



POLICY TITLE

Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA) Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes criteria and processes for the Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA), which is a must-pass element of the pre-clinical phase of the curriculum for progression on to the clinical phase. The PCSA is comprised of a station-based skills Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), a standardized patient encounter, and a written, 250-question multiple choice examination. Successful completion of all components reflects knowledge and competency of tasks reflective of a student transitioning from the pre-clinical to the clinical phase of the curriculum.

Included in this policy are thresholds for successful completion of the assessments, minimum passing scores and remediation for students who do not meet program standards on either or all components of the PCSA. This policy is provided to all students upon matriculation and again in the case of unsuccessfully meeting program standards as it pertains to the PCSA.

ARC-PA STANDARD ADDRESSED

A2.05d Principal faculty and the program director must be responsible for, and actively participate in the process of evaluating student performance.

A2.05f Principal faculty and the program director must be responsible for, and actively participate in the process of assuring the availability of remedial instruction.

A3.02 The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply its policies and practices to all students.

A3.15a The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission any required academic standards.

A3.15b The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission requirements and deadlines for progression in and completion of the program.

A3.15c The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration.

A3.15d The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to students upon admission policies and procedures for withdrawal and dismissal.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed in even-numbered year as needed by the Pre-Clinical Affairs Committee, elevating any policy amendments to the Program Director for approval.

DEFINITION(S)

Pre-Clinical Summative Evaluation (PCSA): This evaluation is comprised of multiple components, the station-based Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), standardized patient encounter, and Written Examination, each of which are individual must-pass elements of the program.

POLICY

As a prerequisite for progression to the clinical year, UNC-Chapel Hill Physician Assistant students are required to successfully complete a two-part Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA), which includes a

250-question multiple choice written examination and a practical component, consisting of a station-based Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and standardized patient encounter. These examinations are linked to program-defined and profession-defined competencies and are intended to demonstrate successful completion of knowledge and tasks of a physician assistant student transitioning from the pre-clinical to clinical phase of the curriculum.

PROCEDURES

I. Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA) Multiple-Choice Written Examination

The PCSA written examination is a 250-question multiple choice exam developed by Rosh Review. This examination is similar to the Clinical Summative Assessment (CSA) in terms of structure, to allow for consistency throughout the program. The examination is blueprinted similarly to the PANCE, regarding distribution of questions. The written PCSA measures students' comprehension of Medical Knowledge considered necessary for the rising clinical year student. It is embedded in the course PASC 730 as the final exam. This is detailed in the syllabus for that course.

A. Grading & Passing Threshold

The passing threshold was developed based on national and institutional data from exam-takers in 2020. Based on the data, the passing threshold is a raw score of 70% or within one standard deviation of the class mean, whichever benefits the student. This threshold has been determined to be considered 'Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work,' which aligns with policies and language consistent with the UNC Graduate School. The statistical analysis of the cohort's performance will be consistent with that of all examinations in the Pre-Clinical Year.

B. Remediation

- 1) In the event that a student does not achieve a passing score (as defined above), the student will be considered for remediation. If remediation is offered, the course director, in conjunction with the Director of Pre-Clinical Education, will develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) for the student.
- 2) The ILP will consist of four parts: review of topics missed, reflection by the student of content missed, test-taking preparation and strategies, relearning of failed material, and retesting.
- 3) The student will meet with the course director, the Director of Pre-Clinical Education and their academic advisor to discuss the details of the ILP and the expectations of the student.
- 4) The student will complete and submit the components of the ILP and will be retested on content areas, as outlined in the ILP. The student must pass the retesting component with at least a 70%.

In the event that the student does not satisfactorily remediate to passing, this will prompt a referral to the Academic Excellence Committee for further discussion regarding the students' standing in the program.

II. Pre-Clinical Summative Assessment (PCSA) Practical Examinations

The PCSA practical examinations consist of a 10-station Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) as well as a separate standardized patient encounter. The OSCE consists of physical examination, history taking, and counseling stations. On a separate day, students complete a standardized patient encounter that includes obtaining a patient history, performing a pertinent physical examination, providing an assessment

and plan, and ultimately communicating that information both through an oral patient presentation to a simulated preceptor as well as through a written note. These practical assessments evaluate pre-clinical students across all program competency domains, which include patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism and cultural sensitivity and humility, systems-based practice, and self-assessment and ongoing professional development. It is embedded in the course PASC 732 as the final examination. This is detailed in the syllabus for that course.

A. Grading & Passing Threshold

1. For the station-based OSCE, students must pass 8 out of the 10 stations. Passing requires achieving a 70% or higher on the station-specific rubric. This passing threshold is consistent with all other examinations in the pre-clinical curriculum, which is set at 70%.
2. For the standardized patient encounter, students must achieve a score of 70% or higher, which is comprised of the combination of 1/3 the encounter rubric, 1/3 the oral presentation rubric, and 1/3 the submitted patient note rubric.

B. Remediation

1. In the event that a student does not achieve a passing score on either practical examination (as defined above), the student will be considered for remediation. If remediation is offered, the pertinent practical elements will be retested.
 - a. For failure of the station-based OSCE, the student meets with the course director to discuss the missed station(s) that led to failure of the examination. If the student missed multiple station types (history taking, physical examination, and/or counseling) the student will need to retest each of those station types. Successful remediation involves achieving a 70% or higher score on the retested station-specific rubric(s).
 - b. For failure of the standardized patient encounter, the student meets with the course director to discuss the area(s) of deficiency that led to failure of the encounter and feedback is provided. The student must then complete a different standardized patient encounter, oral presentation, and written patient note and achieve a 70% or higher on the retested total score.

In the event that the student does not satisfactorily remediate to passing, this will prompt a referral to the Academic Excellence Committee for further discussion regarding the students' standing in the program.

PUBLISHED

- UNC PA Program Policies and Procedures web page:
<https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/students/policies-proceedures/>
- UNC PA Program Student Handbook

HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES

Initially approved by Program Director, November 2021