



**Policy Title:**  
Dismissal Policy and Procedure

**Policy Identifier:**  
A3.14f

<b>Prepared by:</b> PA Program Faculty	Creation Date: 01/01/2026
<b>Reviewed by:</b> PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
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<b>Category:</b> Academic Policies and Student Progression	

**ARC-PA Standards**

A3.14f

**Scope**

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

**Policy Statement**

A recommendation for dismissal may occur when a student fails to meet the academic, professional, or ethical standards required for continued enrollment in the USC SOMC Physician Assistant Program.

Dismissal is a serious action taken only after thorough review, documentation, and due process. The program is committed to fair and consistent application of dismissal procedures to ensure compliance with academic, professional, and ethical standards and to maintain the integrity of the PA profession.

**Reason for Policy**

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standard A3.14f by establishing clear and consistent procedures for student dismissal. This policy defines conditions that may lead to dismissal and outlines the process for review, documentation, and appeal to ensure transparency and due process.

**Definitions**

- **Dismissal:** Permanent removal of a student from the Physician Assistant Program for failure to meet academic, professional, or ethical standards.
- **Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC):** The committee responsible for reviewing student performance, conduct, and eligibility for progression or dismissal.
- **Due Process:** The procedural rights to ensure a fair review and opportunity for student response before a final decision is made.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Grounds for Dismissal**

#### **A. Academic Performance**

- Earning a grade below “C” in any course or Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE).
- Maintaining a cumulative GPA below 3.00 for more than one semester.
- Failing any required remediation activity or reassessment.
- Failing to meet course requirements as defined in the syllabus.
- Failure to complete the program within the approved timeframe, including the 27-month standard curriculum or approved 4-month extension period (for a total of 31-months in the program).

#### **B. Professional and Ethical Conduct**

- Exhibiting unprofessional behavior or violating AAPA Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the PA Profession, the USC Honor Code, or the Carolinian Creed.
- Breaching patient confidentiality, engaging in academic dishonesty, or falsifying records.
- Demonstrating behavior that jeopardizes patient safety, public trust, or the integrity of the clinical learning environment.
- Failing to meet the Technical Standards of the program necessary for participation in didactic and clinical activities.
- Violating university, program, or clinical site policies, including health, immunization, or background check requirements.
- Repeated lapses in professionalism or failure to demonstrate improvement following remediation or professionalism plans.
- Criminal conviction or legal action rendering the student unfit for clinical participation or professional practice, as determined by the program.

### **2. Dismissal Procedure**

1. The SPPC meets with the student to review documented academic or professionalism concerns.
2. The SPPC provides a written recommendation for dismissal to the Program Director.
3. The Program Director meets with the student to review the SPPC’s findings and documentation, allowing the student the opportunity to respond.
4. The Program Director determines the final decision regarding dismissal.
5. If dismissal is upheld:
  - The Program Director issues a formal dismissal letter outlining the decision, rationale, and appeal options.
  - The student and Program Director sign the document to acknowledge receipt.
6. The Program Director notifies the Registrar and the Bursar’s Office of the student’s change in enrollment status.
7. The student may appeal the dismissal decision following university procedures (see Section 3).
8. Once dismissed, the student may not continue coursework or clinical rotations, even while



an appeal is pending.

### 3. Appeal Process

- Students may appeal a dismissal decision in writing to the following offices, in sequence:
  1. Assistant Dean for Clinical Graduate Programs
  2. Dean of the Graduate School
  3. Provost (final review)
- Appeals must follow the [Graduate School's policies](#) on academic dismissal and include:
  - Student's full name and USC ID
  - A written statement explaining the grounds for appeal
  - Relevant documentation supporting the appeal
- Students may seek guidance from the Office of Student Advocacy regarding appeal procedures.

### Additional Notes

- Dismissal decisions consider the student's overall academic performance, professionalism, and potential for successful program completion.
- Dismissed students are not eligible for readmission to the PA Program.
- The program reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time when continuation is deemed detrimental to the student, patients, the University, or the profession.

### Enforcement and Accountability

The Program Director is responsible for ensuring all dismissals are conducted in accordance with this policy, the Graduate School Academic Regulations, and university due process standards. The SPPC provides recommendations based on documented evidence and professional judgment.

### Contacts

Program Director  
USC School of Medicine Columbia  
Physician Assistant Program

### History

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