

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

Policies included in this document:

1. Immunizations & Health Screening Policies
 - a. Required health screening
 - b. Required immunizations and Tb screening
 - c. Ongoing immunization and screening requirements (while enrolled)
2. Required academic standards
 - a. GPA and grades – both phases
 - b. Didactic phase assessments and course grades
 - c. Clinical phase assessments and course grades
 - d. Grading policies – both phases
 - e. Course grading scale
3. Progression in the curriculum
 - a. Compliance with immunizations and health screenings
 - b. Semester progression (in both phases)
 - c. Progression between phases
 - d. Progression to program completion
 - e. Time limit for program completion
4. Primary assessment remediation policies and procedures – didactic phase
 - a. Remediation for a failed primary assessment policy
 - b. Clinical Medicine section remediation policy
 - c. Cumulative primary assessment remediation policy
 - d. Course remediation policy
 - e. Primary assessment remediation procedures
 - f. Clinical Medicine section remediation procedure
5. Primary assessment remediation policies – clinical phase
 - a. Clinical rotation failure policy
 - b. Clinical rotation remediation procedures
 - c. Remediation for a failed EOR exam policies and procedures
 - d. Preceptor evaluation failure policies and procedures
 - i. Preceptor evaluations - mid-rotation
 - ii. Preceptor evaluations - final
 - iii. Remediation for a failed preceptor evaluation procedures
 - e. Remediation procedures for a failed or 'not observed' Learning Outcome (LO)
 - i. Failed Learning Outcome
 - ii. 'Not Observed' Learning Outcome
6. Summative assessment remediation policies
7. Program deceleration policy
8. Withdrawal from the program policies and procedures
9. Program Dismissal policies and procedures
10. Student employment policy
11. Student Mistreatment and Harassment policies and procedures
 - a. Anti-discrimination policies and procedures

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

- b. Sexual harassment policies and procedures
 - c. Procedure for reporting sexual harassment and sex discrimination
 - d. Other forms of student mistreatment policies and procedures
12. Student Grievances and Appeals policies and procedures
13. Policy on student travel for required rotations

1. Immunizations & Health Screening Policies

All accepted and enrolled students must adhere to the program's policies on immunizations and health screenings. The program's policies are based on current CDC recommendations and MS state law and require or recommend students to receive (unless exempt) certain immunizations for health care professionals. Students must also provide documentation of required health screenings as outlined below.

It is the PA program's policy that all accepted applicants must fulfill all the immunization and health screening requirements outlined below prior to matriculation in the program. All accepted applicants are required to establish an account with the program's third-party vendor (Exxat Approve) and are required to provide proof of health screening and immunizations (for vaccine preventable diseases) directly to Exxat Approve. The program will not accept any health or vaccination records or forms directly.

Enrolled students must maintain current immunizations and health screenings during both the didactic and clinical phases of the program. Verification of proof and compliance with all requirements is monitored and managed by Exxat Approve. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are compliant with all requirements.

Failure to submit proof of compliance with immunization and health screening requirements prior to matriculation or to maintain compliance throughout all phases of the program may result in the student becoming ineligible to matriculate or progress in the program.

1a. Required health screening:

All accepted applicants must provide proof (to Exxat Approve) of a complete physical examination performed by a licensed health care provider prior to matriculation and annually thereafter while enrolled in the program. The screening must provide positive clearance for the student to participate in classes, labs, clinical work, and other activities related to the PA program curriculum. The screening must also include verification that the student does not have any conditions that endanger the health and well-being of other students, faculty, staff, or patients while engaged in classroom, lab, testing, or clinical experiences.

1b. Required immunizations and Tb screening:

The PA program's immunization requirements are consistent with the current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) recommendations for Healthcare Personnel Vaccinations. (MSDH has adopted the CDC recommendations.) The CDC's adult immunization schedule can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/adult-medical-condition.html#table-conditions>

(note that the "medical condition" in the far-right column of the table is "being a healthcare provider")

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

It is the student's responsibility to ensure their immunization status does not expire while enrolled in the program. Students who have medical contraindications to receiving any required vaccine must provide documentation from a medical provider.

Immunizations not listed in this policy such as COVID-19, IPV (polio), meningococcal, and HPV (human papilloma virus) are NOT required. Students should review the CDC's recommended vaccines with their health care provider to decide if they are recommended based on their individual health factors. More information about other vaccines recommended by the CDC can be found on this website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/recommended-vaccines/index.html>

The following immunizations and Tb screenings are required prior to matriculation:

- Hepatitis B vaccine series complete AND a positive QUANTITATIVE HBV Surface antibody (anti-HBs) titer confirming immunity
 - For serologic non-converters (not immune titer following primary series):
 - The CDC advises revaccination with a second complete series, followed by repeat anti-HBs testing 1–2 months after the final dose.
 - If non-immune after two complete series, the student must be evaluated to rule out chronic or occult HBV infection by a health care provider and provide written clearance for verification of compliance to Exxat Approve to proceed with attending classes and clinical rotations.
- Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) documented within the last 10 years (NOT Td or DTap)
- 2 doses of MMR(Measles, Mumps, Rubella) OR a positive titer for each
 - Also required for admission to the University
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine OR evidence of immunity (see below)
 - Documentation of 2 doses of varicella vaccine at least 4 weeks apart
 - History of varicella based on a diagnosis or verification of varicella by a healthcare provider (for a patient reporting a history of or presenting with an atypical case, a mild case, or both) a healthcare provider should seek either an epidemiologic link with a typical varicella case or evidence of laboratory confirmation if it was performed at the time of acute illness.
 - History of herpes zoster based on healthcare provider diagnosis
 - Laboratory evidence of immunity (positive titer) or laboratory confirmation of disease.
- TB test – negative screening on 2-step tuberculin skin test (TST), QuantiFERON-Gold, OR BAMT (blood assay for *m. tuberculosis*)
 - If a student is positive for the first time, they must be evaluated for active tuberculosis by a health care provider or the local health department, follow their recommendations, and provide written clearance for verification of compliance to proceed with attending classes and clinical rotations.
 - If a student has a history of positive skin tests or positive QuantiFERON-G test, they must provide written clearance for verification of compliance to proceed with attending classes and clinical rotations.

1c. Ongoing immunization and screening requirements (while enrolled):

- Annual TB (BAMT or TST) screen

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

- Annual influenza (flu) vaccine (*must be documented prior to OCT 31st of each year*)
 - Unless contraindicated
- Annual health screening (physical) by a licensed health care provider

Clinical sites used for SCPEs (rotations) may require additional immunizations or documentation.

These requirements are subject to change at any time based on recommendations from the CDC, the MSDH, USM, or current requirements of affiliated clinical sites.

2. Required Academic Standards

Academic Standards

The following are academic standards required to maintain enrollment and progress in the program (curriculum).

2a. GPA and grades – both phases

Students must maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 (4.00-point scale) for the duration of the program. Students who fail to maintain their GPA greater than or equal to 3.00 at the end of each semester will be referred to the Student Progress committee for review and may be placed on academic probation, have prior academic probation extended, or be subject to dismissal. The program's policies for minimum grades and GPA are aligned with those of the University Graduate School policies published in the University's Online Graduate Bulletin in the 'General Academic Information' section located here:

<https://catalog.usm.edu/content.php?catoid=40&navoid=2534>

For all didactic and clinical phase courses, students must achieve 75.00% (C) overall final course grade. If a student's final course grade is less than 75.00%, they have not passed the course and will be referred to the Student Progress committee for review and may be subject to dismissal.

2b. Didactic phase assessments and course grades

Primary assessments in the didactic phase typically include course exams, lab exams, lab practicals, and physical exam (PE) practicals. Quizzes, assignments, and other graded activities are not considered primary assessments. Each course syllabus will identify which graded activities are primary assessments and which are not considered primary assessments.

For all didactic phase courses:

1. Students must achieve greater than or equal to 75.00% on all primary assessments. In addition, students must achieve a 75.00% average for all primary assessments in a course to pass the course (regardless of other grading components in the course).
2. If a student scores less than 75.00% on any primary assessment in any didactic course, they must successfully remediate the assessment. (*See didactic phase remediation policies.*)

2c. Clinical phase assessments and course grades

Primary assessments in the clinical phase are End of Rotation (EOR) exams and preceptor evaluations; all other assignments and activities are not considered primary assessments. Students are enrolled in PAS 692 course each semester for the clinical phase; however, each clinical rotation is graded separately, and each must be passed individually to pass the course.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

For all clinical rotations:

1. For each clinical rotation, students must achieve a passing (raw) score on each End-of-Rotation (EOR) exam. A passing score on an EOR exam is less than or equal to 1.5 standard deviations below the national mean score. The national mean score is identified in the syllabus for each rotation discipline.
2. If a student scores more than 1.5 standard deviations below the identified national mean, they must successfully remediate the exam. (*See clinical phase remediation policies.*)
3. To pass a preceptor evaluation, a student must achieve a score of greater than or equal to 75.00%.
4. If a student fails a preceptor evaluation (less than 75.00%), they must successfully remediate the evaluation. (*See clinical phase remediation policies.*)

2d. Grading policies – both phases

The USM PA program has a ‘hard pass’ policy when determining course, Clinical Medicine section, and clinical rotation grades. The following apply to this policy:

1. Grades/scores are NOT rounded. All grades are calculated to 2 decimal places. (i.e. 74.99% = failing; 75.00% = passing)
2. The maximum grade achievable on any assignment or assessment is 100.00%.
3. Any extra credit, if offered, cannot be carried forward to another assignment or assessment and cannot be used to achieve a passing score on a primary assessment or final course grade.

2e. Course grading scale

The grading scale below will be used for ALL courses in the PA program:

Grade	Numerical Value	Quality Points
A	90.00 – 100	4.0
B	80.00 – 89.99	3.0
C	75.00 – 79.99	2.0
F	74.99 or less	0.0

3. Progression in the curriculum

All PA students must adhere to all program policies and requirements including those regarding progression in the curriculum.

3a. Compliance with immunizations and health screenings

Failure to submit proof of compliance with immunization and health screening requirements prior to matriculation may result in the student not being eligible to matriculate with the cohort and may lose their seat deposit (if already paid).

Failure to maintain compliance throughout all phases of the program may result in the student becoming ineligible to progress in the program. If a student is ineligible to continue or progress in the program due to non-compliance, they will be referred to the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

The PA program Student Progress committee reviews each student's academic and professional progress at the end of each semester to determine their eligibility for advancement. The following progression eligibility criteria apply to all students during the program:

3b. Semester progression (in both phases)

1. To be eligible for advancement to the next semester, the student must be in good academic standing. Good academic standing consists of passing all courses (clinical rotations in the clinical phase) each semester and overall GPA greater than or equal to 3.00.
2. If a student is on probation (academic or professional) for the semester, the student may still advance if otherwise eligible and either remain on probation or may be taken off probation if they meet the appropriate criteria.
3. A student may not be eligible for advancement if they have been on academic probation for two consecutive semesters or professional probation for one semester and don't meet the criteria to be taken off probation.
4. Any student who does not meet the criteria for advancement in any semester, may be considered for probation (or continued probation) or dismissal.

3c. Progression between phases

1. To be eligible for advancement from the didactic to the clinical phase, the student must be in good academic standing. Good academic standing consists of passing all courses in the didactic phase, overall GPA greater than or equal to 3.00, and not on academic probation.
2. The student must also be in good professional standing (not on professional probation) to be eligible for advancement to the clinical phase.
3. Any student that does not meet the eligibility criteria to advance to the clinical phase may be considered for dismissal.

3d. Progression to program completion

1. To be eligible for advancement to program completion, the student must be in good academic standing. Good academic standing consists of passing all courses in the clinical phase, overall GPA greater than or equal to 3.00, and not on academic probation.
2. The student must also be in good professional standing (not on professional probation) to be eligible for advancement.
3. The student must complete all other required elements for program completion including passing all summative assessments and capstone requirements.
4. Any student that does not meet the eligibility criteria to advance to program completion may be considered for dismissal.

3e. Time Limit for Program Completion

From initial entry into the program (matriculation), students must successfully complete all phases and requirements for program completion within 48 months. Failure to complete all program requirements within this timeframe will result in dismissal.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

4. Primary assessment remediation policies and procedures – didactic phase

4a. Remediation for a failed primary assessment policy

If a student's primary assessment score in any didactic (non rotation-related) course is below 75.00%, the student will be required to successfully complete a remediation assignment (per the Course Director) and pass a remediation assessment.

The remediation format will be aligned with the original assessment type: written remediation exams for knowledge-based assessments and practical, skills-based remediation for laboratory, clinical skills, or technical skills. The student must demonstrate competency according to the defined rubric or criteria to complete remediation. Generally, students must score 75.00% or higher to successfully remediate the remediation assessment. **There will be no grade adjustment after remediation.**

4b. Clinical Medicine section remediation policy

If a student fails a primary assessment for a section within a Clinical Medicine course (any semester), they must successfully remediate the assessment as outlined in the primary assessment remediation policy to pass the section. Failure of more than one primary assessment during a Clinical Medicine course (i.e. two sections in the same semester), results in failure of the course. *(See course remediation policies and procedures for additional details)*

4c. Cumulative primary assessment remediation policy

After a student successfully remediates 2 failed primary assessments (any course or Clinical Medicine section, any semester), they will meet with the Director of Didactic Education and may be issued an academic warning.

If a student fails two primary assessments in a single course (same semester), they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of academic probation or dismissal. If a student fails 5 primary assessments over the course of the entire didactic phase, they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

4d. Course remediation policy

No course remediation is offered for any failed course in the didactic phase. Upon failing a course, the student's progress in the didactic phase is immediately halted and they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

4e. Primary assessment remediation procedures

After a primary assessment, if a student receives a failing grade, they must request a meeting with the Course Director within 24 hours one 'business day' of grade posting to discuss remediation. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Course Director to initiate the meeting. The Course Director will review the student's exam with the student to discuss areas needing improvement to include in the remediation plan.

The Course Director drafts the remediation plan, and it is reviewed by the chair of the Student Progress committee. The committee chair reviews the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

The Course Director creates the remediation assignment(s) and sets the due date for completion (typically 1 week). After the student completes the remediation assignment(s) satisfactorily and submits it by the due date, the Course Director will determine the date for the remediation exam (typically 1-2 weeks). The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition.

4f. Clinical Medicine section remediation procedure

The procedure for remediation of a failed primary assessment in a Clinical Medicine section is the same procedure as for remediation of any other didactic primary assessment. If a student fails the course due to failure of more than one primary assessment in the same semester, they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

5. Primary assessment remediation policies – *clinical phase*

5a. Clinical rotation failure policy

If a student fails a clinical rotation (at any point in the clinical phase), they must successfully remediate the rotation to continue progress in the program. If a student fails the PAS 692 course, they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

Students may only remediate one failed rotation during the clinical phase. If a student fails a second rotation, they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

5b. Clinical rotation remediation procedures

If a student fails a rotation, their progress in the clinical phase is immediately halted and they will not commence their next scheduled rotation. The student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) to discuss the reason(s) for failure and identify areas for improvement.

The DCE will draft a remediation plan, which is then reviewed with the Chair of the Student Progress committee who review the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan for approval. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan.

The remediation period for a failed rotation is 5 weeks (1 rotation block). The student must successfully complete the remediation plan within the remediation period to recommence clinical rotations. After successfully remediating the failed rotation, the student will repeat the failed rotation discipline (subject to availability), typically at a different clinical site or with a different preceptor or both. The student must complete the repeated clinical rotation in its entirety to include all assignments, assessments, and evaluations. Repeating a failed clinical rotation will result in delayed program completion and delayed graduation. and may incur additional tuition and fees.

5c. Remediation for a failed EOR exam policies and procedures

If a student fails an EOR exam for any clinical rotation, the student will be required to successfully complete a remediation assignment (per the Course Director) and pass a remediation EOR exam. **There will be no grade adjustment after remediation.**

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

Upon being notified of failing an EOR exam, the student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) to discuss remediation. The DCE will draft a remediation plan, which is then reviewed with the Chair of the Student Progress committee who review the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan for approval. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan.

The DCE creates the remediation assignment(s) and activities and sets the due date for completion (typically 1 week). The remediation assignment is based on the student's areas for improvement identified by the feedback from the EOR provider. The student will be assigned remediation activities by the DCE which may include independent study, board review questions, and other activities to support learning. The remediation assignments and activities must be satisfactorily completed and submitted by the due date prior to taking the remediation EOR exam.

The remediation (PAEA) EOR exam will be an alternate version of the original EOR exam and must be taken prior to the end of the student's next rotation (typically 3-4 weeks after the failure). If remediation occurs during the student's last rotation, the remediation period may delay program completion and graduation and may incur additional tuition and fees. The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition.

If the student's final rotation grade is 75.00% or higher (with the failed and remediated EOR exam), they may still pass the rotation. If the failed EOR exam score causes the student's rotation grade to fall below 75.00%, they have failed the rotation. Failure to successfully remediate a failed EOR exam will result in failure of the rotation regardless of the student's overall grade for the rotation to date. Upon failing a second (or remediation) EOR exam, the student's progress will be immediately halted, and they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

5d. Preceptor evaluation failure policies and procedures

5d.i Preceptor evaluations - mid-rotation

Students will be required to complete a (formative) mid-rotation evaluation with their clinical preceptor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the evaluation is completed, discussed with their preceptor, and submitted by the due date. Failure to complete this evaluation is considered a violation of the program's professionalism standards and will result in the student being referred to the Student Progress committee for consideration of professional warning or professional probation. In addition, failure to complete this assessment will put the student at risk for failure to meet all CLOs assessed via their final preceptor evaluation.

If, on the mid-rotation evaluation, the preceptor indicates that the student is 'not progressing' toward meeting one or more learning outcomes (LOs), or that one or more LOs are 'not observed', the student's progress will be closely monitored by the DCE who may also conduct an unscheduled meeting with the preceptor with or without the student present. The student may be reassigned to another clinical site (same discipline) to give the student the opportunity to meet the LO.

5d.ii Preceptor evaluations - final

Students are required to achieve 3.0/5.0 or greater for each learning outcome (LO) on the final preceptor evaluation and a final score of 75.00% or higher to pass the evaluation. If the overall score for

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

this assessment falls below 75.00%, this will result in failure of the rotation. *(See rotation failure policies and procedures)*

5d.iii Remediation for a failed preceptor evaluation procedures

If a student fails the preceptor evaluation (less than 75.00%), they have failed the rotation. The student must successfully remediate the evaluation to remediate the failed rotation. *(See rotation failure policies and procedures)*

Upon being notified of failing their preceptor evaluation, the student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) and with the Student Progress committee and will be considered for academic probation or dismissal. The DCE will draft a remediation plan, which is then reviewed with the Chair of the Student Progress committee who review the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan for approval. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. The remediation plan will include assignments and activities outlined by the Director of Clinical Education. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan. The student will sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan.

The remediation period for a failed rotation is 5 weeks. The student must successfully complete the remediation plan within the remediation period to recommence rotations. If remediation occurs during the student's last rotation, the remediation period may delay program completion and graduation and may incur additional tuition and fees. The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition. Failure to successfully remediate a failed rotation on the first attempt will result in failure of the course, regardless of the student's overall grade in the course to date.

Upon failing a second preceptor evaluation, the student's progress will be immediately halted, and they will meet with the Student Progress committee for consideration of dismissal.

5e. Remediation procedures for a failed or 'not observed' Learning Outcome (LO)

5e.i Failed Learning Outcome

If a student receives a score of less than 3/5 on one or more individual LOs, they must successfully remediate the LO. Upon being notified of failing one or more LOs for the rotation, the student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) as soon as possible to discuss remediation. The DCE will draft a remediation plan, which is then reviewed with the Chair of the Student Progress committee who review the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan for approval. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. The content of the remediation plan will be determined by the content of the LO(s) in need of remediation. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan. The student will sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan. **There will be no grade adjustment after remediation.**

If the failed LO(s) can be remediated, the student will engage in the remediation plan. There will be no grade adjustment after remediation. Students may have the opportunity to successfully remediate some technical skills in a simulated environment. If the student's overall score on the evaluation prior to remediation is above 75.00%, they may still pass the evaluation. If the failed LO(s) causes the

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

student's overall score to be below 75.00%, they have failed the evaluation and thus, the rotation. (See *rotation failure policies and procedures*)

If the failed LO(s) cannot be remediated, the student has not passed the preceptor evaluation regardless of their overall score. Failure of the preceptor evaluation results in failure of the rotation. (See *rotation failure policies and procedures*)

The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition.

5e.ii 'Not Observed' Learning Outcome

If a student receives a 'not observed' score on one or more individual LOs, they must successfully remediate the LO. Upon being notified of receiving 'not observed' for one or more LOs for the rotation, the student will meet with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) as soon as possible to discuss remediation. The DCE will draft a remediation plan, which is then reviewed with the Chair of the Student Progress committee who review the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan for approval. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. The content of the remediation plan will be determined by the content of the LO(s) in need of remediation. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan.

If the 'not observed' LO(s) can be remediated, the student will engage in the remediation plan. Remediation activities may include additional time in a SCPE, independent study and/or an appropriate simulation activity (for technical skills only). The student will receive an 'Incomplete' grade for the preceptor evaluation pending completion of the remediation. The student will be reassessed on the 'not observed' LO(s) following remediation activities. If successfully remediated, the student's grade for the preceptor evaluation will be calculated including the original preceptor evaluation score and the score for the reassessed LO(s).

If the 'not observed' LO(s) cannot be remediated, the student has not passed the preceptor evaluation regardless of their overall score. Failure of the preceptor evaluation results in failure of the rotation. (See *rotation failure policies and procedures*)

The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition.

6. SUMMATIVE assessment remediation policies:

For the summative assessments, only the following are eligible for remediation: summative written exam (PAEA End of Curriculum™ (EOC™) exam), summative OSCE note, summative oral case presentation, and summative technical skills practical. Upon failing one or more summative assessment(s), the (PAS 663) Course Director will draft a remediation plan, and it is reviewed by the chair of the Student Progress committee. The committee chair reviews the student's progress to date and the proposed remediation plan. If needed, the plan may be discussed with the Student Progress committee. Once approved, the remediation plan is discussed with the student who must sign for receipt, understanding, and compliance with the plan. The Course Director will create the remediation assessment(s) as appropriate and set the due date for completion.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

If a student fails the PAEA EOC™ exam on their first attempt, they may retake the exam only once and no earlier than 60 days after their initial exam (per PAEA policy). This remediation period will delay the student's program completion and graduation, and they may incur additional tuition and fees. The summative OSCE is not eligible for remediation. Thus, failure of the summative OSCE results in failure of the course (PAS 663) and failure of the summative assessment overall.

A student may only remediate a total of 2 of the 4 assessments eligible for remediation (see above). Failure of 3 or more summative assessments results in failure of the course and failure of the summative assessment overall. Failure of any remediation summative assessment will result in failure of the course and the summative assessment overall and will result in referral to the Student Progress Committee for consideration of program dismissal.

The Student Progress committee will review the outcome of the student's remediation plan for further disposition.

7. Program deceleration policy

The USM PA program does not offer deceleration from any point in the program for academic or professional issues or any other circumstance.

8. Withdrawal from the program policies and procedures

Withdrawal policy – prior to the first day of class

Any accepted applicant who wishes to withdraw from the program prior to the first day of classes (prior to matriculation), may do so at any time for any reason. The applicant must follow the withdrawal procedure outlined below.

Withdrawal procedure – prior to the first day of class

Any applicant who wishes to withdraw prior to matriculation must notify the admissions staff immediately and notify the program in writing (signed letter). If the student has already registered for classes, they should contact the Registrar's office to drop all classes immediately.

Withdrawal policy – matriculated students (after the first day of class)

Any matriculated student who wishes to withdraw from the program after the first day of classes may do so for any reason. Withdrawal from any individual course, lab, or SCPE is not permitted. A student who withdraws from the program is not eligible for direct readmission. Any student who wishes to withdraw from the Program after the first day of class must follow the withdrawal procedure outlined below.

Withdrawal procedure – matriculated students (after the first day of class)

A PA student electing to withdraw from the program should discuss it with their assigned faculty advisor and the following additional steps should be taken:

1. Notify the Program Director of the decision to withdraw in writing. The Program Director will then schedule a meeting with the student.
2. The Program Director will make sure that appropriate documentation is obtained and notify the School Director of the student's intent to withdraw.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

3. AFTER meeting with the Program Director, the student must drop all classes for which they are registered and notify the Registrar's office.
4. If the student's withdrawal is before the Graduate School's deadline, they may drop all classes through their SOAR account without penalty. If the student's withdrawal is after the deadline, they must contact the Registrar's office to complete the final steps of withdrawing from the University.

It is necessary for the correct procedure to be followed; students who stop attending classes without officially withdrawing earn a grade 'F' in each course. Deadlines for withdrawal are the same as those for dropping courses. Students must contact the USM Registrar's office to officially withdraw from the program and/or the University.

9. Program Dismissal

Policies

Program dismissal is defined as a formal action of administrative withdrawal from all PA program courses and the PA program with no opportunity for readmission. Dismissal may result from unsatisfactory academic progress, unsatisfactory professional behavior, or failure to remain in compliance with immunization and health screenings. A student may be dismissed without a prior academic or professional warning or probation.

Procedures

Students who demonstrate unsatisfactory academic progress, unprofessional behavior, or non-compliance with immunization and health screenings are referred to the Student Progress committee for review. Students who exhibit egregiously unprofessional behaviors may be immediately dismissed at the discretion of the Program Director without committee review.

If the Student Progress committee recommends dismissal and the Program Director agrees with the recommendation, the student is notified in person (if feasible) and by formal letter signed by the Chair of the committee and Program Director. The student's receipt of the dismissal is acknowledged by signature at the time of dismissal.

The student's access to the program's educational spaces (such as classrooms, labs, simulation areas, and OSCE rooms) is revoked and the student is typically asked to leave the program spaces as soon as possible. Students are directed to consult with the Registrar and Business office regarding transcripts, financial aid, and enrollment status in the University. The Program Director will formally notify the School Director and Registrar's office of the student's dismissal.

10. Student employment policy

The USM PA program curriculum is rigorous and fast-paced. In addition, some activities and coursework may be scheduled outside of 'traditional' class times. Thus, the PA program's policy strongly discourages students from working during the entirety of the program. Furthermore, outside work obligations will not be considered an acceptable excuse for poor performance, tardiness, or absence from any program-related activities (assignments, lectures, assessments, meetings, or events).

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

Under no circumstances will a PA student be accepted for employment as a ‘work study’ within the PA program or as an aid to any program, principal, or instructional faculty.

11. Student Mistreatment and Harassment policies and procedures

The PA program has a no-tolerance policy for all forms of student mistreatment such as discrimination, sexual harassment, unprofessional relationships, abuse of authority, and abusive and/or intimidating behavior. The PA program’s policies and procedures for reporting allegations of student mistreatment are aligned with the University’s policies and procedures and apply to all PA program faculty, staff, and students. If a student feels they have been mistreated (on campus), they should report the incident or situation to a PA program faculty member, Program Director, or Medical Director as soon as possible. If a student is at a clinical site, they should report the incident or situation to the Director of Clinical Education, Program Director, or Medical Director as soon as possible. The faculty member may request further information and documentation of the allegation. Ideally, the situation can be addressed and resolved informally without further disruption of the student’s educational experience. The student may also choose to make a formal complaint through the University’s processes outlined below.

11a. Anti-discrimination policies and procedures

The University of Southern Mississippi does not discriminate based on age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, veteran status, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local law, in its admission, treatment, or access to its educational programs and activities or in its employment practices. The University of Southern Mississippi prohibits sexual and gender-based harassment, including sexual assault and misconduct, and other forms of interpersonal violence.

The University of Southern Mississippi complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination based on sex (including sexual misconduct) in the University’s educational programs and activities. Consistent with our commitment to providing a learning, living, and working environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment, it is the policy of the University not to tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment in any form and to provide those who feel that they are victims of discrimination with mechanisms for seeking redress.

The University of Southern Mississippi offers students equal access to all educational and programmatic activities that the university sponsors. Students and employees participating in any University-sponsored program – including exchange programs, study abroad, cooperative learning experiences, field placement internships or student teaching – retain all rights and privileges in these off-campus experiences. Similarly, they also are responsible for all university codes of conduct, including consensual relationships, alcohol use, etc.

Employees and students who believe they are being treated differently in these settings because of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status should contact the office of Affirmative Action/EEO.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

For more information on USM Compliance & Ethics Policies and Procedures: <https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/policies-and-procedures.php>

11b. Sexual harassment policies and procedures

The PA program has a no-tolerance policy for all forms of harassment of students, faculty, and staff. The PA program's policies and procedures for reporting allegations of student mistreatment are aligned with the University's policies and procedures and apply to all PA program faculty, staff, and students. These policies are published in the student handbook available to students upon admission.

The University's sexual harassment policy statement is published on its website located here: <https://www.usm.edu/police/sexual-harassment-policy.php>. The statement clearly indicates that the policy applies to all students and university employees. The policy also covers unprofessional relationships.

The University's policy titled 'Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures' is found here: https://usm.policystat.com/policy/token_access/bedddd4c-f6be-4f17-bc3e-8a94be113783/

The policy states that it is applicable to students, student organizations, faculty, administrators, staff, and third parties such as guests, visitors, volunteers, invitees, and campers. For the purpose of this policy, the University defines "student" as any individual who has accepted an offer of admission, or who is registered or enrolled for credit or non-credit bearing coursework, and who maintains an ongoing relationship with the University.

11c. Procedure for reporting sexual harassment and sex discrimination

If you believe you have experienced an incident(s) of sexual harassment or assault, discrimination on the basis of your sex, or retaliation for filing a formal complaint about harassment, you can get help from the Title IX Office. The office provides an online method to report information related to alleged incident(s) of sexual harassment, or retaliation as provided for by the USM Sexual Harassment Policy And Procedures and Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Contact information, resources, and online reporting are found on the Title IX website here: <https://www.usm.edu/title-ix/index.php>

12. Student Grievances and Appeals policies and procedures

The PA program's policies and procedures for reporting student grievances and appeals are aligned with the University's 'Student Grievance Policy':

https://usm.policystat.com/policy/token_access/553d433e-a23a-436f-bc1f-06187aed172f/

The University defines the objective of the grievance policy as follows:

'The primary objective of this Student Grievance Policy is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to present grievances to the University regarding a certain action or inaction by a member of the University community and that the University has a consistent way of resolving those grievances in a fair and just manner.'

The University's policy outlines the process for filing a student complaint and formally filing a grievance.

Program Policies of Interest to *Prospective Students*

The University has a comprehensive webpage for 'Student Help'. By following a link from this webpage, students can obtain information for 'Concerns, Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals' located here:

<https://www.usm.edu/student-help/complaints.php#grievance>

From this webpage, students are given instructions for filing a general grievance through the Dean of Students.

The University also maintains a webpage where students can obtain information about and procedures for appeals and appeal hearings through the Office of Academic Integrity located here:

<https://www.usm.edu/academic-integrity/appeal-hearing-guidelines.php>

13. Policy on student travel for required rotations

All students can expect to travel to distant required clinical sites (beyond 50 miles of the campus) for at least 4 of the 8 required rotations. The PA program does not provide any housing or transportation to or from any clinical rotation sites. Students are responsible for the costs of transportation, housing, and other living expenses associated with required clinical rotations.