Mission

The Academic Performance Committee (APC) is committed to ensuring that PharmD students maintain academic standards necessary for successful progression, graduation, and practice within the profession of pharmacy.

Background

Students currently enrolled in the PharmD program were selected by the Admissions Committee of the School of Pharmacy after much deliberation. Their past academic success and life experiences indicate each student’s potential for academic success in the program. It is the mutual responsibility of a student and the APC to ensure that the student meets the academic standards in all courses of the curriculum and other graduation requirements. To this end, these Policies and Procedures form a framework in which decisions regarding the progression of students can be uniformly, but individually, made.

Students are required, at a minimum, to review these Policies and Procedures upon entry into the School of Pharmacy and at the beginning of each academic year. The Policies and Procedures for the Academic Progression of Students may be found on the PittPharmacy intranet (www.intranet.pharmacy.pitt.edu) and in the Student Handbook. Any situation that arises that is not specifically covered by these Policies and Procedures will be adjudicated by the dean, after consultation with the APC. These Policies and Procedures will be reviewed, and may be revised, on an annual basis.

Academic Performance Committee Membership

The Committee is composed of faculty and staff within the School of Pharmacy, appointed in accordance with the School of Pharmacy Bylaws. All Committee proceedings regarding academic standards and student profession are strictly confidential.

I. General Policies for All Students

A. Pre-professional Courses, Professional Course Load, Grading and Schedule

Pre-professional courses must be successfully completed prior to entry into the professional program. The assistant dean of students and student records manager must approve any exceptions. Students in the PharmD program are expected to carry a full course load during each term of residence, except by permission from the APC and the dean. With the exception of the experiential learning courses and case conference series, all courses must be taken for a letter grade. The PharmD curriculum is intensive. Students are expected to devote full time to the academic program once enrolled. Thus, the School of Pharmacy schedule of classes, assignments, practice experiences, examinations, and other activities take precedence over outside employment or extracurricular activities. Course sessions, practice experiences, and examinations may be scheduled outside the usual business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

B. Course Withdrawal

School course withdrawal procedures are in compliance with University policy (https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-01-07.html). Students may withdraw from professional course(s) only after written permission has been obtained from the assistant dean of students. Course withdrawal must be processed through the student records manager within the time period specified by the University. Students are not permitted to
"unofficially withdraw" by merely not attending classes. Under no circumstances will withdrawal from a professional course be granted solely on the basis of poor performance in the course, except in the event of resignation from the program, as described in section I-C below. Course withdrawal may affect student academic standing; therefore the APC chair will be notified following withdrawal confirmation.

C. Academic Resignation
School academic resignation procedures are in compliance with University policy. (https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-05-08.html). Students may resign from the program at any time. Students who wish to resign must officially communicate this in writing to the assistant dean of students. Once approval is granted from the assistant dean of students, the student records manager will be notified to withdraw the students from all classes and the chair of the APC will be notified to note resignation from the program. Students may not "unofficially resign" by failing to attend classes. Resignation constitutes withdrawal from all courses being taken. Students who have resigned from the program must petition the assistant dean of students, who will consult with the APC, for re-admission as outlined in section III-A.

D. Leave of Absence
Students in good academic standing may, for valid reasons, petition in writing the assistant dean of students and the chair of the APC for a leave of absence from the program. In the written petition, the students must specify, the reason for the request and the length of the leave of absence. Unless special permission is granted by the assistant dean of students, the leave of absence may not exceed one academic year. Students who are granted a leave must notify the student records manager and the assistant dean of students of their intent to re-enter the program at least one month before the beginning of the term in which they intend to return. In turn, these individuals will notify the APC chair and course coordinators for the program term so as to facilitate course planning. In the case of a medical leave, students must submit physician evidence of readiness to re-enter the program. Students will not receive credit for any courses taken at this or any other university or college during the leave of absence.

In the event a student on a granted leave is not able to return to the professional program by the agreed upon date (no greater than one year), the student must submit, in writing, a request for leave extension to the assistant dean of students and the APC chair, clearly detailing the reason(s) for not meeting the original date of return and his/her intentions regarding returning to the professional program.

In the event of a leave of absence and extension lasting more than two years, the student must petition the APC for re-admission and determination of appropriate academic standing. Students should anticipate that the ever-changing curriculum may necessitate individualization of academic scheduling for additional coursework required to achieve success in practice.

Students who do not intend to return to the professional program must submit in writing a request for academic resignation as outlined above in section I-C no later than one month prior to the agreed upon date of return.

E. Missed or Incomplete Course Work
Students may, for valid extenuating circumstances, be unable to complete a course. For these extenuating circumstances that may have resulted in poor academic performance, a "G" may be submitted. All extenuating circumstances must be evaluated and agreed upon by the assistant dean of students and the APC chair. All other course incompletions will receive and "I" grade.
For students given a “G” grade, a written personalized plan that includes periodic monitoring efforts must be co-developed by the course coordinator, appropriate course faculty, and the student. Plans must be submitted to the APC chair for final approval.

For students given an "I" grade, within one week after the end of the term, the course coordinator, chair of the APC, and the assistant dean of students will meet to determine whether the earned grade will be posted or if a remediation plan will be offered. If the student is eligible for remediation, a written personalized remediation plan that includes periodic monitoring efforts must be co-developed by the course coordinator, appropriate course faculty, and the student. Plans must be submitted to the APC chair for final approval.

Incomplete work (“G” or “I” grade) must be completed as soon as possible, and no later than the conclusion of the summer term prior to the next professional year. If a “G” grade is not resolved in the designated time, a review of the student’s extenuating circumstances must be completed by the assistant dean of students and the APC chair. Following this review, a determination of academic standing and progression will be made.

If an "I" grade is not resolved in the designated time, the student will receive their earned grade. If the student’s assigned grade is an “F” or a second “D” in the term, the student will be under academic probation as outlined in section II-C below and the APC will determine his/her progression and standing.

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

Promotion of students to the next professional year of the PharmD program is dependent on successful completion of the current professional year. The following outlines the situations in which students would not meet the criteria for promotion.

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

Cumulative GPA will be calculated at the end of each term. All PharmD students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00. Students who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or above will be placed on academic probation and given one opportunity to repeat selected courses in order to raise their cumulative GPA above 2.00. Students failing to increase their cumulative GPA above a 2.00 during this period of academic probation will be dismissed from the PharmD program.

Term GPA will be calculated at the end of each term. Students with a term GPA under 2.00 will be placed on academic probation and must achieve a GPA of 2.00 or above during the following term. Students failing to achieve a term GPA of 2.00 or above during this period of academic probation will be dismissed from the PharmD program.

B. Course Grades
Students earning the following grades will be placed on academic probation and may not be eligible for promotion to the next professional year.

1. “F” grade or Unsatisfactory (U) grade in any required or elective course within a given term
2. Below a “C-" in any two required or elective courses in a given term
3. More than two "I" grades in a term or more than three "I" grades in a professional year.

NOTE: "I" grades above only include those "I" grades linked to remediation plans, and do not include "I" grades allotted to a student as a result of faculty yet to submit an evaluation or student yet to submit a course requirement.

For students meeting criteria B.1 or B.2 above:
If the inadequate performance occurs at the end of the fall term the students may, with the approval of the APC: 1) take no courses during the spring term and return to the School the next fall term to repeat the professional course(s) they performed inadequately in, as well as other professional courses as determined by the APC; or 2) continue into the spring term, taking professional courses as determined by the APC. The following fall term, the students would repeat the courses of inadequate performance, as well as other courses determined by the APC.

If the poor performance occurs at the end of the spring term, the students may, with the approval of the APC: 1) take no courses during the fall term and return to the School the next spring term to repeat the professional course(s) they performed inadequately in, as well as other professional courses as determined by the APC; or 2) the students may choose to return in the fall term to repeat professional courses in which they performed marginally and/or take elective courses (if prerequisites have been met). The professional course(s) they performed poorly in would be repeated the following spring term when again offered.

For students meeting criteria B.3 above:
Students who receive more than 2 "I" grades in a semester or 3 "I" grades in a professional year will be placed on academic probation and will not be permitted to progress to the next professional year until all "I" grades are resolved. In the case of extenuating circumstances, with the agreement of the appropriate course faculty and the APC, a student may complete a faculty sanctioned remediation program during the summer term for the course in which they had inadequate performance. If this remediation program is successfully completed by the end of the summer term, the student will be eligible for promotion to the next professional year.

C. Academic Probation
Students on academic probation who are repeating courses must earn a grade above a "C-" (i.e., "C" or better) in each repeated course and have a cumulative and term GPA of 2.00 or above to continue in the PharmD program. Students on academic probation who again earn an "F" or a "U" (unsatisfactory) grade in a required or elective course, a grade below "C-" in any two courses (required or elective), within a given term, will be dismissed from the PharmD program and not permitted to register.

The APC may request, via phone, e-mail, or written letter, that students on academic probation appear before the APC to present his or her case prior to a final action by the Committee. Similarly, students have the right to appeal the Committee’s actions or appear before the Committee (see Section IV).

D. Experiential Learning
First Professional (P1) through Third Professional (P3) Years
Experiential learning activities and requirements in the P1 through P3 years, called Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE), are embedded into specific courses. Sections IIA-IIC of this policy apply to IPPE within those first three professional years.
Students may not start P4 Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotations until all P1, P2, and P3 course requirements have been successfully completed.
Fourth Professional (P4) Year
The P4 year consists of three terms, starting in the summer term immediately following the P3 year.

1. A student who earns a “U” grade on an APPE rotation must repeat the same type of rotation in an off-block or in a block after the last scheduled rotation for the P4 year.
2. A student who fails to earn a passing grade in the repeated rotation, or earns a “U” grade in any subsequent rotation, will be dismissed from the program.

E. Extenuating Circumstances
In highly unusual cases, the APC, in consultation with the dean, may make exceptions to the above progression, promotion, and retention policies.

III. Re-admission of Dismissed Students

A. Petition for Re-admission
Students who have resigned from the program or have been dismissed (not permitted to register) from the program will not be considered for re-admission for at least six months after the date of dismissal. After this time, students may submit a petition for re-admission to the chair of the APC. If the APC determines that there are sufficient grounds for re-admission, and class space is available in that current professional year, students will be re-admitted, will follow a course of study determined by the APC, and must conform to any curricular changes that have occurred since they were last enrolled.

B. Dismissed Students, Two Years Later
Students who have been dismissed and who petition for re-admission two or more calendar years from the time of their dismissal are not eligible for re-admission with advanced standing. Such students must apply for re-admission as new P1 students, on a competitive basis with all other applicants for that year. Such students, if admitted, will be expected to follow the PharmD program applicable to other students admitted that year.

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

IV. Due Process and Right of Appeal

Students will be notified in writing of their placement on academic probation or dismissal from the PharmD program, including the reason for this action. Students may appeal this action by submitting in writing to the chair of the APC, within two weeks of the date of the letter from the APC, evidence of extenuating circumstances for the APC to consider. Students may appear before the APC to further explain their particular situation prior to the Committee making its final decision.

Students may appeal decisions of the APC to the dean by providing a written petition, within two weeks of the date of the letter from the APC, outlining the extenuating circumstances or an alternative solution to the decision made by the APC. The dean may choose to consult with the APC prior to arriving at a decision, which will be final.
V. Other Requirements for Student Progression and Graduation

The APC will recommend students for graduation upon successful completion and adherence to all course-based requirements, GPA requirements, adherence to defined technical standards and all professional development experiences, including but not limited to, completion of portfolio requirements, co-curriculum requirements, Readiness Assessment testing, and the Pharmacy Curriculum Outcomes Assessment (PCOA®).