Policy - Student Attendance, Participation and Inclement Weather

**Origin Date:** November 6, 2013

**Last Evaluated:** February 5, 2015

**Responsible Party:** Directors of Didactic/Clinical Education

**Minimum Review Frequency:** Annually

**Approving Body:** Principal Faculty

**DPAS Associated Forms:** None

**ARC-PA Associated Standards:**
- A3.17 - The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include:
  - a) any required academic standards

**Background and Purpose**

Because PA education is a prelude to a professional career as a health care provider, all scheduled activities within the program are mandatory to attend. Consistent attendance, punctuality, and participation also reflect a student’s professionalism and are considered academic standards. It is recognized that there may be extenuating circumstances that prohibit student from attending a required activity. This policy defines the expectations for attendance, participation, and inclement weather.

**Policy Statement**

I. **Attendance**

A. **Didactic Phase**

1. Attendance is required for all program lectures and activities. Consistent attendance is a component of professional behavior. In the event of an absence, students must notify the department administrator and course director prior to the activity that will be missed. It is recommended that students refrain from making other commitments.
during the hours of 8AM-5PM, Monday through Friday unless the time slot in question is unequivocally specified as free time. Note: Unscheduled Protected Time is not considered free time.

2. The student is responsible for contacting the course directors to discuss make-up work, if applicable.

3. It is expected that students will use good judgment when taking an absence, doing so only for legitimate reasons. The following are examples of occurrences when an absence may be excused:
   a) Personal illness with provider’s note or permission from course director.
   b) Family emergencies.
   c) Death in the immediate family.
   d) Observance of a religious holiday.

4. Family obligations, employment, travel, and previous plans are not generally accepted as excused absences. Medical/dental appointments should be scheduled, when at all possible, at times when classes or scheduled activities are not in session. Special circumstances will be reviewed by the DDE/PD on a case-by-case basis. Students are responsible for making up any missed work during an excused absence. The Student Progress Committee will not consider absences as reasons for poor performance. If a student absence results in a missed exam, refer to the missed examination section of the Student Assessment policy.

B. Clinical Phase

1. In the event of an illness or emergency necessitating absence from the clinical rotation, students must notify both the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) and the clinical preceptor by 9:00am on the day of the absence. Students should make every effort to reach the clinical preceptor and DCE rather than utilizing voicemail or email. Students are required to submit appropriate documentation supporting the reason for any unplanned absence(s).

2. Failure to report an absence will result in remedial assignment(s), point(s) deduction on the Clinical Performance Evaluation and will be considered an unexcused absence which may result in formal evaluation of a student’s professionalism and referral to the Student Progress committee.

3. Students are required to submit a written request for approval of any anticipated absence, to the DCE, prior to the absence. The DCE will communicate with the student regarding details of the anticipated absence, preceptor notification and preceptor approval. Students should not seek approval from the preceptor without prior approval by the DCE lest this be considered an unexcused absence.

4. If a student arrives to the clinical site more than 2 hours late or leaves the clinical site more than 2 hours early, he/she is required to notify the DCE immediately. If a student misses up to five (5) days on any rotation, he/she must discuss with the preceptor
ways to make-up the additional time. If there is no opportunity for the student to make up the missed days, the student will have to discuss potential make-up time with the DCE. In the event that a student misses more than five (5) days on any rotation for an excused absence, they will be required to repeat the rotation.

5. Students are required to be at their assigned clinical site a minimum of 36 hours per week.

6. Students may be required by some clinical sites to engage in clinical or educational activities during the evenings and/or weekends. Additional activities, assignments and meetings during the evening or weekend hours may also be required by the Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

7. If the preceptor or his/her designee is unavailable to work with the student for 2 or more scheduled clinical days (e.g. vacation, scheduled days off, etc.), the student is required to notify the DCE so that an alternate assignment may be made.

8. Absence from a clinical site during a PA educational conference (e.g., AAPA, NCAPA) for the purpose of conference attendance may be permitted with the permission of the DCE. The student is still responsible for ensuring that any rotation benchmarks are not compromised by conference attendance.

9. Students are required to return to campus at the completion of each rotation for academic and professional activities such as case presentations, End-of-Rotation Exams, OSCEs, Clinical Seminar activities and other designated program endeavors. If a student is assigned to a clinical site more than 4 hours travel time from the University, the student may be excused from the rotation early with prior approval from the DCE or Program Director.

C. Absences

1. An absence is determined to be excused or unexcused by the DDE/PD during the didactic phase and by the DCE/PD during the clinical phase. Course directors will notify DDE/DCE/PD in the case of any excused or unexcused absences. Unexcused absence is considered unprofessional and may result in formal evaluation of a student’s professionalism and referral to the Student Progress committee. Students are allowed no more than five (5) excused absences per academic year. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the program director.

II. Participation

A. Multiple modalities are utilized by the program to ensure program learning outcomes are being met, as mandated by ARC-PA. To maximize learning, students must actively participate in all learning activities, including required pre-class reading and preparation, class discussions, assignments, problem-based learning, team-based learning, case studies, and laboratory skill sessions. Failure to actively participate in program requirements is considered unprofessional behavior and may result in referral to the Student Progress committee.

B. Students are required to participate as a patient model during laboratory sessions and skills assessments. Students are expected to willingly participate in a professional manner. On
occasion, it will be requested that students wear appropriate clothing that will easily facilitate physical exam by fellow classmates. For females, this will consist of an appropriate sports bra or tank top and shorts and males will be requested to wear shorts. Students who require accommodation related to this policy should meet with the course instructor and provide reasonable justification for an alternative approach that allows the student comply with the intent of the policy to the best of their ability.

C. Students on clinical rotations are required to participate in all activities assigned by their clinical preceptor (e.g., attend lectures, conferences, educational programs, etc.) unless illegal or unethical. If a student feels an assignment is inappropriate, he/she should discuss their concerns with a Clinical Coordinator or the Director of Clinical Education.

D. At times, students will be responsible for facilitating the learning of their classmates (e.g., during TBL/PBL) and failure to put forth the best effort in these activities may result in referral to the Student Progress committee.

III. Inclement Weather

A. The policy of High Point University is to conduct scheduled classes, keep offices open and carry on normal college operations under conditions deemed to be reasonably safe. When adverse weather conditions or other events force the temporary closing of the university or postponement of classes, students and faculty will be notified via email and postings on the HPU web site. Emergency situations (i.e. Tornado warnings) are communicated via the Panther Alert system. This includes emergency text/voice messaging, emails, desktop alerts and campus sirens (when necessary). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the university has up-to-date contact information.

B. In the event that program activities are being held, students should not attempt to travel under unsafe conditions or to take unnecessary risk due to inclement weather if they must travel some distance to get to campus. The department administrator and/or course director should be notified if the student is unable to attend class or other activity due to the weather.

Approved by: Principal Faculty

Modified: February, 2014; February, 2015

Next Review: February 2016