TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM
Grading Policy

GRADING IN THE DIDACTIC YEAR
Graduate students’ work is graded at the end of each semester using a system of letter grades and quality points to evaluate student performance.

Letter Grades

The TUSM Physician Assistant Program uses the following grading system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMERIC SCORE</th>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>QUALITY POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the graduate level, the grade A signifies work of distinction, and the letter B represents work of good quality. Any grade below a B- is considered a failing grade and the course will not count toward the degree requirement. The letter grades C+, C, C-, D or F represent work below the standard expected for a graduate student and will not be counted toward the degree requirements.
GRADING IN THE CLINICAL YEAR

Clinical (second) year student evaluations are reported on a three-tier system:

- Pass
- Low Pass
- Fail

Evaluations from the clinical rotations include an assessment not only of the student’s fund of knowledge and comprehension, but also of those characteristics considered desirable in a good physician assistant: problem-solving, industry, reliability, judgment, interpersonal relations (with peers, patients, and staff), skills (history taking, patient examination, and so forth), and motivation. A descriptive summary of the student’s strengths and weaknesses is also made. These evaluations become part of the student’s file. A student’s professional behavior is also considered in this evaluation. Attire, punctuality, language, and general comportment are to be considered part of this evaluation.

Criteria for Grades

- **Pass**: the student must fulfill all of the expected goals of the rotation and has no significant deficiencies in knowledge or ability in the assigned discipline. The student’s attendance and punctuality have met the requirements set forth by the rotation preceptor/site director.
- **Low Pass**: the student has fulfilled most of the expected goals of the rotation but has demonstrated one or more serious deficiencies in knowledge, skill, or behavior. These deficiencies would require remediation and possibly a repeat of the rotation at a later time. A student with a Low Pass grade is automatically referred to the Promotions Committee for review and possible disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.
- **Fail**: The student has not completed or fulfilled the basic requirements of the rotation or has failed to demonstrate appropriate professionalism and/or attitude.

Assignment of Final grade: Utilizing the preceptor’s evaluation of the student’s performance and the results of the End-of-Rotation examination, the Clinical Coordinator compiles the student’s final grade for the clinical rotation.
STANDARDS OF WORK
Student grades are reviewed monthly by the program director and principal faculty. A grade of B- or better is considered a passing grade for a didactic course. When a student receives a course grade below a B for a didactic course or a “Low pass” for a clinical rotation, the student will receive a warning letter from the program director. A “Low pass” grade in a clinical rotation will result in a referral to the PA Program’s Promotions Committee for review and possible disciplinary action.

If the student receives more than two grades of B-, or if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be referred to the Promotions Committee and may be placed on academic probation.
Although a didactic grade of B- and a clinical rotation grade of “Low Pass” are considered passing grades for an individual course or rotation and will be counted toward degree credit, a cumulative GPA of 3.00 is required in order to be granted a degree.

Any course or clinical rotation failure will result in referral to the Promotions Committee for disciplinary action, including deceleration or dismissal from the Program.

REMEDIATION
Remediation will be offered at the discretion of the PA Promotions Committee to any student who is failing to meet standards of work as prescribed by the program. Remediation will be offered to a student for a maximum of one course per semester. The PA Promotions will oversee the development of a remediation plan/contract. Retaking any course from the first year curriculum will require deceleration due to the nature of course scheduling in this program. Failure to achieve a B- or better in a course taken on a second attempt may result in dismissal from the program.

DECELERATION
Deceleration is defined as delaying graduation by up to one year to retake a course or clinical rotation to achieve a passing grade and cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in order to meet the necessary requirements for graduation. This may require the student to re-enter the program in the following class. Any student request for deceleration (for personal or academic reasons) must be made in writing to the Promotions Committee which has sole discretion to grant or deny the request.

**ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISMISSAL**
Students placed on academic probation will first be reviewed by the PA Program’s Promotions Committee for consideration of denial of advancement or dismissal from the program. Failure of more than one course is grounds for dismissal from the program, regardless of the student’s GPA or grades in other courses. Students on academic probation (failure to achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 or better) will not be permitted to enter their clinical year. Failure to achieve a grade of Pass in a clinical rotation will result in the student being placed on academic probation and referral to the Promotions Committee. If a student receives a Low Pass for a clinical rotation, the student must repeat the rotation at the end of the regularly scheduled academic year, thereby delaying his/her graduation. Elective rotations may not be used to repeat a rotation. Any student receiving a second Low Pass for a clinical rotation is subject to dismissal from the program. The Promotions Committee meets every semester to review student academic progress.

The PA Promotions Committee forwards all recommendations for dismissal to the Tufts University School of Medicine’s (TUSM) Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee. Final decisions on dismissals are made by the TUSM Committee which has jurisdiction for students in all programs. In cases where dismissal of a student is being discussed by either the PA or TUSM committee, the student will be notified ahead of time and invited to address the Committee. Any student who is denied advancement or dismissed has the right to appeal the decision to the TUSM Student Appeals Committee.
If a student on academic probation receives no grades below a B in the semester subsequent to being placed on academic probation, that student will be removed from probation.

**SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Federal regulations require the Tufts School of Medicine Public Health and Professional Degree programs to establish Satisfactory Academic Progress standards for students who are awarded federal financial aid funds. The following standards apply to all matriculated students, whether they are financial aid recipients or not. Students who fail to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress during any semester may be placed on Financial Aid warning, Financial Aid probation and/or academic plan, suspension or may be dismissed, in accordance with the policies of the PHPD program. Students who are terminated from financial aid eligibility may continue their studies but are required to self-pay and make payment arrangements through the Bursar’s office.

The standards of Satisfactory Academic progress for eligibility for Financial Aid measure a student’s performance in three areas: maximum timeframe, cumulative grade point average (GPA) and cumulative completion rate. The student’s academic progress shall be evaluated at the end of each semester. Also, please note that if a student fails a course and is given the option of decelerating and repeating that course the following year, that student will not be eligible for Financial Aid for that one course. Academic Progress for both part-time and full-time students will be evaluated under the criteria given below.

*Maximum Timeframe Allowance*

PA students will be evaluated to determine if they have achieved satisfactory levels of academic progress. In order to achieve satisfactory academic progress, a student must complete their degree requirements within 150% of the program’s published length in accordance with the standards established by their program as noted below:

*Credit Amounts listed below are for students beginning the program in the Spring 2014 or later.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM/DEGREE</th>
<th>Minimum Credit for Degree</th>
<th>Maximum Credit for Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


**Grade point average (“GPA”):**

As part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress assessment, students will be evaluated to determine if they have achieved satisfactory levels of academic progress. In order to achieve satisfactory academic progress and receive Financial Aid, a student must earn a minimum GPA in accordance with the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician Assistant Program (MMS)</th>
<th>Cumulative attempterd credits</th>
<th>Minimum GPA required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>9.5 – 26.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>27 -77</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although a grade of B- is considered a passing grade for an individual course and will be counted toward degree credit, a cumulative GPA of 3.00 is required in order to be granted a degree from the Tufts University PA Program.

Transfer credits (not applicable to PA students) are not included in calculation of the GPA and are not included when determining Satisfactory Academic GPA requirements.

**Completion Rate (Credit Hour Progression)**

As part of the Satisfactory Academic Progress assessment, each student’s cumulative Completion Rate will be evaluated by comparing the total number of attempted credit hours with the total number of credit hours earned. In order to achieve satisfactory academic progress, a student must earn a minimum percentage of credits attempted in accordance with the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician Assistant Program (MMS)</th>
<th>Cumulative credits</th>
<th>Percentage of Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(MMS)</td>
<td>attempted</td>
<td>that must be Successfully Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-77</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Credits attempted are those hours a student is registered for at the conclusion of the add/drop period each semester as defined by the Registrar’s Office. All classes for which a student is registered after that date will be included.

Successfully completed credit hours is defined as the total number of hours which a student receives a grade of B- or better.

_Treatment of course withdrawals, incomplete(s)/not reported, repeated courses and transfer courses:_

_Withdrawals (W):_ Credit hours for courses dropped before the conclusion of the add/drop period that no longer appear on the students enrollment record or transcript will not count as a course attempted. Credit hours for courses in which a student has remained enrolled after the Drop/Add period for which the student receives a "W" grade, will count as a course attempted.

_Incompletes (I):_ Credit hours for courses in which a student has an incomplete grade or the faculty has not reported a grade at the time in which SAP is reviewed will be included in the course attempted hours. However, as there is no current grade in the system, these courses will not be included in the cumulative GPA determination at such time.

_Repeated courses:_ For required courses that are repeated due to failure, only the most recent grade is included in the students cumulative GPA when determining the GPA (SAP) standard. When determining if a student is meeting the Completion Rate (SAP) standard, credit hours for the original failure and the most recent course will count as a course attempted.
Students who receive a grade of less than a B in a course may repeat the course in order to attempt to earn a better grade. If a student re-takes a course and passes it, s/he receives credit for the course; both grades are included on the student transcript, and in computation of the GPA. No more than 2 courses may be re-taken in this manner. Any given course may only be counted once toward a PHPD degree or certificate requirement. When determining the GPA (SAP) standard and when determining if a student is meeting the Completion Rate (SAP) standard both courses will be included in the SAP determination. Students may only receive aid to repeat a previously passed course one time. Students that opt to repeat a course a subsequent time must pay for that course.

*Transfer Credits:* The Physician Assistant Program does not permit transfer courses to be used to fulfill degree requirements.

**NOTE:**

*Due to the “Lock-step” nature of the curriculum, withdrawal or taking an incomplete grade in a course in the Physician Assistant Program may result in deceleration of up to one year in the Program.*