

Policy - Student Assessment

Origin Date: November 1, 2013

Last Evaluated: April 2019

Responsible Party: Program Director

Minimum Review Frequency: Biennially

Approving Body: Principal Faculty

DPAS Associated Forms: DPAS Behavioral and Professional Evaluation form

ARC-PA Associated Standards:

- **C3.01** - The program must conduct frequent, objective and documented evaluations of students related to learning outcomes for both didactic and supervised clinical education components.
ANNOTATION: Student assessment is both described and applied based on clear parallels between what is expected, taught and assessed. Thorough assessment includes both formative and summative evaluations and involves multiple assessment approaches with multiple observations by multiple individuals. Performance is assessed according to the program's pre-specified criteria.
- **C3.02** - The program must document student demonstration of defined professional behaviors.
- **C3.04** - The program must conduct and document a summative evaluation of each student within the final four months of the program to verify that each student is prepared to enter clinical practice.
ANNOTATION: Evaluation products designed primarily for individual student self-assessment, such as PACKRAT, are not to be used by programs to fulfill the summative evaluation of students within the final four months of the program. The ARC-PA expects that a program demonstrating compliance with the Standards will incorporate evaluation instrument/s that correlates with the didactic and clinical components of the program's curriculum and that measures if the learner has the knowledge, interpersonal skills, patient care skills and professionalism required to enter clinical practice.

Background and Purpose

Student assessment is an important and integral aspect of all facets of PA education, ensuring that students adequately meet program expectations and have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for entry-level PA practice. The purpose of this policy is to define the assessment policy for the HPU Department of Physician Assistant Studies (DPAS).

Procedures

The specific objective performance criteria are absolute — they are not guidelines. A student who wishes to appeal a final course grade must declare so in writing at each level of appeal and must follow the outlined hierarchy. An appeal does not guarantee a change in the decision.

Grading Appeals:

1. Faculty member who awarded the grade;
2. Department Chair;
3. School Dean;
4. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs;
5. President of the University

Process:

1. All appeals must be submitted to the Program Director in writing within five working days of receiving the action/decision being appealed.
2. Appeals will be reviewed during a meeting of the Principal Faculty Committee and a decision will be rendered to the student within five working days of receipt of the appeal. Students will be invited to attend the Principal Faculty Committee meeting at which the appeal is considered to present their case and respond to any questions the committee may have. As this meeting is a purely academic proceeding, no legal counsel will be allowed to attend or participate. The appellant student may, however, request participation by other students or non-program faculty with approval of the Program Director. Proceedings may not be recorded in any manner (audio, video, digital, etc.)
3. Students who wish to challenge the Program's appeal decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences. This appeal must be initiated within five working days of the Program's appeal decision and must be submitted in writing.
4. Students who wish to challenge the Dean of the School of Health Sciences appeal decision may initiate a subsequent appeal to Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs within 5 working days.
5. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will be considered final and become effective upon ratification by the President.

Appeals concerning the correctness of answers can be made to the Course Director (see 7. below). All decisions of the Course Director are final in these matters.

Examinations

The following procedures are to be followed for DPAS examinations:

1. All principal course examinations will be proctored.
 - a. The proctor will generally not be the course instructor.
 - b. Students may not ask questions of the proctor other than to clarify problems with the exam itself, such as numbering sequences, ability to access the exam, etc.
2. Once an exam has begun, students will not be permitted to leave other than to use the bathroom facilities until they have completed and submitted the exam. Students may leave only with permission from the instructor/proctor. Only one student is permitted to leave the exam at a time. The only exception will be in the case of an emergency at the discretion of the instructor/proctor. Any time taken for personal needs will come out of the allotted time for the exam. Students must abide by Academic Integrity standards at all times.
3. Students are not permitted to talk among themselves during the examination.

4. The area surrounding a student taking an exam must be free of books, cell phones, personal computers (including iPads), electronic devices (including smart devices), papers, etc.. If students are using their own computer for the exam, they are permitted to access only the exam during this time period. For some exams, students will be given one sheet of blank paper to be used for “scratch”. This must be handed in to the proctor, labeled with the student’s name, at the end of the exam.
5. All students must take the exam in the same assigned area. Exceptions include:
 - a. Students who have current documented need for accommodations through the HPU Office of Accessibility and Resources Services.
 - b. Students who must miss an exam for illness or who have a prior-approved alternate make-up time.
6. Grades will be accessible via the online learning management system.

In most cases, DPAS written exams are administered electronically using an exam testing software that blocks access to all applications and stored files on the laptop during the exam. Once the exam begins, students can work only on the exam and cannot regain access to their files until they exit the exam.

Basic Information:

1. Students must install the software and complete the process of registering their computers with the exam testing software company prior to the first day of class. This can be completed by following installation instructions provided to students prior to matriculation.
2. It is the student’s responsibility to provide his/her own laptop and power cord and to install the software on the laptop. It is also the student’s responsibility to ensure that hardware conforms to program requirements (see Technology Policy)
 - a. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure the laptop/computer is in working condition.
 - b. Students are expected to be fully familiar with the equipment and the exam testing software program.
 - c. Training in the exam testing software program is the responsibility of the student. In most cases DPAS faculty and HPU tech support staff are not trained to provide specific software technical support and will only be able to assist with maintaining internet connections.
3. Students must have a current copy of Adobe Reader installed on their testing computer.
4. In the event of a catastrophic computer failure or other extenuating circumstances (not due to lack of student exam testing software training/installation or equipment preparation), the student should immediately notify the proctor. An alternative testing method may be provided by the proctor at the exam proctor’s discretion.
5. Any attempt to disable or tamper with or otherwise circumvent the security features of the exam testing software program will be treated as a professionalism violation.
6. Students who accidentally use the “practice mode” to type their exam will receive a grade of zero (0) for the exam. Exams typed in the “practice mode” are not saved, printed or produced.

Before the Exam:

1. Student must download the exam. This must be **completed** during the scheduled download time /prior to the scheduled start time for the examination period. Additional time to download the exam will come out of the allotted testing time. It should be noted that a re-posting of the exam to allow additional downloads may require a fifteen (15) minute waiting period. This will result in the student receiving a Professionalism Concern.
2. Updates that automatically run on student’s laptop should be scheduled for non-exam times.
3. Students must resolve any exam testing software technical problems prior to arrival for the exam. Technical support information will be provided to students at the start of the program.
4. Students must have the appropriate materials for the exam which may include:

- a. Functioning laptop with the exam testing software installed, **power cord**, and charged battery pack (required)
- b. Pen, pencil, calculator, and/or scratch paper as allowed by course instructor.
- c. Student login and exam testing software password

Note: Any actions the student must take to remedy the situation for 2 - 4, above will come out of the allotted time for the exam.

During the Exam:

1. **Start Time:** Students are not allowed to write/type until instructed to do so by the proctor(s).
2. Exam testing software users who experience software/computer failure should notify proctor immediately.
3. Questions about the Exam are limited to those of a technical nature only. No questions about content or wording of questions are permitted. Refer to examination policy defined by course syllabus.

After the Exam:

1. **Calling Time:** When proctors say "stop," students must stop writing/typing immediately unless the exam is configured for an automatic upload at the end of the allotted time.
2. Students must upload their exam files immediately upon completion of the exam.
3. When the exam is uploaded, proctor must confirm successful submission of the exam prior to student leaving the room. Proctor will confirm notification on computer screen.
4. Following verification of exam submission by the proctor, students should exit the room as quietly as possible. If a student finishes with 5 or less minutes remaining for the examination, the student may not leave the exam room early. Students should sit quietly with laptop closed until the end of examination period.
5. **Students MAY NOT** remove any of the exam materials, scratch paper, etc. from the classroom.

Examination Review

DPAS course examinations are considered secure documents and as such all examination items and related material are considered confidential and are not to be released or shared in any forum outside of the testing/review setting. Students have the opportunity to challenge examination questions and to review examinations and their own answers during scheduled time, in a secure environment soon after the examination has been given and scored.

In an effort to provide consistency, expedite student feedback, and ensure test integrity the following procedure will be followed for examination review in the MPAS program (with the exception of the CDM course series).

1. Examination Review Sessions will be scheduled during Program Time
2. DPAS staff will supervise examination review sessions. In the event that a staff member is not available, a faculty member who did not administer the examination will supervise the examination review.
3. Students have 1 hour to review an examination. Any change to this timeframe will be at the discretion of the Course Director.
4. The area surrounding a student must be free of books, cell phones, personal computers (including iPads), smart devices, papers, etc. The following will be provided to students for examination review purposes.
 - a. Examination with answer key
 - b. Individual incorrect student answers
 - c. Worksheet to submit questions to the Course Director

- d. Additional worksheet for student notes. This worksheet will be reviewed by the course director to ensure exam integrity is not violated prior to being returned to the student for further study
5. When a student completes their review, they will submit all items to the examination review supervisor. Taking the examination or any material out of the room will not be permitted.
6. Individual student worksheets will be collected by the supervisor and provided to the Course Director following the examination review session.

The Course Director will respond to each query in a manner that is best suited to the nature of the question. This may include any of the following:

1. E-mail students individually regarding specific test item question(s). If the student continues to have questions about a particular item or concept, they may request a meeting for further clarification.
2. Schedule individual student meeting to clarify questions or concepts.
3. Respond to a group of students via e-mail or in person regarding common questions or which require further review.

A student who believes he or she should receive credit for a question following review must make an appointment with the course director within one week of the examination review.

1. Student must bring adequate evidence to the meeting that backs up his or her assertion. In most cases this means a citation from the course materials as described in the course syllabus or, at the discretion of the course instructor, from a standard, referenced medical textbook. Other sources may be considered at the discretion of the course director provided they are representative of current clinical standard, e.g. practice guidelines from a specialty board.
2. When possible, the student will be notified of the course director's decision within five working days of receipt of the student's challenge.

Skills Assessments/Oral Assessments

These assessments, when given for grade, will be graded by anchored rubric, which will be made available to the student prior to the exam. Acceptable performance that constitutes a passing grade will be determined by the course director and communicated to students in the syllabus.

Missed examination

In order to be eligible to make up a missed examination, the absence must be an excused absence as determined by the Program Director or the Program Director's designee and course director. Students must be prepared to take the exam on the day they return to classes, but will take the make-up exam when scheduled by the course director. Except under unusual circumstances, there will be no early examinations given. The need for early exams will be decided by the Course Director and the Program Director or the Program Director's designee on a case-by-case basis. Unexcused absence from an examination without reasonable extenuating circumstances (e.g. personal MVA, personal injury, personal severe illness, personal hospitalization or severe illness, injury, or hospitalization of an immediate family member such as child, spouse or parent) as determined by the PD will result in a grade of zero (0) on that exam.

Exceptional Circumstances

Circumstances sometimes arise that may prevent a student from performing their best on an assessment. A student who experiences exceptional circumstances beyond his/her control (for instance, a death in the immediate family) that he or she believes will result in being unable to perform to capacity must communicate with their Course Director prior to the scheduled evaluation (if reasonably possible). Rescheduling of the evaluation will be at the discretion of the course director and Program Director or the Program Director's designee.

Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT)

As a tool for student self-assessment, each student is required to take the PACKRAT twice during the program. The examinations will be given:

- 1) Upon completion of the didactic curriculum.
- 2) Upon completion of the supervised clinical practice experience (SCPE) curriculum.

There are no minimum performance requirements associated with the PACKRAT. Students should use their performance to identify deficiencies in knowledge and develop a plan to address areas of weakness.

Assessment Considerations for Program Faculty

- All course outcomes must be assessed. This can be achieved by using any combination of items listed in the “Program Assessment Tools” section above.
- All assessment items must be linked to an instructional objective and all instructional objectives and course outcomes must be listed in the syllabus.
- There should be balance of assessment across outcomes/objectives.
- All skills assessments must have a rubric that defines the levels of performance.
- Style of assessment tool will generally reflect the domain (cognitive, psychomotor, affective) being assessed.

Approved by: Principal Faculty

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Next Review: Spring 2021