

Quinnipiac University Physician Assistant Program Academic Standards, Progression, and Program Completion Policies

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The traditional PA Program is a seven-semester sequence taken on a full-time basis. Students must complete a total of 94 credit hours of course work in the program of study as described in the Quinnipiac University Academic Catalog. Graduates of the 27-month program earn a Master of Health Science (MHS). Refer to the Catalog for all degree requirements.

ACADEMIC STANDARD POLICY

Students enrolled in graduate studies at Quinnipiac University are required to maintain Academic Good Standing. The university policy for academic good standing is outlined in university policies at: <https://catalog.qu.edu/university-policies/program-level-academic-good-standing-policy/> . In addition, the PA program has the following requirements:

Students in the Quinnipiac University Physician Assistant Graduate Program are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.00/4.00 or above, and to pass every class with a final grade of B or better (3.00). At the end of each semester, the Department Chair/Program Director will review all grades and identify students who do not meet academic criteria requirements as follows:

- Failure to achieve or maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00
- Failure to achieve a semester grade point average of 3.00
- Failure to demonstrate competency in clinical skills
- A course grade of B- or lower
- Failure of a course with a grade of D or F

After a thorough review of a student's academic performance the Department Chair/Program Director may choose any of the following options for those students who fail to meet the academic standards listed above:

- Meeting with the student's academic advisor
- Meeting with the PA Department Chair/Program Director
- Referral to the Student Success Coach and/or Learning Commons Staff
- Referral to the Academic Progression and Retention Committee (APRC)

Any student who does not achieve a semester GPA of 3.00 in any single semester will be automatically placed on academic probation.

Immediate dismissal from the program, by the Program Director, will occur for students who have any of the following deficiencies:

- *Failure of a course with a grade of “D,” “F,” or “Fail (Pass/Fail Course)”*
- *Failure to achieve a first semester GPA of at least 2.80*
- *Failure to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 by the end of the first didactic year (end of the Spring Semester)*
- *Exceeding the maximum number (20) of written exam component critical deficiencies or failures (scores of less than 73% on exam components)*
- *Exceeding the maximum number (4) of learning contracts in a semester*
- *Failure to complete all components of a learning contract by the due date*
- *Failure to attain a score of 73% on an assessment of knowledge associated with a learning contract (a failure/critical deficiency of a repeat assessment after a failed re-assessment)*
- *Exceeding the maximum number (4) of Competency Exam failures including initial and reassessment attempts*
- *Failure to attain the cut score on a Competency Exam reassessment associated with a learning contract (not meeting the cut score on a repeat assessment of a failed re-assessment of a Competency Exam)*
- *Exceeding the maximum number of clinical rotation failures related to either preceptor evaluation failures or end of rotation exam failures*
- *Failure to attain a passing score on a repeat clinical rotation that was failed due to a failure on the preceptor evaluation*
- *Failure to attain a passing score on a re-assessment of knowledge associated with a learning contract for end of rotation exam failure and subsequent retesting*

Automatic Referral to the APRC will occur for students with the following:

- *A semester GPA of at least 2.80 but less than 3.00 after the first summer semester*
- *Course grade of C-, C, or C+*
- *Failure to meet competencies including the minimum level of entrustment (EPAs) at the end of semester*
- *Failure to comply with the required components of an academic success plan*

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- If a student is dismissed for a failed course and successfully appeals, rematriculates and decelerates, the student may not repeat that failed course more than once
- A student may request only one re-admission during their matriculation in the program
- A student who takes an academic leave of absence and decelerates will be automatically placed on academic probation for the semester they return.
- All students, including those who decelerate, must successfully complete all courses and requirements within 42 months of original matriculation date. A leave of absence, suspension or overturned dismissal does not reset the clock on this timeline. If a student is granted a leave of absence for military service, the timeline for completing all requirements will be extended by the time of active service for up to an additional 12 months
- A student who decelerates prior to completing the didactic year, or has a delay in the start of clinical rotations for twelve weeks or more, or has a period of at least twelve weeks during the clinical year where they are on leave of absence or suspended, must take and pass (scoring at least the cut score predetermined by faculty in all components and overall) a standardized patient experience (SPAC) prior to starting/restarting the clinical phase. Any SPAC attached to a course that the student is enrolled will count as long as it occurs within four months of the start of clinical phase. Failure to pass each individual component and the experience overall will result in referral to the APRC.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION

DURING THE FIRST DIDACTIC YEAR

Progression in the PA Program during the didactic phase requires students to successfully complete all didactic coursework in the required timeframe. It is expected that students will maintain at least a 3.00/4.00 GPA throughout the didactic phase. At the end of the first semester (first summer), students must have a GPA of at least 2.80 to remain in the program and progress. At the end of the first spring semester (third semester in the program), a student must have at least a 3.00 GPA in order to remain in the program and progress. In addition, students must also successfully complete and/or pass the following:

- Advisor meetings
- Preclinical clerkship (competency)
- All course work, competencies, compliance requirements, and assigned evaluations by the assigned program and university deadlines
- Meet all the program *Technical Standards*

- Meet all the program standards for professionalism and behavioral conduct
- Remediation of any course deficiency
- Complete all components of all learning contracts including passing all associated re-assessments

TO THE CLINICAL YEAR

Progression from the first (didactic) year to the second (clinical) year requires successful completion of the following:

- Meet all the program *Technical Standards*
- All first-year didactic course work (class and lab). No student with any grade of incomplete will be allowed to progress on to the clinical year.
- An overall GPA of no less than 3.00/4.00
- Successful completion and passing grade in pre-clinical clerkships, as outlined in the pre-clinical handbook/syllabus.
- A passing score on the standardized patient competency practical exam and demonstration of competency as defined in the course syllabus for the written patient note (SPAC).
- Complete all components of any learning contracts including passing all associated re-assessments.
- Successful completion and documentation on the university's chosen health record vendor of all health requirements, immunizations and screenings by the assigned deadline.
- Successful completion and documentation on the university's chosen health record vendor of a cleared criminal background check and drug screen by the assigned deadline.
- Proof of valid BLS and ACLS, by the assigned deadline, that will remain current throughout the entire clinical year.
- Successful completion of all required didactic advisor meetings.
- Successful completion of the first year Professionalism Evaluation.
- Completion of all assigned evaluations by the deadline determined by the PA program and the university.
- Completion of all clinical paperwork required by the Director of Outcomes and Assessment, Coordinator of Program Data and Assessment, the Director of Clinical

Education, Clinical Coordinators or their assigned Administrative Assistants, by the assigned deadlines.

Failure to fulfill and complete any of these requirements in any of these areas may result in immediate dismissal and/or delay in the start of the clinical phase of the program.

Note: The PA Program and university do not round up the semester or cumulative grade point average. GPAs are truncated at the hundredth place.

Deceleration, remediation, late start to clinical rotations and/or extra credit projects are not options for those students not meeting the required 3.00/4.00 GPA at the end of the first didactic year (End of spring semester).

FROM THE CLINICAL YEAR TO THE FINAL DIDACTIC SEMESTER

Progression from the clinical year to the final summer didactic semester (third year – Summer III) and graduation from the program requires successful completion of the following:

- Clinical rotations
 - Preceptor evaluations of student performance
 - EOR examinations
 - Patient write-ups
 - End-of elective examinations
 - Attendance requirement
 - Competencies for the Physician Assistant program
 - Mandatory clinical skill competencies
 - Any additional assignments/requirements by the rotation site (i.e., grand rounds, oral case presentations, written assignments)
- Other clinical year requirements
 - Clinical year professionalism evaluation
 - All required clinical advisor meetings
 - Community service/volunteer hours
- Although there is not a minimum number of community service/volunteer hours that must be completed in the clinical year, all students must complete a minimum of 50 hours of service during the duration of the PA program. Twenty-five of the 50 hours must be community service.

Any deficiencies, failures, and/or disciplinary action during the clinical year may limit the student's ability to graduate on time, and/or participate in the graduation Commencement Ceremony and the Physician Assistant Certificate and White Coat Ceremony.

'Late finisher'

Any deficiency, failure, disciplinary action (academic, clinical, or professionalism related), or incomplete coursework in the clinical year may result in the student being unable to complete the program on time; thus, making the student a 'late finisher.' A student is considered a 'late finisher' if all program requirements have not been successfully fulfilled by the certificate ceremony date. The reasons for a student's graduation from the program may be delayed may include, but are not limited to:

- Clinical year deficiencies or failures, or disciplinary action
- Incomplete, remediation, or repeat clinical curriculum coursework
- Suspension
- Leave of absence
- Repeat rotations
- Breach of professionalism or HIPAA policy
- Breach of Academic Integrity
- Failure of the End of Curriculum (EOC) written exam (part of PY 676)
- Failure of 2 or more components of the Comprehensive OSCE (part of PY 676) will automatically result in the student becoming a late finisher

If a student has rotations left to complete or needs to repeat rotations, the rotation(s) would take place after the completion of the final didactic summer semester (summer 2026) making the student a 'late finisher' in the PA program.

- Students must maintain medical insurance throughout the program. Therefore, late finishers will need to make the appropriate provisions to maintain their medical insurance. At the end of the final didactic summer semester, these students must provide the program with a copy of their current, valid insurance card.
- Students are required to be compliant with all health and immunization requirements throughout the duration of their time as a student, including during rotations completed as a late finisher.
- The opportunity of a 'late finisher' to participate in the graduate commencement ceremony (May 2026) is at the discretion of the program director. The student would need approval to participate in the graduate commencement.

- Pending successful completion of the third-year didactic semester (summer 2026) and a passing overall grade on the Comprehensive Exam, the student may be allowed to participate in the PA program *Certificate Ceremony*. However, the student would not receive their certificate at that time.
- Students may not schedule their exit interview until all program requirements have been successfully completed including all didactic course work, the comprehensive examination, all clinical year requirements and rotations, community service hours, and logging.
 - The program will notify students when their requirements have been completed and when they can schedule their exit interview with the assigned faculty member.
- After the program verifies the student has completed all course work, program requirements, and completed their exit interview, the certificate of completion will be issued.
- Eligibility for licensure and credentialing is dependent on the state of practice and the medical institution.
- ‘Late finishers’ should keep in mind the following time frames:
 - It takes the program 2-3 weeks after the student finishes any rotations, course work, or comprehensive exam to complete and submit a final grade for the corresponding course.
 - It takes 21 days after the program certifies the student’s program completion for the NCCPA to process the student’s application.
 - Students will NOT be eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE) until after all program requirements have been successfully completed and the student has had their exit interview.
 - ‘Late finishers’ finishing in October – December (2026) would be eligible for the Master of Health Science (MHS) degree in January (2027).
- If a student needs to repeat a rotation, they will:
 - Be withdrawn from the corresponding course (i.e., rotation # 1 corresponds to PY 611)
 - Need to re-register and re-pay for the course/rotation (Clinical Residency)
 - Students that enrolled part-time during a semester are not eligible for financial aid. For example, if the student needs to repeat one rotation from August – October 2026, they would be considered a part-time student since they would

only be taking one (3-credit) course in the fall semester. Therefore, the student would need to meet with Heather Hamilton, Director of Graduate Financial Aid (203-582-8384) to discuss the situation and seek guidance on developing a financial plan.

FOR COMPLETION OF THE PA PROGRAM AND GRADUATION

For a PA student to be eligible to be awarded a *Certificate of Completion-PA* and conferred a *Master of Health Science – PA* degree, the student must meet all the following requirements:

- A student must successfully complete all coursework (didactic and clinical) in the PA program in the 27-month time frame, with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00/4.00. Extensions to this time frame will be considered for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the program. As outlined in Additional Academic Standards above, all coursework and program requirements must be completed within 42 months of original program matriculation.
- All assigned evaluations by the program and university deadlines.
- A student must meet the minimum requirements of all the PA Program Core Competencies, Essential Learning Outcomes, clinical and technical skills (EPAs) at the required level of entrustment.
- A student must accurately log all clinical experiences (including duty hours, procedures, diagnoses etc.).
- A student must successfully complete the professionalism requirements of the PA program.
- A student must meet all PA program community service requirements within the stated time frame.
- A student must successfully pass all components of the summative comprehensive exam.
- A student must have demonstrated ethical and professional behavior and appropriate interpersonal skills.
- A student must complete all components of every learning contract including passing all associated re-assessments.
- A student must participate in the Summative Evaluation/Exit Interview with a PA faculty member.
- A student must submit demographic and employment information.