - Acknowledgment of requirement for readmission to the Graduate School.
- Upon receipt of the official letter from the Program Director, the student must provide the letter, PPP approval of the leave, and a note from his/her healthcare provider (if applicable) to the Graduate School. The Graduate School 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 voluntary deceleration at the specified time, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the program and will be responsible for all accrued fees and financial obligations.

Delayed Progression / Deceleration

- Occasionally, students may be offered delayed progression/deceleration as an alternative to dismissal, if the program feels it is in the student's best interest to take time to handle personal issues and return to the program at the next matriculation date.
- If remediation efforts are unsuccessful and a student fails a course, the course director may recommend a comprehensive exam of the course material covered during that semester. The comprehensive exam is worth 50%, and the failed course grade 50% of the final course grade. The comprehensive exam will not be offered to

a student with greater than one failed course grade in that semester, or one who has displayed persistent unprofessional behavior. If the remediated course grade is less than 70%, or the student's cumulative GPA is <3.0, the student will meet with the PPP Committee to determine his/her future in the program. The recommendations from the committee may include dismissal from the program, with or without the option to reapply, continued remediation or deceleration.

- Deceleration would consist of completing the course when it is next scheduled (usually in the same semester of the next PA academic year). The student would not be allowed to register for any new courses until the failed course is repeated. Students in the K-State University Physician Assistant Program must successfully complete each course during their didactic year in order to progress to the clinical year.
- This policy in no way guarantees the option of deceleration for a failed course; it is one option that will be considered by the PPP committee.

Withdrawal

Students are permitted to withdraw from the program at their discretion following the University-defined procedure. The student must notify the program director in writing, of their decision to withdraw from the program, and complete a notice of withdrawal form. Unless a leave of absence is requested and granted, withdrawal from any individual course will not allow the student to progress in the program, and therefore constitutes withdrawal from the program. To be considered for readmission, the student must reapply through CASPA. K-State's [withdrawal policy](#) explains the refund policy related to withdrawals.

Dismissal

- Dismissal is an action recommended by the Progression, Promotion and Professionalism committee to the program director when a student fails to adhere to the program's academic or professional standards.
- Dismissal is removal from the program such that reapplication and readmission is necessary for a student to return.
- Dismissal appeal process: to appeal the program's dismissal decision the student will write to the Dean of the Graduate School to petition for reinstatement.
- More information may be found at Appendix G.1-2: [Dismissal and Reinstatement](#) and Appendix C: [Graduate Student Reinstatement Procedure](#).

Professional examples which may lead to a dismissal recommendation include:

- Plagiarism
- Conviction of a felony
- Positive drug screen
- Refusal to submit to a drug screen
- Social media policy violation
- HIPAA violation.
- When the student exhibits behavior detrimental to their profession, including failure to demonstrate ethical and/or professional behavior and academic dishonesty.

- Students found to be cheating are subject to **automatic dismissal**.
- Any additional professional violations following placement on professionalism probation.
- Behavior poses a threat to the mental or physical well-being of others.

Academic examples which may lead to a dismissal recommendation include:

- Remediation of more than two didactic courses
- Remediation/failure of more than two clinical rotations
- Rotation failure following two didactic remediation attempts.
- Semester cumulative GPA less than 3.0
- Didactic phase cumulative GPA less than 3.0
- Unsuccessful remediation of any failed course or rotation
- While on academic probation, the student continues to fail exams, earns less than a 3.0 cumulative semester GPA or remediates two courses
- A score of "2" on any category of the professionalism assessment (or a total score of 29 or below).
- It is no longer possible for the student to complete all program requirements for graduation within 4 years of their original date of matriculation.

Students dismissed from the Physician Assistant program may request reinstatement according to the [Graduate Handbook – Appendix C](#).

Inclement Weather

The University may cancel classes due to severe weather and will make this known through inclement weather announcements. Absences resulting from cancelled classes and campus closure are University Excused Absences.

Students in the didactic year, and students in the clinical year at R2C, will follow weather policies per the K-State University. In the event of a Declaration of Inclement Weather, K-State will close for non-essential state employees, and classes will be cancelled during that period. Please refer to the University's [Emergency Notification System](#) or download a copy of [K-State's Emergency Management Plan](#) for further information and support.

Students in the clinical year should exercise reasonable judgement and follow local recommendations for safe travel. If the student's current rotation site is open despite inclement weather, students should not attempt to travel under unsafe conditions or to take unnecessary risk. If a student determines that it is not safe to travel to the rotation site, they must inform both the preceptor and Clinical Director as soon as possible. If a current rotation site is closed due to inclement weather, the student will not report to the facility for the day(s) closed and will notify the Clinical Director of the situation.