



Policy Title:
Graduation Requirements Policy

Policy Identifier:
A3.14b

Prepared by: PA Program Faculty	Creation Date: 01/01/2026
Reviewed by: PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
Approved by: PA Program Executive Committee	Effective Date: 01/01/2026
Category: Academic Standards and Progression Policies	

ARC-PA Standards

A3.14b

Scope

University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia (USC SOMC) PA students.

Policy Statement

To be recommended for the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree, students must complete all academic, professional, and administrative requirements of the USC School of Medicine Columbia (SOMC) PA Program within the designated timeframe and meet the standards set by the program. Students who do not fulfill graduation requirements within the specified limits must request an extension or leave of absence in accordance with institutional and program policies.

Reason for Policy

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standard A3.14b by clearly defining the requirements and deadlines for successful completion of the Physician Assistant Program. This policy establishes transparent criteria for awarding the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree and ensures fairness and consistency across all graduating cohorts.

Definitions

- **Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC):** The committee responsible for reviewing student academic and professional progress, and recommending promotion, remediation, or extension.
- **Extension:** A program-approved period of up to one additional semester (four months) granted to complete remaining degree requirements.
- **Leave of Absence:** An approved period of up to one year during which the student pauses enrollment and decelerates into a subsequent cohort.



Procedures

1. Completion Timeframe

- Students must complete all program requirements within the expected 27-month timeframe.
- Under exceptional circumstances, and with the recommendation of the SPPC and approval of the Program Director, a student may be granted an extension of up to one additional semester (four months) to complete all degree requirements.
- Absences exceeding four months require an approved leave of absence of no more than one year and deceleration into the next cohort.

2. Academic Requirements

- Successful completion of all required courses in the professional curriculum with a minimum grade of “C” or better in each course.
- Maintenance of a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (B) or higher.
- Achievement of a passing grade on the summative evaluation as defined by the program.

3. Professional and Ethical Standards

- Demonstration of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct consistent with the AAPA Code of Ethics and program policies.
- Maintenance of satisfactory evaluations in professionalism and clinical performance throughout all didactic and clinical phases.

4. Financial and Administrative Obligations

- Fulfillment of all financial obligations to the University, including tuition, fees, and any outstanding balances.
- Resolution of any administrative holds or requirements prior to graduation (e.g., return of equipment, completion of exit surveys).

5. Recommendation for Degree Conferral

- The Program Director reviews each candidate’s record to verify eligibility for graduation, grants final approval, and submits the recommendation for conferral of the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree to USC Graduate School.

Enforcement and Accountability

Failure to meet graduation requirements within the established timeframe or standards may delay degree conferral, result in academic probation, or lead to dismissal from the program. Extensions or leaves of absence will be granted only under extenuating circumstances and must receive formal approval from the SPPC and the Program Director.

Contacts

Program Director
USC School of Medicine Columbia
Physician Assistant Program

History



Date of Change	Change
01/01/2026	Policy drafted into new template