



# Policy - Student Attendance, Participation, and Inclement Weather

**Origin Date:** November 6, 2013

**Last Evaluated:** April 2023

**Responsible Party:** Program Director (PD)

**Minimum Review Frequency:** Biennially

**Approving Body:** Principal Faculty

**DPAS Associated Forms:** Active Student Participation Agreement

**ARC-PA Associated Standards:**

A3.15 The program *must* define, publish, consistently apply and make *readily available* to students upon admission:

- a) any required academic standards,
- b) requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program,
- c) policies and procedures for *remediation* and *deceleration*,
- d) policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal,
- e) policy for student employment while enrolled in the program,
- f) policies and procedures for allegations of student mistreatment, and
- g) policies and procedures for student grievances and appeals.

## Background and Purpose

Because PA education is a prelude to a professional career as a health care provider, all scheduled activities within the program require mandatory attendance. 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 students 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/Congdon School of Health Sciences lectures and activities unless otherwise explicitly stated. Consistent attendance is a component of professional behavior. In the event of an absence, students must notify the medical education specialist, APD, and Course Directors prior to the activity that will be missed. It is recommended that students refrain from making other commitments during the hours of 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday, unless the time slot in question is unequivocally specified as free time. Note: Unscheduled Program 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. During the didactic phase, students are allowed up to two excused absences from each  $\geq$  two credit hour course per semester. For one credit hour courses (with the exception of Interprofessional Education), students are allowed up to one excused absence. Due to the nature of the course meeting dates/times for Interprofessional Education, students are typically not allowed any excused absences without prior permission. In the event that a student requests additional absences from any didactic courses, approval is at the discretion of Assistant Program Director (APD). Family obligations, employment, travel, and previous plans are not generally accepted for additional excused absences. The following are examples of reasonable occurrences for additional excused absences:
  - 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. 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 APD/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 8:00am 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 without appropriate justification will result in point deduction from the Professionalism grade and will be considered an unexcused absence, which will

result in formal evaluation of a student's professionalism and possible 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.
5. If a student misses a scheduled shift 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.
6. Students are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours on each clinical rotation.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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, Formative/Summative Evaluations, 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.

**C. *Unexcused Absences***

Any absence that is not included within the didactic phase and clinical phase headings above is considered an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is considered unprofessional and may result in formal evaluation of a student's professionalism and referral to the Student Progress Committee.

**Participation**

- D.** 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.

- E.* 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 to comply with the intent of the policy to the best of his/her ability.
- F.* 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 faculty member.
- G.* 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.

## **II. 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. The Program Director also has the authority to cancel classes. These notifications are typically made by email.
- 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 a student is unable to attend class or other activity due to the weather.

**Approved by:** Principal Faculty

**Modified:** February 2014, February 2015, March 2016, April 2017, April 2019, April, 2021, April 2023

**Next Review:** Spring 2025