

Academic Performance Standards Policy

And

Student Performance Review Committee Procedures

School of Health and Medical Sciences Seton Hall University

Effective July 1, 2019

This document supersedes any and all other documents dated prior to July 1, 2019

I. Introduction

Preparing for a career in the health sciences is a rigorous undertaking. Practitioners are expected to possess excellent clinical and leadership skills, and also to practice according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Preparation for meeting these high standards begins during a student's education. Students are required to take all courses at the School of Health and Medical Sciences (SHMS). At SHMS, academic performance includes not only scholastic work, but also encompasses clinical ability, management and leadership skills, and professionalism.

Some students may occasionally experience academic difficulties. Such difficulties are best addressed early, before they become unmanageable. As practitioners, students will be expected to exercise sound clinical judgment. As students, it is important to exercise sound academic judgment and seek academic assistance when necessary. Students should consult with course instructors, academic advisors and/or program directors, and department chairs as soon as a difficulty becomes apparent.

This policy outlines the academic performance expected of all students in the School of Health and Medical Sciences. It also describes the role of the Student Performance Review Committee ("SPRC") and its procedures in reviewing academic performance, including clinical skills, management and leadership skills, professional behavior, and addressing student appeals from decisions made by the Dean.

II. Satisfactory Academic Progress

A. Cumulative Grade Point Average

It is University and SHMS academic performance standards policy that each graduate and certificate student maintains a minimum program cumulative grade point average of 3.00. Students whose program cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation.

For dual degree students, the calculation of the program cumulative GPA will begin with the first semester of professional SHMS coursework. Only undergraduate coursework that is counted toward the professional degree granted by SHMS will be included in the graduate level GPA calculation.

Any student admitted to a SHMS program on academic probation must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better (regardless of course load) in their **first** semester or they will be dismissed from the program. No rounding of cumulative GPA will be permitted.

B. Individual Course Grades

The successful completion of academic coursework and clinical practicum are essential to the student’s preparation for clinical competency and professional practice. Successful completion of each and every course requirement with a passing grade of “C” (or “Satisfactory” when applicable) or better is mandatory. Any grade below this standard will be considered a failure and will result in academic probation.

Dual degree students in their first year of graduate professional coursework in SHMS, whether registered as an undergraduate or graduate student, will abide by SHMS grading policies as indicated in course syllabi.

III. Grading Structure

The following table provides the letter grades available to students in SHMS and aligned with the University’s Graduate Catalogue.

Letter Grade		Quality Points
A	Superior	4.000
A-		3.667
B+		3.333
B	Good	3.000
B-		2.667
C+		2.333
C	Satisfactory	2.000
F	Failure	0.000
I	Incomplete	no credits earned/no impact on GPA
AU	Audit	0.000
NR	No Record/Not Reported	no credits earned/no impact on GPA
IW	Incomplete Withdrawal	no credits earned/no impact on GPA
WD	Withdrawal	no credits earned/no impact on GPA
FI	Failure-Unresolved Incomplete	0.000
S	Satisfactory	full credits earned/no impact on GPA
U	Unsatisfactory	no credits earned/no impact on GPA
IP	In Progress	no credits earned/no impact on GPA

* In cases where students do not fulfill all course requirements in a given semester resulting in grades of – I, NR, IW, WD, and/or IP – GPA’s will be recalculated when final course grades are posted by the Registrar. Academic dismissal/ probation by the Dean may be retroactive.

IV. Academic Standing

Any failure (which is a grade below a “C” or a grade of “Unsatisfactory”) in a course or a cumulative grade point average less than 3.00 will result in the student’s academic record being referred to the SPRC.

A. Program Cumulative GPA Requirement

A student earning a program cumulative grade point average of less than 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. To be removed from probation, the student must raise the program cumulative grade point average to 3.00 or greater. Students placed on academic probation will be given up to two successive semesters (including a Summer semester if part of the program’s curriculum) in which to raise their program cumulative GPA to 3.00 or better. A student’s probationary status may be removed as early as the first semester following the semester in which the student was placed on probation, if the student successfully raises program cumulative GPA to a 3.00. Failure to raise the program cumulative GPA to 3.00 or greater will result in a recommendation of dismissal from the program. If it is not possible for a student to raise his/her program cumulative GPA to 3.00 or greater because the student has less than two semesters remaining to complete their program of study, the student will be dismissed or have the option to withdraw from the program. If it becomes mathematically impossible for a student to raise his/her program cumulative GPA to 3.00 or greater (e.g., after one (1) semester of academic probation), then the student will be dismissed or have the option to withdraw from the program.

B. Individual Course Failure

Students who have completed SHMS courses and received a grade of “C” or better are not permitted to repeat such courses. However, any student receiving a grade of less than “C” (including a grade of “U” when applicable) will be required to repeat the course the next time the course is offered and earn a grade of “B” or better (or “S”, when applicable) in the repeated course. As a result of a course failure, the student will be placed on academic probation until the failed course is retaken. A student will have only one (1) opportunity to repeat a failed course. Failure to retake and/or pass a previously failed course with a grade of B or better will result in a recommendation of dismissal from the program. Individual course failures may interrupt a student’s progression in his/her program of study.

C. Multiple Failures

A student with two or more course failures will be subject to a recommendation of dismissal from their respective program and/or the SPRC.

D. Academic Record

Academic standing decisions made by the Dean, at the recommendation of the SPRC, will be reflected in a student’s academic transcript. Please contact the Registrar if you have any questions about how these academic standing decisions may appear on your transcript.

V. Clinical and Internship Performance Standards

It is the responsibility of each program within SHMS to develop performance standards for students who are involved in clinical practicum or internships. Clinical performance is a component of academic performance and students should refer to their program manuals and student handbooks for the standards for each program.

The standards for successful completion of clinical practicum and internships will be consistent with the academic and accreditation standards of the respective programs.

These standards will be provided in writing to each student upon admission to their respective program. These standards will be the basis for the academic review at the end of each semester for students who are enrolled in clinical practicum and internships.

VI. Professionalism

It is critical that students in the health sciences maintain the highest standards of ethical integrity and professional behavior. Students are expected to honor their responsibilities to the health professions, to the School, to the University, and to their faculty, clinical and internship supervisors, peers and patients. Professionalism is a component of academic performance and is defined as competencies demonstrating respect for others, responsibility, accountability, professional skills, leadership, caring and compassion. Students should refer to their program manuals for specific professional behavior standards relevant to performance in their field of study.

Students in SHMS are bound by all applicable University policies and procedures. Students are expressly governed by the University's Community Standards, which may be found at <https://www.shu.edu/student-life/student-conduct.cfm>. In addition, and not limited to, students in SHMS may not:

- violate the code of ethics in their respective profession;
- engage in an intimate relationship or sexual activity with clients/patients or others for whom they are responsible;
- engage in conduct that adversely reflects on the health professions or on the individual's fitness to serve professionally;
- use any form of social media, including e-mail, to engage in any of the activities described in this Section or violate any University or SHMS policy or procedure. The University may require that content distributed through social media that violates any of these standards be removed.

Academic honesty is considered a critical part of professionalism. The University's Policy on Academic Honesty and Integrity can be found at the end of this document.

Actions that violate any University or SHMS policy, procedure or standard may result in dismissal from the University.

VII. Remediation/Dismissal

Students who fail to meet the academic standards outlined in this document and by this policy may be subject to academic sanctions including: academic probation, suspension, establishment of a learning plan, or dismissal.

A. Academic Probation

Academic probation is a period during which a student is permitted to improve academic performance that does not meet SHMS standards.

Grounds for being placed on academic probation include, but are not limited to:

1. failure to maintain a program cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better;
2. course failure;
3. failure to meet clinical performance standards established by the applicable program;
4. breaches in professionalism.

B. Program Deceleration/Suspension

Most courses in the School of Health and Medical Sciences are offered only once in an academic year and serve as prerequisites for subsequent courses. In the event of a course failure, a student may not be permitted to take subsequent courses that require the failed course as a prerequisite until the failed course is successfully retaken. This could result in the student being temporarily suspended from moving forward in the program until the required prerequisite course has been successfully completed. In this case, the student's progression in the program will be decelerated and could, therefore, impact his/his graduation date. In order for the student to enroll in other courses for which the failed course is not a prerequisite, the written approval of the department chair is required.

Students who are decelerated or suspended from their program of study or have failed a course may be required to register for an Independent Study course or audit courses as part of academic planning. Independent Study courses and audited courses have associated fees. Please consult the Registrar's office for information about fees associated with Independent Study courses and audited courses.

In the event that a student is determined by the Dean to pose a danger to faculty, staff, employees, other students, or patients at clinical sites, the student may be temporarily suspended pending further review by the University. Students who are suspended may be prohibited from entering University premises and/or the applicable clinical site until the situation is resolved and may further be required to undergo a psychiatric evaluation that may include a threat assessment, an anger management assessment and an analysis of whether the student can function effectively in the learning community of the University. Access to the University's Internet or other computer systems may also be suspended pending resolution of the situation.

C. Learning Plan

A learning plan is a document that may be created by a department when a student's performance fails to meet any aspect of the SHMS' academic, clinical, or professional performance standards. The plan describes how a student's performance has been deficient and outlines steps that should be taken to remediate a deficiency or improve performance. Learning plans may be established independently of, or in addition to, any of the sanctions imposed. Failure to fulfill the conditions established in a learning plan may constitute grounds for further action, including dismissal. In evaluating whether a student's performance is acceptable following completion of a learning plan, the University may consider the totality of the student's overall performance, both prior to and during the learning plan.

D. Dismissal

Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. failure to raise the program cumulative GPA to a 3.00 (no rounding permitted) or better at the completion of no more than two successive semesters (including any Summer sessions);
2. two or more course failures;
3. failure to meet conditions established in a learning plan;
4. failure of a student admitted on probation to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better in their first semester;
5. failure to meet clinical performance standards established by the applicable program;
6. breaches in professionalism;
7. failure to earn a grade of "B" or better or "S" (when applicable), in a repeated course when a student previously received a grade of less than "C" (including a grade of "U" when applicable).

VIII. Leave of Absence

Students who will be away from their program for more than two weeks must submit a letter to their department chair requesting a Leave of Absence (LOA). The department chair forwards his/her recommendation and the student's request along with appropriate documentation to the Chair of the SPRC. The SPRC will make a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean will render a final decision. An LOA may be granted for up to one year and may not be renewed unless there are mitigating circumstances, which will be determined by the Dean in consultation with other university officials, if appropriate.

If an LOA is taken for medical reasons, the department requires certification from a licensed healthcare professional attesting to the student's fitness to resume participation in their program according to the program's essential functions.

Granting of an LOA does not imply full or partial refund of tuition and fees. Any potential refund is subject to University policy.

IX. The Student Performance Review Committee (“SPRC”)

A. Scope of SPRC Activities

The Student Performance Review Committee is a Dean-appointed SHMS faculty committee with advisory responsibilities to the Dean of SHMS. The function of the SPRC is to review the academic progress of students referred to it by the departments in the School of Health and Medical Sciences and provide recommendations regarding those students to the Dean. The SPRC also receives and reviews requests for LOAs and appeals presented by students in the School of Health and Medical Sciences and provides recommendation to the Dean. The SPRC serves to ensure that the policies outlined in this document and in program policy manuals are applied in a fair, equitable manner to all students.

However, claims of discrimination, including retaliation, and sexual harassment should be submitted to the University Compliance Office by the student.

B. Composition of the SPRC

The SPRC comprises one voting member from each of the six departments in the School of Health and Medical Sciences, appointed by the Dean, for a period of one academic year, which is renewable by the Dean.

C. SPRC Meetings

The SPRC meets at the conclusion of each semester after official grades have been posted by the University to review the academic records of students referred by their department for review. The SPRC reviews the academic progress of students who:

1. failed to raise the program cumulative GPA to a 3.00 (no rounding permitted) or better at the completion of no more than two academic program semesters (including any Summer sessions) of probation;
2. failed one or more courses;
3. failed to meet conditions established in a learning plan;
4. were admitted on probation to their program and failed to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better in their first semester;
5. failed to meet clinical performance standards established by the applicable program;
6. evidenced lapses in academic integrity, honesty, and professional behavior.

The SPRC will also meet on an as needed basis to address events arising during the course of the semester.

X. Referral of Students to the SPRC

It is the responsibility of the Department Chairperson to refer to the SPRC any students who fail to meet the standards for academic performance, which includes clinical/internship performance and professionalism.

A. Academic Performance

At the conclusion of each academic semester, the Department Chair will forward to the Chair of the SPRC the name and student identification number for each student who:

1. is presently on academic probation;
2. has a program cumulative GPA below 3.00;
3. has failed one or more courses;
4. has failed to meet conditions established in a learning plan;
5. was admitted to their program on probation and has failed to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better in their first semester;
6. has failed to meet clinical performance standards established by the applicable program;
7. has had a lapse in academic integrity, honesty, or professional behavior.

B. Professional and Clinical/ Internship Performance

If concerns should arise regarding a student's clinical/Internship performance or professional behavior that cannot be addressed at the program/department level, the Department Chair may refer the student to the SPRC at any time.

C. Student Status Changes

If a student requests a leave of absence or withdraw from a program, the Department Chair will notify the SPRC.

D. Return to Good Academic Standing

It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to notify the SPRC when a student, who has been placed on probation, returns to Good Academic Standing.

Upon a referral of a student to the SPRC for any of the reasons under Paragraphs A – C (except for a withdrawal from the program), the SPRC will convene and review the matter, which may include interviews of some or all of the parties involved as well as other members of the SHMS. Following a review, the Committee will make a written recommendation which the SPRC Chair will forward to the Dean.

The Dean will issue a final decision and notify the student.

XI. Presenting an Appeal to the SPRC

A. Scope of an Appeal

Students may submit an appeal to the SPRC if they seek review of:

1. a grade and/or the manner in which their academic performance, clinical performance, and/or professionalism was graded or evaluated;
2. a letter from the Dean finding that they failed to meet school/program standards;
3. a letter of dismissal from the Dean.

B. Informal Grade Appeal Procedure

In order for a grade appeal to be heard by the SPRC, students are required to take the following actions:

1. The student will attempt to address the contested grade with the course instructor(s) within 10 business days of receiving the contested grade.
2. If a resolution satisfactory to both parties cannot be reached within 5 days of addressing the contested grade with the instructor, the student should contact the Department Chair for guidance. If the department chair issued the grade in dispute, the student should contact the Associate Dean for guidance.
3. In the event that a student cannot resolve the matter at the department level, the student may submit the *Request to Present an Appeal to SPRC* form to the Chair of the SPRC. This form should be submitted within 10 business days of determining that the issue cannot be resolved at the department level.

XII. Appeal Procedures

A. Preliminary Procedures

1. Following the submission of a *Request to Present an Appeal to SPRC* form, the SPRC Chair will determine:
 - a. whether the matter falls within the purview of the SPRC
 - b. if the informal grade appeal procedure has been followed.
2. In the event the matter falls outside the purview of the SPRC or a student has not followed the steps in the informal grade appeal procedure, the SPRC Chair may dismiss the appeal or take other appropriate action.
3. In some circumstances, the SPRC Chair may determine that it is not the appropriate entity to address an appeal. Should this be the case, the Chair of the SPRC will work with the Dean to refer the matter to the appropriate SHMS or University body, which may include the Compliance Office and/or the Division of Student Services-Community Development.

B. Formal Appeal Procedures

1. No attorneys may participate.
2. Each student party may be accompanied throughout the process by a support person from the University who may not participate in the appeal proceedings.

The appealing student meets with the SPRC Chair to discuss the procedures outlined below.

1. The SPRC will convene to hear the student's appeal.
2. The SPRC will include the SPRC Chair and at least two additional committee members.
3. The SPRC member from that student's department may remain present during the hearing but will excuse him/herself from providing a recommendation on that student's appeal. The member may participate in Committee deliberations as deemed necessary by the SPRC Chair in order to provide clarification of the department's policies and procedures and supply any other information deemed relevant by the Chair.
4. The student may present any supporting evidence including documentation, witness testimony (oral or written), and exhibits during the meeting.
5. The faculty/staff member, clinical supervisor, or student whom the appeal is against may also present any supporting evidence including documentation, witness testimony (oral or written), and exhibits during the meeting.
6. After all evidence is presented, the SPRC will deliberate.
7. A report of the SPRC findings will be made to the Dean.
8. No student is permitted to tape or otherwise record the proceeding.

XIII. Report of SPRC Findings

The SPRC seeks to address appeals and review the performance of all referred students in a timely fashion. However, in many cases it will be necessary to review the matter in detail with the parties involved. After the case has been discussed to the satisfaction of the SPRC, the SPRC will forward its written recommendations to the Dean.

XIV. Action by the Dean

Within 10 business days of receipt of the report from the SPRC along with all underlying documents submitted to the SPRC, the Dean will render a final, written decision to the student with a copy to the Chair of the SPRC. Alternatively, the Dean may issue an interim decision referring the matter back to the SPRC for further review.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

The School of Health and Medical Sciences (SHMS) is committed to preparing future healthcare professionals. As part of this preparation and aligned with the Catholic mission of Seton Hall University, the School has very high expectations of students regarding academic honesty and integrity. Professionals in the health sciences are held accountable to legal mandates set forth by federal and state regulatory agencies as well as ethical standards outlined by professional organizations and other work setting organizations. For the practicing professional, breaches of honesty or integrity in these settings result in a variety of sanctions including legal (i.e., fines, imprisonment) and professional (i.e., suspension or loss of license to practice). Therefore, this SHMS policy on academic honesty and integrity reflects the manner in which these acts are met in professional settings.

According to the SHU Student Code of Conduct (2015), “Each college or school within the University may choose to have its own definitions, standards, and policies relative to academic dishonesty and/or academic integrity. It shall be the decision of the appropriate Academic Dean as to which process to refer any matter under such policy.”

“The term ‘cheating’ includes, but is not limited to:

- a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other type of assessment;
- b. use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments.
- c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University’s faculty or staff;
- d. engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.”

“The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or providing of term papers or other academic materials.”

Students enrolled in any SHMS course, whether at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels, will adhere to the policies and procedures outlined herein regarding Academic Honesty, Integrity and Professional Behavior. Violations of appropriate or expected student behavior on and off campus, not including academic honesty, integrity, and professional behavior, are addressed in the Seton Hall University Student Code of Conduct. This document outlines the process for addressing reported violations of University rules and regulations. A link for the SHU Student Code of Conduct can be found at:

<https://www.shu.edu/student-life/student-conduct.cfm>

SHMS considers breaches of academic honesty, integrity and professional behavior to be serious offenses. Any breaches of these policies will be swiftly investigated and a record of the breach and sanction will be recorded as part of the student’s academic record. Sanctions for breaches of academic honesty, integrity, and professional behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure of assignment or assessment.
- Immediate failure of the course.
- Suspension from the program.
- Dismissal from the University.

The above sanctions may be imposed upon any student who has breached the SHMS Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Professional Behavior policies outlined herein. To determine the sanction or combination of sanctions, the following is considered:

- The severity of the violation
- The student's previous record of disciplinary sanction(s), if any
- The effect of the student's misconduct upon the University community
- Consistency with previously issued sanction(s) for similar misconduct.

Breaches of academic integrity, honesty and/or professional behaviors that cannot be resolved at the department level may be referred to the SPRC. For procedures, please see Sections X through XII of this document.