



**SALUS**  
UNIVERSITY

Pennsylvania College of Optometry

## **Academic Policy Traditional Optometry Degree Program Class of 2027**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 This academic policy applies to optometry students enrolled in the traditional degree program of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. This policy is published for students, faculty, and staff, all of whom are held responsible for reading and adhering to this policy.
- 1.2 The faculty and administration of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, in conjunction with the Salus University Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC), the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Registrar have developed this policy to uphold the educational standards the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and Salus University for all students.
- 1.3 This policy will be reviewed by the faculty and administration of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in conjunction with the Office of the Provost for necessary updates on an annual basis.
- 1.3.1 Recommended substantive changes to this Policy will be reviewed and acted upon by the University's Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee.
- 1.3.1.1 Substantive changes approved by the EPCC will be shared with all stakeholder groups impacted by the Policy.
- 1.4 Unless otherwise stated, the Dean of the College is the individual charged with rendering final interpretations of the policy and for deciding whether to grant exceptions to the policy.

## **2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2.1 The Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and, in conjunction with their College administrators and faculty, is charged with the oversight of the curriculum and other academic matters. The faculty, in conjunction with the Dean and the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, creates and modifies the curriculum. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is the chief academic officer of the University and is responsible for final decisions concerning the curriculum and educational policy for all Colleges at Salus University.
- 2.2 The Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment and their staff are charged with the administration of all aspects of the didactic program, including faculty and student schedules.
- 2.3 The Associate Dean of Optometric Special Programs and their staff are charged with monitoring the progress of the students and developing modified programs, in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment, when it is deemed necessary to ensure a student's academic success.
- 2.4 The Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs and their staff are charged with the administration and integration of all clinical courses within the curriculum, along with the management of the educational operations of the clinics, including faculty and student schedules. They are also charged with administration of the clinical educational programs in The Eye Institute clinical network and at all off campus sites.
- 2.5 The Dean of Student Affairs is charged with the administration of matters related to registration, student counseling, and student life on campus. This office has the responsibility for advising students in personal matters impacting academics and special events.

- 2.5.1 Under the auspices of the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining the students' permanent records.
- 2.5.2 The Dean of Student Affairs oversees the Center for Personal and Professional Development, the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Admissions.
- 2.6 The Vice President of Clinical Operations is responsible for all patient care/business operations of the University, specifically The Eye Institute, including patient scheduling, patient care protocols, maintenance of records, patient fees and insurance payments, compliance with infection control protocols, and other related issues.

### **3. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Faculty are responsible for monitoring student performance throughout the term, and providing students with performance feedback consistent with the course grading outline and syllabus.
- 3.2 A syllabus will be distributed for each course and will describe the course instructor, course description, prerequisites, course learning goals and outcome measures, course requirements, attendance policies, ethical conduct and disability support services, course schedule, evaluation and grading, assignments and assessments, and learning materials.
- 3.2 Faculty and the Associate Deans/Dean recommend to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs students for the awarding of certificates conferring of degrees based on program requirements.
- 3.3 Faculty are required to use their Salus University email account when communicating with students, faculty, staff and administrators at Salus University.

### **4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 Students are responsible for understanding all requirements stated in the academic policy.
- 4.2 Students are required to check their Salus University e-mail account twice daily, as some correspondence from faculty instructors and administrators may be time-dependent. In addition, all students are expected to check their Salus University email accounts on a daily basis, including during weekends, breaks, holidays and other unassigned times for the duration of the account life.
- 4.2.2 Students are required to use their Salus University email account when communicating with faculty, staff and administrators at Salus University. Administrators, faculty and staff of Salus University are not responsible for reading or responding to any mail sent by students that is not sent from Salus University email accounts.

### **5. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULES**

- 5.1 The Salus University Calendar provides the beginning and ending dates for each term as well as University holidays. The Office of the Dean distributes the College's Academic Calendar(s) no later than the spring term prior to the subsequent academic year. Important dates are listed, such as the beginning and ending dates for each term, academic holidays, academic breaks, study days, University closing dates, and national examination dates.

- 5.2 Any travel or other commitments scheduled on days reserved for academic activities are made at the student's own risk in the event that these dates become necessary to be used for mandatory classes, laboratories, examinations or other educational activities.
- 5.3 The Weekly Class Schedule is distributed during the current term for the subsequent term. This schedule is released as a supplement to the course syllabi.
- 5.4 Both the College's Academic Calendar(s) and Weekly Class Schedules are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., faculty illness, inclement weather).
- 5.5 Instructors require prior approval from the appropriate Associate Dean and/or their designee to modify the Weekly Class Schedule.

## **6. ATTENDANCE**

- 6.1 It is the policy of the College that student attendance at all instructional activities is expected, and that students should attend every lecture for which the student is scheduled.
- 6.2 Attendance and absence policies as described in this document also apply to all scheduled examinations and assessments.
- 6.3 A syllabus will be distributed for each course and will provide information relative to the course instructor, course description, prerequisites, course learning goals and outcome measures, course requirements, attendance policies, student responsibilities for ethical conduct, course schedule, course schedule, evaluation and grading, assignments and assessments, and learning materials and disability support services.
- 6.4 Instructors have the option to require mandatory attendance at lectures. Mandatory attendance will be communicated by the instructor in writing to the students either in the syllabus or a syllabus addendum. Students should reference the course syllabus for consequences related to absences from mandatory lectures or assignments.
- 6.5 Attendance is mandatory for all examinations, laboratories, clinical assignments, including Community Based Activities (CBA); Clinical Problem Solving (CPS) sessions; and, when specified, Problem Solving Sessions (PSS), orientations, seminars, grand rounds, conferences, and meetings.
- 6.5.1 Where attendance is mandatory, absences alone may result in a course grade of Failure (F) as specified in course syllabi.
- 6.6 The allowable number of absences (excused and unexcused) accrued before requiring a leave of absence or initiating a course failure is determined on a case by case basis and is evaluated by the Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment and/or the Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs. Determinations are made based upon an evaluation of the proportion of time dedicated to the course or patient care activity in the College curriculum. A student who misses a substantial portion of any course may be required to take a leave of absence from the College, or complete a course reenrollment, as determined by the Dean of the College or their designee.
- 6.6.1 Students placed on involuntary academic leave of absence may appeal this decision to the Dean of the College of Optometry. The decision of the Dean of the College of Optometry is final, there are no further appeals.

6.7 A student who is not in satisfactory academic standing (see Section 18) may be required to attend specified courses or tutoring sessions. In this event, written notification to the student will be sent from the Office of the Dean or their designee.

6.8 In the event of extremely harsh weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about University closing via the University alert system. Students should consult the University website for weather related policy, guidance, and information.

### **6.9 Absences: Mandatory Activities: Non-Patient-Care**

6.9.1 Any student who is absent from a mandatory activity must complete and submit an absence-approval request form and provide the appropriate documentation to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs. This form may be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.s

6.9.2 For an unanticipated absence, a student is required to submit appropriate documentation within 24 hours following their return to educational/program activities.

6.9.3 For an anticipated absence, Excused Absence requests must be submitted with the required documentation by the end of the second week of the term. If the anticipated absence will fall within the first four weeks of the term, students must submit the required documentation four weeks prior to the date of the anticipated absence

6.9.4 Absences that are eligible for receiving an Excused Absence may include the following:

6.9.4.1 Personal illness of the student, with documentation from a physician that, at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under the physician's care and too ill (with included diagnosis) to participate in the mandatory activity.

6.9.4.2 Illness of a dependent or close family member for which the student is a caretaker with a statement from a physician that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.

6.9.4.3 A death in the student's immediate family. The relationship of the deceased to the student, name of the deceased, and the date of the death must be provided.

6.9.4.4 A student's or immediate family member's wedding. No more than one day will be granted for an Excused Absence in the case of a wedding that is not the student's own wedding.

6.9.4.5 An immediate family member's graduation or childbirth. No more than one day will be granted for an Excused Absence in these cases.

6.9.4.6 Childbirth (see Leave of Absence policy referenced in Section 24).

6.9.4.7 Educational or professional activities, (e.g., attendance at a professional meeting). The Salus University Dean of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Optometry or their designee, must grant approval. If granted, the length of the approved absence will be determined as part of the review process. Students must be in satisfactory academic standing for approval to be considered (see Section 18).

6.9.5 Excused absence requests that fall on an examination date will only be considered in the

most extenuating of circumstances. All excused absence requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

- 6.9.6 The determination whether an absence not specifically covered above is considered to be excused shall be decided by the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.
- 6.9.7 Circumstances that amount to a lack of professionalism or responsibility on the part of the student will not be granted excused absences. Students failing to meet the timelines laid out in the Academic Policy for excused absence requests will not be considered for an Excused Absence.
- 6.9.8 All work missed during an excused absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the course instructor prior to receiving a grade for the course. All work must be completed within the period of time designated by the course instructor in conjunction with the Dean of Optometry.
- 6.9.8.1 It is the responsibility of the student to contact the course instructor as soon as they are aware of the absence, and to complete all make-up assignments as designated by the instructor.

## **6.10 Absences: Patient Care Activities (Internship and Externship)**

- 6.10.1 Attendance is mandatory at all patient care activities. This portion of the Academic Policy applies to all internal and external clinical/patient care activities.
- 6.10.2 Students must report all absences (excused and unexcused) to the appropriate individual (Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs and the clinical service chief internally, and to the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program externally) immediately, unless they are physically unable to communicate. Students should refer to the Patient Care Syllabi for specific reporting instructions and contact information.
- 6.10.3 For an absence to be excused, a request and explanation must be submitted in writing internally to the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs or their designee, and externally to the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program.
- 6.10.4 For an unanticipated excused absence, a student is required to submit proper documentation for consideration of approval within 24 hours following their return to campus activities and upon return to the site for external rotations.
- 6.10.5 Excused Absence requests must be submitted with the required documentation to the appropriate individual by the end of the second week of the term. If the anticipated absence will fall within the first four weeks of the term, students must submit the required documentation four weeks prior to the date of the anticipated absence.
- 6.10.6 Absences that are eligible for receiving an Excused Absence may include the following:
  - 6.10.6.1 Personal illness of the student, with documentation from a non-family member physician that, at the time of the mandatory activity, the student was under the physician's care and too ill (with included diagnosis) to participate in the mandatory activity.
  - 6.10.6.2 Illness of a dependent or close family member for which the student is a caretaker with a statement from a non-family member physician that a member of the student's immediate family (state relationship) was seriously ill and required the student's presence.
  - 6.10.6.3 A death in the student's immediate family. The relationship of the deceased to the



student, name of the deceased, and the date of the death must be provided.

- 6.10.6.4 A substantive personal event, such as the wedding or graduation of immediate family members will be considered on a case by case basis. The Chief of Service or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program, in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs, must grant approval.
- 6.10.6.5.1 Externship students with excused absences may first use personal/professional days for excused absences if they are available. If personal/professional days have been exhausted, students may use excused absence days requiring a make-up. For additional information, please refer to the Externship Handbook.
- 6.10.6.5.2 Students in the internship program should pursue finding replacements for their clinical patient care duties with students in other sections. Prior to an absence, students are expected to communicate who will be replacing them to the appropriate Service Chief. If the replacement does not arrive for the assignment, the originally assigned student will be given an unexcused absence. If students are unable to find a replacement for an expected excused absence, they must schedule a make-up for each absence with the Service Chief.
- 6.10.6.5.3 Childbirth (see Leave of Absence policy referenced in Section 24).
- 6.10.6.5.4 Educational or professional activities, (e.g., attendance at a professional meeting). The Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Optometry or their designee, must grant approval. If granted, the length of the approved absence will be determined as part of the review process. Students must be in satisfactory academic and clinical standing (e.g., performing clinically at a passing level with no significant clinical absences or late arrivals) for approval to be considered (see Section 18).
- 6.10.6.5.5 Circumstances that amount to a lack of professionalism or responsibility on the part of the student will not be granted excused absences. Students failing to meet the timelines laid out in the Academic Policy for excused absence requests will not be considered for an Excused Absence.
- 6.10.6.6 It is the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate individual as soon as they are aware of the absence and complete all make-up assignments, as directed. All work must be completed within a period of time designated by the Chief of the Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program.
- 6.10.6.7 Any excuse not specifically listed above will be addressed and resolved internally by the Director of the Internship Program and externally by the Director of the Externship Program in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs.
- 6.10.6.8 All work, including clinical assignments and written assignments, that is missed during the absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the appropriate Chief of the Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship, or Externship Program prior to receiving a grade for the course.
- 6.10.6.9 A student may appeal to the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs if she/he feels that the policy is not being honored or equitably enforced.

## **6.11 Absences: Guidelines and Allowances For Patient Care Activities**

- 6.11.1 Students in professional programs make a commitment to all clinical assignments and responsibilities, including patients and other members of the healthcare team. Failure to immediately inform the appropriate personnel, as defined in this policy, of an absence and its reason demonstrates a disregard of this important aspect of professionalism. While there may be instances when timely communication with the team is challenging, casual attitudes regarding this responsibility will not be tolerated.
- 6.11.2 Absences from patient care activities occurring the day or week of examinations or during orientation weeks will be excused only for substantive urgent issues with extenuating circumstances, such as a serious illness with a non-family member physician's note, or death of an immediate family member (students must follow absence guidelines listed in Section 6.9). Students cannot request an excused absence for clinic but still sit for an examination on the same day.
- 6.11.3 Anticipated absences may not be approved if the student's absence substantively impacts patient care activity or in cases where the student is not meeting clinical performance expectations.
- 6.11.4 Guidelines for scheduling the NBEO Part III - Clinical Skills Examination (CSE) must be followed as specified in the Patient Care Syllabi or distributed policies. The Patient Care Syllabi should also be referenced for information on the process for requesting absences related to taking or retaking NBEO Part I - Applied Basic Science and/or Part II - Patient Assessment and Management at non-targeted times.
- 6.11.5 The allowable number of clinical absences (excused and unexcused) accrued before requiring a leave of absence or initiating a course failure is determined on a case by case basis and is evaluated by the Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs. Determinations are made based upon an evaluation of the proportion of time dedicated to the course or patient care activity in the College curriculum. A student who misses a substantial portion of any course, or the traineeship, internship, or externship rotation time, may be required to take a leave of absence from the College, or complete a course reenrollment.
- 6.11.6 Make-up time for a student whose absences are excused will generally be equal to the number of days missed. Should the absence not be excused, the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs (internally) and/or the Director of the Externship Program (externally) may assign a greater number of make-up days than the actual days missed.
- 6.11.7 Make-up patient care time is typically required for students with excused absences. In rare instances, a project/assignment may be substituted for patient care time.
- 6.11.8 For an excused absence, make-up patient care time or a project/assignment may be waived at the discretion of the Chief of Service and/or Director of the Traineeship, Internship or Externship Program in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs, providing that the clinical performance has been achieved at an acceptable level of competency as demonstrated to the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs and also providing that patient care was not compromised. Make-up time may not be waived for an unexcused absence.
- 6.11.9 Make up of these assignments must be completed within a time frame determined by the appropriate individual; Chief of the Service, Director(s) of the Traineeship, Internship or Externship Program(s), or the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs in accordance with the Patient Care Syllabus.
- 6.11.9.1 Personal/Professional Days available to externship program students do not require

make up assignments.

- 6.11.9.2 The Externship Program may grant additional days, without makeup for NBEO testing, as outlined in the Externship Handbook.
- 6.11.10 Maximum number of allowable excused absences per term is listed below.
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> year: | fall = 1; spring = 1  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> year: | summer = 1; fall = 2; spring = 2                              |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> year: | summer = 1; fall = 2; spring = 1 (internship); 1 (externship) |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> year: | per quarter = 2 excused plus 1 personal/professional day      |
- 6.11.10.1 The Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs, in conjunction with the Directors of the Traineeship and Internship or Externship Program, will address absences in excess of these numbers of days. All absences during the Traineeship and Internship Program should be made-up utilizing guidelines listed in the respective Patient Care Syllabi. The Externship Syllabi details make-up absence expectations for the externship program.
- 6.11.10.2 Departments may exceed these guidelines for due cause and allow more absences, but may not restrict absences to fewer than those allowed by this Policy.
- 6.11.11 Excused absences, regardless of their nature, are additive, with the total number accumulated counting toward the proportion of the course missed.
- For example, if a student was ill for two days, had one day of personal crisis, took one personal day, and interviewed for two days, then that student has used six (6) days of excused absences. In a hypothetical course consisting of 24 rotation days, these six (6) days of absences constitute a proportion of 25 percent. In this case, the Associate Dean/Department Director could award a passing grade to the student if their performance was at a level of competency deemed appropriate by the department and if a make-up of six days of clinical time, a project, or combination thereof has been successfully completed
- 6.11.12 Students in the spring term of their third year and fourth year students who have more than the number of absences indicated above will be referred to the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs. A grade of Incomplete ("I") may be recorded for the course, provided that the student otherwise has earned a passing grade. Students have 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete ("I") grade was received to complete all work (see Section 12.7).
- 6.11.13 The Dean or their designee may grant an extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or Chief of Service, Director of the Traineeship or Internship Program, or the Director of the Externship Program via the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs confirming that extenuating circumstances exist. The duration of this extension will be provided to the student in writing, via Salus email.
- 6.11.14 The decision to require a student to repeat an entire rotation due to excessive absences will be made by the Associate Dean of Optometric Clinical Affairs, in consultation with the Director of Traineeship, Internship or Externship, and the Chief of Service.

## **6.12 Tardiness and Unauthorized Early Departure for Patient Care and Non-Patient Care Activities**

- 6.12.1 Students are expected to arrive on time, as defined by the clinic schedules and Patient Care Syllabi, and to stay in the assigned clinical service until released by preceptors. Late arrivals after the start of a clinical assignment, absences from the assigned clinical area, and early departures at on-campus and satellite sites, clerkship sites, or externship sites will be documented and reported to the Chief of Service or the Director of the Traineeship Program (clerkship sites), or to the Director of the Internship or Director of the Externship Program (internship and externship sites). Failure to follow clinical schedules and attendance policies may result in unexcused absences.
- 6.12.2 Students are expected to arrive on time for laboratory activities and to remain in the laboratory for the duration of the assignment, unless excused by the faculty member. Failure to follow laboratory schedules and attendance policies as stated in the course syllabus may result in an unexcused absence.

## **6.13 Unexcused Absences: Mandatory Non-Patient Care Activities**

- 6.13.1 An unexcused absence is any absence that does not meet the criteria for being an excused absence, as outlined in Section 6.9.
- 6.13.2 Unexcused absences from educational/program activities will result in a “zero” for any academic activities that occur during the period of the unexcused absence. This grade of “zero” will be averaged into the final course grade. A student will not be allowed to take a make-up exam if an unexcused absence results in missing a scheduled exam.

## **6.14 Unexcused Absences: Patient Care Activities**

- 6.14.1 An unexcused absence is any absence that does not meet the criteria for an excused absence as outlined in Sections 6.10.
- 6.14.2 Unexcused absences, including repeated lateness, early departures or other absences from the clinic, will not be permitted and may result in a failing (F) grade in a patient care-related course/rotation for that term.
- 6.14.3 A pattern of unexcused absences, including repeated lateness, early departures or other absences from patient care activities, could also result in dismissal for unprofessional conduct.
- 6.14.4 All unexcused absences must be made up as assigned by the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs may include assignments on Saturdays, academic/institutional holidays, break-week periods, or other hours as assigned. The number of make-up days for unexcused absences may exceed the actual number of days missed.

## **6.15 Attendance: Community-Based Clinical and Screening Programs**

- 6.15.1 Attendance at all assigned external community-based clinical and screening programs is mandatory.
- 6.15.2 All excused absences from these activities must be made up.

- 6.15.3 The specific method for making up an absence will be determined by the Suite Chief or faculty.
- 6.15.4 A student may appeal to the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs if they feel that the policy is not being honored or equitably enforced.
- 6.15.5 Make up for excused absences may consist of participating at a future date in activities similar to those that occurred during the absence, including during academic/institutional holidays or vacation periods. They may also include writing project papers or other methods that allow the student to demonstrate competency in the activities missed.
- 6.15.6 Prior to an anticipated absence, students are expected to find a student replacement for their patient care duties and communicate who will be replacing them to the appropriate preceptor. If the replacement does not arrive for the assignment, the originally assigned student will be given an unexcused absence.
- 6.15.7 Students who fail to notify the preceptor prior to the absence and/or fail to arrange a replacement, or do not receive an excused absence from the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs will be given with an unexcused absence and may receive a grade of Failure (F) for the course.
- 6.15.8 Any unexcused absences from community-based clinical and screening program activities could result in dismissal for unprofessional conduct.

## **6.16 Attendance: Clerkship Program**

- 6.16.1 Attendance at Clerkship sites is mandatory.
- 6.16.2 The required number of hours of patient care activity are determined by the preceptor to complete the clerkship course credit hours, consistent with the College's academic calendar and policies.
- 6.16.3 If illness, preceptor vacations, or other circumstances prevent students from maintaining their clinical schedule, the Coordinator of the Clerkship Program should be notified immediately (see the Clerkship Syllabus for more information).
- 6.16.4 The preceptor, in consultation with the Coordinator of the Clerkship Program and in conjunction with the Director of the Traineeship Program or their designee, will determine how and when student absence(s) will be made up within the allotted Clerkship Program weeks.
- 6.16.5 For a student who otherwise has a passing grade, all absences not made up to the satisfaction of the preceptor and the Director of the Traineeship Program or their designee by the end of a term will result in an Incomplete grade ("I") being registered as the student's grade for the term.
- 6.16.6 Make up of this work must be completed within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the ("I") grade was received.
- 6.16.7 The Incomplete grade will be removed only when all Clerkship work is completed, including: Attendance Logs, Meditrek Submissions, Site Evaluation Forms, and Student Evaluation Forms (refer to the Clerkship Syllabus for additional information).
- 6.16.8 The Dean, via the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs or their designee, may

grant an extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or faculty member confirming that extenuating circumstances exist. The duration of the extension period will be provided to the student in writing, via their Salus email.

- 6.16.9 A student's progress in the Patient Care Series (PC4) at The Eye Institute may be delayed until the Clerkship activity (PC3) is satisfactorily completed.

## **6.17 Attendance: Externship Program**

- 6.17.1 Attendance at Externship sites is mandatory. The Patient Care Syllabus for the Externship Program describes the attendance policy in detail.
- 6.17.2 The hours and days of office and patient care activity are determined at the discretion of the preceptor, consistent with the College's Externship Program calendar, syllabi, and policies.
- 6.17.3 College policies regarding excused and unexcused absences relating to patient care activities apply while students are enrolled in externship courses.
- 6.17.4 If illness, preceptor vacations, or other circumstances prevent students from maintaining their clinical schedule, the Office of the Externship Program should be notified within 24 hours (refer to the Patient Care Syllabus for the Externship Program).
- 6.17.5 The Director of the Externship Program, in consultation with the preceptor, will determine how and when student absence(s) will be made up.
- 6.17.6 For the student who otherwise has a passing grade, all absences not made up to the satisfaction of the preceptor and the Director of the Externship Program by the end of a term will result in an Incomplete grade ("I") being registered as the student's grade for the term.
- 6.17.7 Make up of these absences must be completed within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete grade ("I") was received.
- 6.17.8 The Incomplete grade ("I") will be removed only when all externship activities are completed to the satisfaction of the Director of the Externship Program.
- 6.17.9 The Dean via the Director of the Externship Program and the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs may grant an extension period if written documentation is provided by the student and/or faculty member/preceptor confirming that extenuating circumstances exist. The duration of this extension will be provided to the student in writing, via Salus email.
- 6.17.10 If it is determined that the externship activity will not be completed by the end of the term due to circumstances beyond the student's control, a deferred grade (R) will be issued with a documented anticipated completion date. See Section 12.8 for information about the resolution of a deferred grade.
- 6.17.11 Awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree will be withheld until the externship activity is satisfactory and completed.

## **7. ELECTIVE COURSES**

## **7.1 Elective Course: Registration and Enrollment**

- 7.1.1 Students are able to voluntarily enroll in elective course offerings as part of their enrollment in the traditional Doctor of Optometry degree program. These courses are not a mandatory component of the traditional Doctor of Optometry degree program.
- 7.1.2 Individual registration is required through the Director of Electives and Advanced Studies for enrollment in each elective course.
- 7.1.3 Students will be invited to register for elective courses during the term the elective course is offered, prior to the beginning of the course.
- 7.1.4 After registration closes, students will not be permitted to register for any elective course unless their originally requested elective course is canceled.
- 7.1.5 Elective course enrollment or certificate of completion will not be granted to any student who has not properly registered.
- 7.1.6 Enrollment in elective courses with limited enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to the nature of course content, some electives may be most appropriate for specific program years (e.g., recommended for third or fourth year students only).
- 7.1.7 Students enrolled in the Doctor of Optometry degree program may enroll in elective courses offered in other colleges at the University. Application, admission, registration, and additional fees (including tuition) may apply. Prior approval from the PCO Dean or their designee is required.
- 7.1.8 Tuition and fees may apply and will be made clear prior to student registration. Only students in satisfactory academic standing may enroll in elective courses.

## **7.2 Elective Course: Withdrawal**

- 7.2.1 All elective course withdrawal requests must be submitted to the Director of Electives and Advanced Studies before the elective course begins.
- 7.2.2 All weekend elective course withdrawal requests must be submitted to the Director of Electives and Advanced Studies by 4 PM on the Friday before the elective begins.

## **7.3 Elective Course: Cancellation**

- 7.3.1 The Director of Electives and Advanced Studies, in conjunction with the Dean, reserves the right to cancel any elective course with less than the minimum required student enrollment. Students will receive notice from the Director of Electives and Advanced Studies if an elective for which they have registered has been canceled.

## **7.4 Elective Course: Successful Completion for Certificate**

- 7.4.1 Requirements for successful completion of the elective course is outlined in the syllabus. No credit is awarded on the student transcript for elective courses.
- 7.4.2 No certificate will be awarded for any elective course for which the requirements have not been successfully met. A certificate of completion is considered a Pass (P) for electives being utilized as Part 1 of Advanced Studies.

- 7.4.3 Certain elective courses may include an examination, a research project, or other requirements for certificate completion purposes, which will be indicated in the elective course description and syllabus.
- 7.4.4 Attendance is mandatory for each elective course in order to receive a certificate of completion. Students not attending 100% of the elective course will not receive a certificate of completion.
- 7.4.5 Attendance sheets must be completed and verified by the responsible instructor for each elective course session and forwarded to the Director of Electives and Advanced Studies. Attendance and completion information will be forwarded to the Dean for certificate of completion issuing.

## **7.5 Advanced Studies**

### **7.5.1 Advanced Studies: Registration and Enrollment**

- 7.5.1.1 Advanced Studies in specified content areas are offered as an optional complement to the traditional Doctor of Optometry degree program. Four component parts comprise each Advanced Studies offering, and additional tuition applies.
- 7.5.1.2 Application for Advanced Studies must be submitted to the Office of Advanced Studies for review. A letter of acceptance or denial will be issued to the student as appropriate.
- 7.5.1.3 Students must meet the established eligibility criteria to enroll in Advanced Studies.
- 7.5.1.4 Automatic registration occurs for Advanced Studies parts. Notification of enrollment for each part will be sent from the Office of the Registrar and fees will be applied.
- 7.5.1.5 Enrollment in Advanced Studies is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 7.5.1.6 Only students in satisfactory academic standing may enroll in Advanced Studies. If a student successfully completes all parts within an Advanced Studies content area, a certificate of completion is awarded at the time of graduation.

### **7.5.2 Advanced Studies: Withdrawal**

- 7.5.2.1 Students will not be permitted to withdraw from an Advanced Studies part(s) after the start of the term in which the Advanced Studies part is offered.
- 7.5.2.2 Non-compliance with this procedure will result in a Failure (F) for the Advanced Studies part(s) and the appropriate tuition will be charged.
- 7.5.2.3 If an excused absence is granted by the Dean of Student Affairs, then a student may be permitted to withdraw. A student is still required to meet the four-part sequence requirement in order to successfully complete the specified content area.

### **7.5.3 Advanced Studies: Attendance**

- 7.5.3.1 Attendance is mandatory for each Advanced Studies part.



- 7.5.3.2 Attendance sheets must be completed and verified by the responsible instructor for each Advanced Studies part session. Attendance information and grades will be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar.
- 7.5.3.3 Students not attending 100% of an Advanced Studies part will automatically receive a Failure (F).
- 7.5.3.4 If an excused absence is granted by the Dean of Student Affairs, then a student may be permitted to withdraw. A student is still required to meet the four-part continuum in order to successfully complete the specified content area.

#### **7.5.4 Advanced Studies: Grading**

- 7.5.4.1 The grading system for Advanced Studies parts one, two, and three is Pass (P) / Failure (F). The grading system for part four, is Honors (H) / Pass (P) / Failure (F).
- 7.5.4.2 All grades of Failure (F) received in Advanced Studies parts will be computed into the term and cumulative grade point averages under the Advanced Studies designation, and will remain on the transcript.
- 7.5.4.3 No credit will be awarded for any Advanced Studies part for which a grade of Fail (F) is received.
- 7.5.4.4 A student who received a Failing (F) grade in an Advanced Studies part may be eligible to re-register for the Advanced Studies part. The Dean or their designee will determine the remediation or reenrollment procedures to be followed in conjunction with the instructor, and syllabus for that specific Advanced Studies part.

### **8. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

- 8.1 Students are required to check their Salus University email account twice daily, as some correspondence from instructors and administrators may be time-sensitive. Any student with unresolved academic matters (e.g., remediation examinations, incomplete grades) must check their email on a daily basis until the matter is resolved. In addition, all students are expected to regularly check their Salus University email account during weekends, breaks, holidays and other unassigned times for the duration of the life of the account.
  - 8.1.1 Letters and related communications regarding student academic standing (e.g., academic Warning, Probation, Dismissal) will be sent electronically to student Salus University email addresses as PDF email attachments.
- 8.2 Students are expected to use their Salus University email account when communicating with faculty, staff, and administrators at Salus University. Administrators, faculty, and staff of Salus University are not responsible for reading or responding to any email from a student that is not sent from their Salus University account.

### **9. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT**

- 9.1 Concerns related to the academic environment should initially be discussed with the instructor and the appropriate Associate Dean.

- 9.2 In the event that the Associate Dean is the course instructor or is otherwise a direct participant in the concerns, the situation should be discussed with the Dean.
- 9.3 Discrimination or sexual harassment concerns should be brought to the attention of the Salus University Affirmative Action Officer or the Dean of Student Affairs.

## **10. PATIENT CARE ASSIGNMENTS**

- 10.1 Students are expected to read The Eye Institute Practice Manual, provided by the Office of Optometric Clinical Affairs and the Vice President of Clinical Operations.
- 10.2 Student assignments may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons:
- 10.2.1 Decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for academic and/or clinical deficiencies.
- 10.2.2 Decision of the Salus University Judicial Committee regarding a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and/or conduct unbecoming of a professional.
- 10.2.3 Decision by an officer of Salus University for non-payment of tuition and fees or any other matter deemed appropriate.

## **11. EXAMINATIONS**

### **11.1 Examinations: General Policies**

- 11.1.1 Examinations provide the opportunity for instructors to assess students' knowledge and for students to demonstrate academic progress and competence.
- 11.1.2 Rules for Taking Examinations are distributed to students and posted on Blackboard. Each student is responsible for understanding these Rules. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment or the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.
- 11.1.3 Infractions of the Rules for Taking Examinations are considered serious offenses. These matters will be referred to the Salus University Judicial Committee for review and potential action. Students determined to be guilty of infractions will be penalized in an appropriate manner, including the possibility of expulsion from the University.
- 11.1.4 Examination policies and procedures for a course will be included in the course syllabus, which will be posted or distributed at the beginning of each academic term.
- 11.1.5 Course instructors must inform students in writing at the beginning of a course of the relative weights to be given to various examinations and assessment tools used in determining the final grade.

### **11.2 Examinations: Schedules**

- 11.2.1 Examination schedules are established and issued by the Office of the Dean or their designee.
- 11.2.2 Examination schedules are subject to change for academic or unanticipated reasons.

11.2.3 The College will make reasonable efforts to modify student clinic schedules during final examination weeks to support appropriate examination preparation.

11.2.4 In the event of extremely harsh weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about University closure or delays via the University alert system. Students should consult the University website for the weather policy.

### **11.3 Examinations: Attendance**

11.3.1 A student must be registered for any given course before they may take the course examinations. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for ensuring that only registered students receive a grade in a particular course.

11.3.2 Students are required to sit for all examinations as scheduled. If a student is unable to sit for the examination, they must immediately notify the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs. This process is important to request an excused absence and schedule a make-up examination, if appropriate. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero (0) for the exam.

11.3.3 The course coordinator will determine the make-up date, and the format of the examination. Students should consult the course syllabus for additional information.

### **11.4 National Board Examinations**

11.4.1 Passage of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) is not required for graduation. However, passage of Part I – Applied Basic Science, Part II – Patient Assessment and Management, and Part III – Clinical Skills Examination is required in most states for licensure. Therefore, it is recommended that all students register and sit for the examinations if they plan to practice in the United States.

11.4.2 See the Externship Course syllabus for guidelines related to on and off campus NBEO Part III scheduling.

11.4.3 Students should consult the NBEO website, [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org), for general information and registration procedures. Students are responsible for registering for the NBEO examinations by the deadlines posted on the NBEO website. All other questions should be directed to the Office of the Registrar.

11.4.4 Each student is required to release their NBEO scores to the College since these scores provide information vital to the College's ongoing curriculum assessment efforts.

## **12. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADES**

### **12.1 Didactic Grades and Evaluation**

12.1.1 At the conclusion of a didactic course or term (usually within one week, as determined by the Office of the Registrar), grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

12.1.2 Unless otherwise specified in a course syllabus, the grading scale is:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Grade Points Earned/Term Hour</u>
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<b>A</b>	93.00 -100.00	(EXCELLENT) Indicates exceptional achievement	4.00
<b>A-</b>	90.00 - 92.99		3.70
<b>B+</b>	87.00 - 89.99		3.30
<b>B</b>	83.00 - 86.99	(GOOD) Indicates superior achievement	3.00
<b>B-</b>	80.00 - 82.99		2.70
<b>C+</b>	77.00 - 79.99	(SATISFACTORY) Indicates acceptable achievement	2.30
<b>C</b>	73.00 - 76.99		2.00
<b>C-</b>	70.00 - 72.99	(POOR) Credit earned but below desired standards	1.70
<b>D+</b>	67.00-69.99	(UNSATISFACTORY)	1.30
<b>D</b>	63.00-66.99		1.00
<b>D-</b>	60.00-62.99		0.70
<b>F</b>	≤ 59.99	(FAILURE) No Credit Earned	0.00

Other Designations (carrying no Grade Points):

<b>F</b>	(FAILURE) Unsatisfactory performance Remediation of the course is required	0.00 (no credits earned)
<b>H</b>	(HONORS) Indicates outstanding performance	0.00 (credits earned)
<b>P</b>	(PASS) Indicates performance meets all competencies or requirements	0.00 (credits earned)
<b>CR</b>	(CREDIT) Credit is given but no grade is assigned	0.00 (credits earned)
<b>AU</b>	(AUDIT)	
<b>I</b>	(INCOMPLETE)	(refer to Section 12.7)
<b>R</b>	(DEFERRED)	(refer to Section 12.8)
<b>IP</b>	(IN PROGRESS)	
<b>W</b>	(WITHDRAWAL)	(refer to Section 12.9)

## 12.2 Failing Grades (F)

- 12.2.1 A failure (F) in a required course must be removed by the passing of the course through remediation by directed study (see Section 13.2), or re-enrollment (see Section 13.3) if applicable, within one term of the conclusion of the term in which the grade was earned.
- 12.2.1.1 The option of remediation or re-enrollment is not available once a student has been dismissed from the College.
- 12.2.1.2 If the grade of failure (F) is not remediated within the next term, the student will be dismissed from the College for academic reasons.
- 12.2.2 All failures (F's) must be remediated prior to beginning externship clinical rotations.
- 12.2.3 Remediation examinations will be scheduled in conjunction with the Office of the Dean or their designee (see Section 13).

12.2.5 A student not remediating a failing grade within the specified timeframe(s) will not be permitted to continue in the academic program without the written approval of the Dean.

12.2.5.1 After receiving this written approval, a student may be subject to special academic stipulations as determined by the Dean or their designee, or the Committee on Academic Promotion.

### 12.3 Clinical Grades and Evaluations

12.3.1 **Internship Program Clinical Grades:** This grading scale applies to Patient Care 6,7,8. For Patient Care 5 grading, see Section 12.3.1.5. At the conclusion of a clinical course, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

12.3.1.1 The grades of Honors (H), Pass+ (P+), Pass (P), Pass- (P-) or Failure (F) may be utilized for Patient Care Courses.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Grade Points Earned per Term Hour</u>
<b>H</b>	(HONORS)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates outstanding performance in all expected competencies or requirements		
<b>P+</b>	(PASS +)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates performance exceeding most expected competencies or requirements		
<b>P</b>	(PASS)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates performance meets expected competencies or requirements		
<b>P-</b>	(PASS -)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates performance that inconsistently and/or minimally meets expected competencies or requirements. Students earning a Pass- during the final term of internships will be required to begin their externships on campus.		
<b>F</b>	(FAILURE)	0.00 (no credits earned)
Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Reenrollment in the course is required.		
<b>I</b>	(INCOMPLETE)	(see Section 12.7)
<b>R</b>	(DEFERRED / IN PROGRESS)	(see Section 12.8)

12.3.1.2 Students must receive Honors (H), Pass + (P+), or Pass (P) in the Fall Patient Care Course in the third professional year in order to successfully transition to the spring third year externship off-campus. Students earning a Pass - during the final term of internships will be required to begin their externships on-campus.

12.3.1.3 The grades of Honors (H), Pass + (P+), Pass (P), and Pass - (P-) will not be converted to grade points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero grade points and will be computed in the grade point average.

12.3.1.4 No percentage of the class will be pre-designated to receive any specific grade category.

12.3.1.5 The Patient Care 5 course will follow the grading scale as defined in the syllabus and will only include grades of Pass (P) or Fail (F). Further information can be found in the Patient Care 5 syllabus.

12.3.2 **Externship Program Clinical Grades:** At the conclusion of a clinical course, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

12.3.2.1 The grades of Honors (H), Pass (P), or Failure (F) will be utilized for all externship clinical rotations on and off campus.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Grade Points Earned per Term Hour</u>
<b>H</b>	(HONORS)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates outstanding performance in all expected competencies or requirements		
<b>P</b>	(PASS)	0.00 (with credits earned)
Indicates performance meeting expected competencies or requirements		
<b>F</b>	(FAILURE)	0.00 (no credits earned)
Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental course may be required. Reenrollment in the course is required.		
<b>I</b>	(INCOMPLETE)	(see Section 12.7)
<b>R</b>	(DEFERRED / IN PROGRESS)	(see Section 12.8)

12.3.2.2 For the Externship Program, earned clinical grades will be recorded on the transcript as Honors (H), Pass (P), or Failure (F).

12.3.2.3 The grades of Honors (H) and Pass (P) will not be converted to grade points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero grade points and will be computed in the grade point average.

12.3.2.4 No percentage of the class will be pre-designated to receive a grade category.

12.3.3 **Clinical Evaluations:** At the conclusion of a clinical course or rotation, an evaluation summary form concerning the quality of the student's work will be rendered.

12.3.3.1 The evaluation summaries are used in counseling students concerning clinical strengths and areas for improvement as well as in the preparation of letters of evaluation/recommendation.

12.3.3.2 Evaluation summaries are rendered on standard forms. These forms are provided by the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs.

12.3.3.3 Evaluation summaries are not considered a part of the student's Permanent Record File that is maintained in the Office of the Registrar, but may be reviewed by the student in the Office of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs.

12.3.3.4 A clinical evaluation may recommend enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental (PCS) course (see Section 15). A student may be enrolled in a PCS course as part of a special program to meet personal/academic needs, to assist a student in transition or returning from a leave of absence, who has been placed on academic probation, or as recommended by CAP.

## 12.4 Credit by Examination (CR)

12.4.1 A student judged qualified by the appropriate Associate Dean may receive academic credit for a course within the curriculum by achieving satisfactory performance on special examinations administered by the College. A fee is charged for the examination.

12.4.2 Upon satisfactory completion of the examination and approval by the Dean, a grade of Credit (CR) will be given and recorded during the term in which the examination was taken.

## **12.5 Credit by Transfer (CR)**

12.5.1 Credit by transfer may be accepted for any course(s) within the curriculum when it is determined the transfer course is substantially equivalent to that offered by the College. This equivalency will be determined by the course coordinator in conjunction with the appropriate Associate Dean, and approved by the Dean.

12.5.2 Only courses in which the student received a grade of C, P (Pass), or above will be considered for transfer.

## **12.6 Audit (AU)**

12.6.1 A student may elect to officially audit any course within the curriculum by obtaining written permission from the course instructor and registering for the course.

12.6.2 The student is required to provide the Office of the Registrar with written approval from the course instructor no later than the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) business day of the term.

12.6.3 The instructor for the course is required to inform the appropriate Associate Dean and the Dean, via the Office of the Registrar, about student attendance for all required course audits at the time course grades are submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

12.6.4 This noncredit registration is recorded as "Audit" on the student's transcript.

12.6.5 A course audit fee will be applied.

12.6.5.1 Non-degree students may be permitted to audit courses under special circumstances with the written approval of the Dean and/or their designee.

12.6.5.2 The Office of the Registrar will notify the course instructor when a student has approval to audit a course.

12.6.6 A course taken on an audit basis will not count toward the fulfillment of degree requirements.

12.6.7 An audit will not affect the student's grade point average since credit hours attempted and grade points will not be awarded for an audited course.

12.6.8 Not attending this required course may result in a failed stipulation (audit) and suspension or dismissal from the College for not adhering to this requirement unless this is a required stipulation.

12.6.8.1 In certain instances for educational reasons, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, and/or the Dean or their designee, may require a student to audit a course or a component already taken.

## **12.7 Incomplete Grade (I)**

- 12.7.1 The temporary designation Incomplete (I) may be used by the Instructor when a complete assessment cannot be rendered because course work is not complete due to a student-centered reason, such as being granted an excused absence due to illness and/or personal urgency, and when the students' work is otherwise of passing quality.
- 12.7.2 Incomplete grades must be resolved within 45 calendar days after the end of the term in which the "I" grade was received. The date for resolution of the Incomplete grade will be set by mutual agreement of the student and instructor.
- 12.7.2.1 The Dean or their designee may grant an extension for resolution of the Incomplete if written documentation is provided by the student and/or instructor confirming that "extenuating circumstances" exist. Written documentation of the terms of the extension will be provided to the student in writing, via their Salus email account.
- 12.7.2.2 All Incomplete (I) grades must be removed prior to beginning external clinical rotations to avoid a delay in the start and/or end date of the external clinical rotation.
- 12.7.3 If the student fails to remove the Incomplete (I) grade within the time allowed, the course instructor, with the approval of the Dean, will authorize the Office of the Registrar to change the grade to a Failure (F). The student, course instructor, the appropriate Associate Dean, and the Dean will be notified in writing of this grade change.
- 12.7.4 When the Incomplete (I) designation is used, the instructor or department will submit to the Office of the Registrar, in writing, the reason for the designation of the Incomplete (I) and the student's academic standing in the course to date.
- 12.7.5 The Office of the Registrar will provide this information in the Academic Progress Meetings and to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for all students not meeting the requirements of satisfactory academic standing (potential dismissal, probation, warning). This additional information will assist the faculty and/or the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in evaluating student performance in borderline cases.
- 12.7.6 The final grade of a student who receives an Incomplete (I) is the decision of the course instructor.

## **12.8 Deferred Grade (R)**

- 12.8.1 A Deferred grade (R) may be assigned by the Instructor when the work in a course is not completed due to a program-centered reason beyond a student's control, such as a change in schedule/instructor availability or technology challenges associated with remote instruction.
- 12.8.2 Deferred grades must be resolved within one (1) term after the end of term in which the grade was earned, or prior to beginning off-campus externship rotations, whichever comes first.
- 12.8.2.1 If the student fails to remove the Deferred (R) grade within the time allowed, the course instructor, with the approval of the Dean, will authorize the Office of the Registrar to change the grade to a Failure (F). The student, course instructor, the appropriate Associate Dean, and the Dean will be notified in writing of this grade change.



- 12.8.2.2 The timing by which the Deferred grade (R) will change to an assigned grade will be based upon resolution of identified challenges.
- 12.8.2.3 All Deferred (R) grades must be removed prior to beginning external clinical rotations to avoid a delay in the start and/or end date of the external clinical rotation.
- 12.8.2.4 The Dean or their designee may grant an extension for resolution of the Deferred grade (R) if written documentation is provided by the student and/or instructor confirming that “extenuating circumstances” exist. Written documentation of the terms of the extension will be provided to the student in writing, via their Salus email account.
- 12.8.3 An instructor will not assign a Deferred grade (R) when a substandard grade is earned due to substandard student performance.
- 12.8.4 For a student who is not in satisfactory academic standing when the Deferred grade (R) designation is used, the course instructor or the Office of the Dean or their designee will provide to the Office of the Registrar, in writing, the tentative student grade based on the student's performance to date.
- 12.8.5 The Office of the Registrar will provide this information in the Academic Progress Meetings and to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for all students not in satisfactory academic standing (potential dismissal, probation, warning). This additional information will assist the faculty and/or the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in evaluating student performance.

## **12.9 Withdrawal (W)**

- 12.9.1 **Withdrawal from an Elective Course:** A student who wishes to drop an elective course may do so by completing a course withdrawal form and submitting it to the Director of Electives.
- 12.9.2 **Withdrawal from a Required Course:** A student may not withdraw from a required course(s) or the entire curriculum without the approval of the Dean, and the subsequent approval of the Dean of Student Affairs. The desire to avoid a low grade is not an acceptable reason for withdrawal from a course or the entire curriculum.
- 12.9.2.1 Beginning with the spring term of the third professional year, withdrawals from any internal or external clinical assignment, or any changes in the contract signed with the Office of the Externship Program, are subject to the approval of the Director of the Externship Program and the subsequent approval of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs.

## **12.10 Grade Mediation and Adjudication**

- 12.10.1 A student who has a concern about a reported grade in a course should first discuss the course grading policies and determinations with the instructor. It is expected that the student and instructor will address any misunderstandings and will attempt to resolve any disagreements over a reported grade.
- 12.10.2 On occasion, circumstances may develop in which a student and instructor disagree about a student's grade. The student may then appeal the grade decision, in writing, to the Associate Dean for the department in which the course is offered. The Student has five (5) business days from the date that the grade is posted to the transcript, to bring concerns to the Associate Dean to begin the mediation process. The Associate Dean

must resolve the grade decision within five (5) business days from the date the Associate Dean received the mediation request from the student.

- 12.10.2.1 The Associate Dean's decision on a grading dispute is final. There is no further appeal of the grade within the College.
- 12.10.2.2 In the event that the Associate Dean teaches the course in question, the student's written appeal is made to the Dean.
- 12.10.3 The original grade assigned by the instructor remains on the student's record while the appeals process is in progress and will be changed only when, and if, the appeal is successful.
- 12.10.4 Copies of sequestered exams, reports, and/or presentations submitted by students are required to be retained by the course instructor for a period of one calendar year from the end of the term in which the grade was earned, in the event that a challenge to a grade should arise.
- 12.10.5 If a CAP Hearing is necessary, all grade mediation issues must be resolved prior to the CAP Hearing.

## **12.11 Change of Grade**

- 12.11.1 Once submitted to the Office of the Registrar, no grade, except that of Incomplete (I) or Deferred (R), may be changed without the mutual written consent of the course instructor and the appropriate Associate Dean and/or Dean.

## **12.12 Grade Point Average (GPA)**

- 12.12.1 A student's cumulative grade point average (GPA) is the weighted mean value of all grade points earned by the student in all courses taken for letter grades within the College.
- 12.12.1.2 Grades are converted to grade points by multiplying the number of credits for each course by the specified formula assigned to the letter grade. An A=4 points, a A-=3.7 points, a B+=3.3 points, a B=3.0 points, a B-=2.7 points, a C+=2.3 points, a C=2.0 points, a C-= 1.7 points, a D+= 1.3 points a D=1.0 point, a D-=0.7 points, and an F=0 points. Thus, an A in a four credit course earns the student 16 grade points (4 x 4); a B in a four credit course earns 12 grade points (4 x 3), and so on.
- 12.12.1.3 The total number of grade points divided by the total credits used to calculate the grade points equals the grade-point average. A student has a GPA below 2.0 when total grade points are less than twice the total credits completed to earn grade points.
- 12.12.2 A student's cumulative grade-point average is calculated utilizing only courses taken within each degree program.

## **13. REMEDIATION**

Remediation is required for all students who do not meet the academic standards established by PCO (see Section 18). Reassessment is one form of remediation. It occurs during the term in which the student is enrolled in the course. Remediation by

directed study occurs after final course grades are submitted to the Registrar and it is determined students have not met academic standards. Remediation by re-enrollment is generally offered as a stipulation by the CAP committee or as part of a modified course of study. A student may be granted the opportunity to remediate a failing grade by Directed Study or Reassessment as long as their academic standing is satisfactory.

### **13.1 Remediation by Reassessment**

- 13.1.1 Remediation by Reassessment occurs within the same term, prior to the submission of grades and is incorporated into final grade submission. Reassessments must be completed prior to the end of the grade deadline.
- 13.1.2 Reassessments are offered at the discretion of the faculty. Faculty may offer a reassessment during the term to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or skills. Students should follow all syllabus instructions for course assessments.
- 13.1.3 Reassessment grading will be defined in each course syllabus if offered.
- 13.1.4 The grade earned following reassessment is factored into the final course grade and submitted to the registrar. .

### **13.2 Remediation by Directed Study**

- 13.2.1 Eligible students are required to remediate all failing (F) grades and all D grades earned. If remediation is offered, directed study is the first method that will be used to address failing (F) and D grades earned prior to a re-enrollment. (See Section 18 for academic standing).
- 13.2.2 Remediation by Directed Study may include re-examination of the entire course material or an individualized area of weakness.
- 13.2.3 A student who is remediating is required to re-register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar. A remediation fee will be applied.
- 13.2.4 Under certain circumstances, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and/or Dean can mandate that the student remediate a grade other than that of a failure (F) or D grade. The student will then remediate the course in accordance with the stipulations set forth in writing by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and/or the Dean.
- 13.2.5 The highest grade that can be earned by Directed Study is a grade of “C+” (satisfactory) or “P” (pass), depending upon the grading scale utilized in the course syllabus.
- 13.2.5.1 A student remediating a “D” grade must earn a C- or better on the remediation in order to successfully remediate the course. If a C- or better is not earned, the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.
- 13.2.6 Remediation of a course may result in a grade lower than the original grade. For example, an original earned grade of “D” may become an earned remediation grade of “F”, which becomes the final grade.
- 13.2.7 For all remediations, the original grade will remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the new cumulative grade-point average.

- 13.2.8 The new course grade earned by Directed Study is recorded on the transcript during the term it was completed.
- 13.2.9 Students must successfully complete all necessary remediations within the subsequent term, on the predetermined remediation date(s) on the Academic Calendar as determined by the Instructor of Record, in conjunction with the Dean of the College of Optometry or their designee. In addition the following apply to remediations:
- 13.2.10 All traineeship and internship Patient Care courses (1-8) must be successfully remediated prior to beginning the externship.
- 13.2.11 Patient Care course remediation may require enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental (PCS) course. The corresponding PCS for a failed externship course may occur within the same term as the failure with the approval of the Dean. See Section 15 for additional information.
- 13.2.12 Students will not be permitted to begin the externship phase of the program with any “F” or “D” grades on their transcript.
- 13.2.13 Students must fulfill all CAP stipulations prior to beginning externships.
- 13.2.14 Students remediating due to CAP stipulations will complete their remediation in the subsequent term on a separately scheduled date than that stipulated by the Academic Calendar, as determined by the Instructor(s) and appropriate Associate Dean.
- 13.2.15 A course can be remediated by Directed Study only once.
- 13.2.16 If a student fails to achieve a passing grade of a C- or above in a remediation, they are no longer in satisfactory academic standing, they will be dismissed for academic reasons.
- 13.2.17 A student enrolled in a course remediation is required to register for those credits as per communications with the Instructor and the Office of the Registrar.
- 13.2.18 The student is required to meet with the course instructor prior to the remediation to review the examination format and receive academic counseling regarding the course examination content.
- 13.2.19 The course instructor determines the content and format of delivery under the supervision of the appropriate Associate Dean and including any special stipulations set forth by the CAP, if applicable.
- 13.2.20 The instructor will be responsible for grade submission following Directed Study.
- 13.2.21 The course Directed Study requirements must be completed within the time frame as per established policy direction regarding the specific course (11.7, 11.7.1).
- 13.2.21.1 If a student does not attempt to remediate a grade of “F” within the specified time, it will result in the dismissal of the student for academic reasons.

### **13.3 Remediation by Reenrollment**

- 13.3.1 Re-enrollment may result in a modified course of studies, and may be offered as a

compulsory stipulation by the CAP committee. This option is granted to students who have/had extenuating circumstances requiring them to repeat coursework in which there was poor performance.

- 13.3.2 A student repeating credits through re-enrollment is required to register for those credits with the Office of the Registrar.
- 13.3.3 The grade earned during re-enrollment in the course is recorded on the transcript, and will be used to calculate the GPA during the term in which it was completed.
- 13.3.4 In all cases, the original failing grade will remain on the student's transcript but will not be used to calculate the student's cumulative grade point average.
- 13.3.5 The full grade scale will be available to a student participating in a course reenrollment.
- 13.3.6 Any student who does not adhere to the agreed upon re-enrollment plan is subject to academic dismissal.
- 13.3.7 Tuition and fee information is available on Salus University website.

#### **14. MODIFIED COURSE OF STUDY**

- 14.1 Students may be eligible to participate in a modified course of studies upon returning from a leave of absence or reinstatement to the College through a CAP committee decision.
  - 14.1.1 In special or extenuating circumstances, the Dean of the College may determine a modified course of study.
- 14.2 The curriculum design and implementation for a modified course of studies is the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Optometric Special Programs.
- 14.3 Oversight of students participating in modified course of studies is the primarily provided by the Associate Dean of Optometric Special Programs.
- 14.4 Students participating in modified course of studies will have the opportunity to review their updated curriculum with the Associate Dean of Optometric Special Programs prior to the reinstatement.
- 14.5 All grades earned in coursework completed on a modified course of studies will be recorded on the transcript within the term they are taken and will be averaged into the Grade Point Average calculation.
- 14.5 If students on modified course of studies do not meet the terms outlined in this policy for satisfactory academic progress, they may be academically dismissed from the College and will be notified, in writing, by the Dean of the College of Optometry.

#### **15. PATIENT CARE SUPPLEMENTAL**

- 15.1 Patient Care course remediation or reinstatement to the College after a dismissal may require enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental (PCS) course. A PCS course is a

custom designed course to meet the educational needs of an individual student. A student may be enrolled in such a course under a variety of circumstances. It may be included as part of a special program tailored by the Office of the Dean or their designee to meet a student's personal or academic needs. Similarly, a PCS may be utilized to assist a student in transition from an approved leave of absence. A student who has been placed on academic probation may be enrolled in a PCS. PCS courses are also used for remediation of third or fourth year externs who have been identified as weak or failing by their preceptor or have failed to meet professional behavior standards at externship sites or a TEI rotation. A PCS course is Pass (P)/Fail (F) course.

15.1.1 For additional information, please refer to the PCS syllabus.

## **16. ACADEMIC PROGRESS MEETINGS: FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

16.1 The faculty is responsible for evaluating the academic achievement and potential of all students at the midpoint and conclusion of each academic term.

16.2 The faculty is responsible for providing feedback to the Dean and/or their designee about those students who will advance to the next term of the program.

## **17. MIDTERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION**

17.1 The performance of all students registered within a course will be evaluated by the instructors of record at a point approximately mid-way into each academic term.

17.2 The name of any student who has been evaluated as "weak" or "failing" will be provided to the Office of the Registrar. "Weak" students are defined as those earning a C- or below at the midpoint of the term. "Failing" students are defined as those earning an F at the midpoint of the term. The Office of the Registrar will compile this information and present it at the Midterm Academic Progress meeting.

17.3 Following the Midterm Academic Progress meeting, the Office of the Dean or their designee will notify the student in writing that their performance is unsatisfactory.

17.4 Additionally, the student will be contacted by the Dean and/or their designee and may be required to meet with an Associate Dean, and may be recommended to meet with a member of the Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD), and/or the course instructor.

17.5 A student is expected to take action to resolve their academic difficulties with the assistance of the individuals and services available to them.

17.6 The Office of the Dean may also require tutoring for students experiencing academic difficulty.

17.7 If a student fails to comply with the action items delineated in the post-Midterm Academic Progress meeting letter, the matter may then be referred to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion for review and further action as appropriate, including potential dismissal.

17.8 Midterm evaluations/grades are not part of the student's permanent transcript and are not used in the determination of academic standing.

## **18. ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION**

- 18.1 The course coordinators or their designee will meet with the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment and/or the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs to evaluate the performance of all registered students at the end of each grading period.
- 18.2 The academic standing of each student will be reviewed to evaluate academic and/or clinical performance. Information reviewed will include the student's prior academic performance, academic status entering the term in question and any additional information relevant to their progress.
- 18.2.1 Grades become official at the end of the term in which the grade was earned and posted.
- 18.2.1.1 If a student does not meet minimum program requirements, they will receive notification from the office of the Dean and/or their designee. The student may be required to meet with appropriate individuals from the College.
- 18.3 Categories of Academic Standing include satisfactory, warning, probation, and dismissal.
- 18.3.1 Satisfactory Academic Standing – A student is in satisfactory academic standing when they are attaining a term grade point average and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 2.0, and any failing (F) grades or D grades have been successfully remediated.
- 18.3.1.1 Prior to beginning an external clinical rotation a student must be in satisfactory academic standing and all requirements related to remediation and/or re-enrollment must be successfully completed.
- 18.3.1.2 Students must remain in satisfactory academic standing while holding student leadership positions. If a student is in a leadership position and falls below satisfactory academic standing, they will be required to step down from their position.
- 18.3.2 Academic Warning – A student may receive a notice of academic warning if their term GPA or cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher, but below 2.40. Academic warning is an indication to the student that their academic performance is in danger of falling below minimum acceptable academic expectations.
- 18.3.3 Academic Probation – A student is considered on academic probation when:
- Their term GPA falls below 2.00;
  - Their cumulative GPA at the end of a term falls below 2.00;
  - They earn a Failure (F) in any course;
  - They earn a grade of “D” in two courses at any time in the program, whether in the same or different term(s).
- 18.3.4 Academic Dismissal – A first-year student will be dismissed from the academic program based upon GPA alone when:
- Their GPA is below 1.90 at the end of the Fall term;
  - Their cumulative GPA is below 2.0 at the end of the Spring term.

**All students** will be dismissed from the academic program when:

Their term GPA is below 2.0 for any two terms; OR

Their cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 for any two terms; OR

They earn a grade of “D” in three or more courses at any time in the program, whether in the same or different term(s); OR

They earn a grade of “D” while enrolled in a remediation of an “F” or “D” grade OR

They earn a failing grade (F) in any two courses at any time in the program, whether in the same or different term(s) OR

They earn a failing grade (F) in any course at any time in the program and a term GPA below 2.0 for any term at any time in the program; OR

They earn a failing grade (F) in any course at any time in the program and two or more “D’s”.

NOTE: Any failure or “D” earned in courses that were subsequently passed through remediation or re-enrollment will count towards the number of overall course failures or “D’s” and will remain on the transcript.

The failure to undertake a necessary remediation or re-enrollment in any course during the time period as stipulated by the Academic Policy or in guidance from the CAP committee may also result in academic dismissal. (See Section 18.6 for non-academic reasons for dismissal.)

18.4 Students who fail externship courses may be dismissed at any point during the term with approval of the Dean.

18.5 Student failure to comply with directives from the Dean or their designee may result in their dismissal from the academic program (see Section 18.6).

## **18.6 Dismissal for Other Reasons**

18.6.1 In addition to the academic reasons for dismissal listed in Section 18.3.4, the College reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student at any time for what the College faculty and/or administration believe to be good and sufficient reasons.

18.6.2 These good and sufficient reasons may include, but are not limited to, student demeanor, knowledge base, mental or physical fitness, as well as any form of cheating, plagiarism or unprofessional conduct. Students are expected to read the Salus University Student Handbook for additional information.

18.6.3 The College assigns great importance to self discipline, the ability to interact appropriately with others, and the ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner. Demonstration of deficiencies in any of these areas is viewed by the College as evidence that the student is not suited to a professional career, and constitutes adequate cause for dismissal regardless of academic performance.



## **19. REINSTATEMENT**

### **19.1 Administrative Reinstatement without Appeal**

19.1.1 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may be reinstated to the College's academic program upon a consensus recommendation at an Academic Progress Meeting and with the approval of the Dean without having to formally appeal to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

19.1.2 A student will be notified in writing with the conditions of Administrative Reinstatement within 3 business days of the date of the Academic Progress Meeting.

### **19.2 Appeal Process for Reinstatement**

19.2.1 A student who has been dismissed based upon the faculty consensus at an Academic Progress Meeting will receive a letter informing them of their standing within 3 business days of the meeting.

19.2.2 A student will have the right to request an appeal hearing with the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion or waive the right to appeal. This decision must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Registrar within 3 business days of receipt of the dismissal letter not including the day the letter is received.

19.2.3 Appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received from the student. The hearing will be scheduled based on availability of Committee members and may include evenings and weekends.

19.2.3.1 If a student wishes to appeal the dismissal, the appeal should be addressed to the Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Included in this letter of appeal should be a written explanation of why the student feels that their appeal for reinstatement should be considered and granted by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. The student must also indicate if they will appear in person before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

19.2.4 The student must submit all other information and supporting documents in writing to the Office of the Registrar, at least two (2) business days prior to their scheduled appeal.

19.2.5 The student may also make an oral presentation to the Committee during the appeal hearing; however, such a presentation is not required.

19.2.6 A student who fails to contact the Office of Registrar three (3) business days after the notification date of their dismissal letter will forfeit the right to their appeal.

19.2.7 If the student chooses not to make a formal appeal, the Office of the Registrar must make a formal notation in the student's Permanent Record File.

## **20. PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY (PCO) COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION**

### **20.1 Composition of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion**

- 20.1.1 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion (CAP) is a standing committee appointed by the Dean. The committee is composed of four faculty members (three voting members and one Chair of the Committee).
- 20.1.2 The Dean may select a faculty member to serve as an alternate member of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in the event of unavailability of a named Committee member, or for instances in which a Committee member has recused themselves or has been disqualified.
- 20.1.3 Representatives from the Salus University Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of the Registrar are non-voting members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. If appropriate, the committee may call upon representatives from the University for additional information.
- 20.1.4 Three faculty members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion must be present to consider an appeal for reinstatement.
- 20.1.5 Any member of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion may recuse or decline participation in any hearing.
- 20.1.6 The student may send a request to the Dean to disqualify one faculty member of the Committee without stating a reason. A request to disqualify more than one member of the Committee requires a written explanation. Any request for disqualification must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar and addressed to the Dean at least 3 business days in advance of their scheduled hearing.

## **20.2 Responsibilities of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion**

- 20.2.1 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion is responsible for hearing appeals for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on criteria outlined in the Academic Progress Evaluation (Section 17).
- 20.2.2 The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal.
- 20.2.3 The Committee may review grades, NBEO examination scores, and summaries concerning professional development and any extenuating circumstances, i.e., events beyond the student's control.
- 20.2.3.1 The Committee will have access to any prior CAP appeal decisions as part of the review.
- 20.2.4 The Committee shall then make a decision either to uphold the dismissal; or reinstate the student either immediately, or at a future date.
- 20.2.5 If the Committee's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion may include, but are not limited to, requiring the student to:
- Take a remediation examination(s);
  - Enroll in a course of study;
  - Continue enrollment under a modified program;
  - Repeat specific courses or rotations even if previously passed;

Repeat an academic year of study;  
Obtain academic counseling and/or tutoring; or,  
Obtain academic, medical, or psychological evaluation(s).

- 20.2.6 The Dean will review the conditions put forth by the CAP Committee on Academic Promotion, and the Associate Dean of Optometry Special Programs in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Curriculum and Assessment will advise the student.
- 20.2.7 Students who are required to re-enroll and repeat a course are responsible for the academic/clinical work and examination(s) as outlined and required in the syllabus at the time of the course reenrollment. The Dean or their designee, in consultation with the faculty for that course, will outline alternate conditions for said re-enrollment in writing.
- 20.2.8 A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons is not eligible for remediation or re-enrollment in any course, nor may they participate in any clinical activities without prior permission from the Dean.
- 20.2.9 During the appeal process students may audit a didactic course (lecture, laboratory, CPS, and/or other course) unless otherwise prohibited.
- 20.2.10 Remediation or re-enrollment may occur only after a student is formally reinstated.
- 20.2.11 The faculty, the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, the Salus University Office of Student Affairs, and/or the Office of the Dean will closely monitor the performance of all reinstated students. Their continuance at the College will depend on successful compliance with the articulated Conditions of Reinstatement.

### **20.3 Conduct of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Hearing**

- 20.3.1 The hearing shall be conducted in such a manner as to give the student the full opportunity to explain the reason for their unsatisfactory academic performance.
- 20.3.2 The Committee will have access to the student's complete files, including documentation of previous appeal(s) if any exist.
- 20.3.3 By appealing the dismissal, the student authorizes the committee to review relevant information including, but not limited to, grades, NBEO examination scores, faculty interviews, summaries concerning professional development, and any extenuating circumstances ( i.e., events beyond the student's control).
- 20.3.3.1 The student should realize that unsatisfactory performance based on poor or unwise judgment (e.g., spending too much time on nonacademic activities such as working inside or outside the College, excessive participation in student activities, and/or poor study habits) is not an acceptable explanation for poor academic performance.
- 20.3.3.2 Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, (i.e., events beyond the student's control), which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. Verifiable evidence of such circumstances is required to be submitted to the Committee as part of the written statement of appeal.
- 20.3.4 A primary focus of the Committee is determining the student's potential for future academic success. Extenuating circumstances alone may not provide sufficient reason for reinstatement of the student. The PCO Committee on Academic Promotion grants

reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced that the student is capable of making marked improvement in their academic performance. The student has the right to provide written letters of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.

20.3.5 The appeal hearing will be conducted in a manner as to provide a fair evaluation of the student's performance. It will not be restricted unduly by rules of procedure or evidence, nor shall deviations from prescribed procedures invalidate a decision or proceeding unless significant prejudice to a student results.

20.3.6 The appeals process is not a formal legal proceeding. Although a student may seek and retain legal counsel at the student's own expense, the role of legal counsel is limited to advising the student. Legal counsel may attend the hearing but may not actively participate in the hearing as an advocate to examine witnesses, to make opening or closing statements, to direct discussion, or to present the student's case on their behalf. Securing the availability of counsel at the scheduled hearing time and date is the responsibility of the student. A student who wishes to exercise the option of legal counsel attending the hearing must notify the Office of the Registrar, in writing, at least (2) business days in advance of the hearing.

20.3.7 Requests for an extension to scheduling an appeal should be made in writing by the student, addressed to the Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion and submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least two (2) business days prior to their scheduled hearing. Extensions may be granted when the presence of extenuating circumstances has been established clearly, or when a strong case has been made that additional information pertinent to the appeal cannot be made available by the time the appeal would be heard normally.

20.3.8 The appeal hearing will be private. The Chair of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion will determine the number of persons to be admitted to the hearing. Those attending will treat all information confidentially.

20.3.9 The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording remains the property of the University and will be secured by the Office of the Registrar. If the student appellant wishes to obtain a transcribed copy of the hearing, a written request must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. A fee will be charged to cover the transcription expense.

20.3.10 The Office of the Registrar will provide the complete University file and academic record of each dismissed student for review by members of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion at the appeal hearing. The Committee may also seek written or verbal statements of evaluation from faculty and staff regarding the student's academic record and potential, and/or the Committee may ask such individuals to appear before the Committee.

20.3.11 The student shall be notified in writing of the action of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, including all requirements set forth by the Committee, within five (5) business days following the hearing. Should the Committee require further information or time for deliberation; the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the five (5) business days.

## **20.4 Counseling and Assistance Available to Students**

20.4.1 The Dean of Student Affairs is available to:

- 20.4.1.1 Interpret for/counsel students on the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion;
- 20.4.1.2 Inform students of recommendations rendered during Academic Progress Meetings concerning unsatisfactory academic performance and/or professionalism concerns, but will not attribute comments to specific faculty members; and,
- 20.4.1.3 Review with students the steps in appeals processes.
- 20.4.2 A member of the Office for Academic Success for Personal and Professional Development is available to provide a student with, or facilitate, counseling services.
- 20.4.3 The academic counselors in PCO will be available to meet with students for academic counseling services. Students should schedule an appointment with the academic counselors when they recognize they are struggling with the course material, when they are not in satisfactory academic standing and/or when they are being dismissed from the College. While the CAP committee will have final decisions regarding student dismissal and/or terms of reinstatement, the academic counselors are available to review with the student the options as outlined within the Academic Policy.

## **20.5      **Appealing a Decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Not Involving Dismissal****

- 20.5.1 This section pertains to any student who has been asked to remediate or re-enroll in a course, assume a modified program, or repeat an academic term or year.
- 20.5.2 Students may appeal non-dismissal actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion in the form of a letter directed to the Dean.
- 20.5.3 This letter of appeal must be received in the Office of the Registrar within five (5) business days, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying them of the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.
- 20.5.4 The Dean must consider every case in which a student requests an appeal.
- 20.5.5 The Dean will commence consideration of the appeal within five (5) business days after receipt of the letter of appeal, not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.
- 20.5.6 The Dean, after consulting with the Associate Dean for Optometric Academic Affairs and/or the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs, will consider and rule on the appeal.
- 20.5.7 The Dean's decision on the appeal may uphold, modify, or reverse any previous decision.
- 20.5.8 The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Dean concerning the appeal.
- 20.5.9 The Dean's decision will be made within ten (10) business days, not including the day the student's letter of appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.
- 20.5.10 Should the Dean require additional time for deliberation, the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the ten (10) allotted business days.

20.5.11 The decision of the Dean regarding the appeal of a decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion not involving Dismissal is final.

## **20.6 Appealing a Decision by the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion Involving Dismissal**

20.6.1 The student may appeal to the Dean when the decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion is to uphold a dismissal.

20.6.2 The request must be made in writing by the student in a letter addressed to the Dean and is limited to an **administrative review**, indicating alleged improprieties in the process/hearing by/before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, or new information that was unavailable to the student at the time of the hearing before the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion. The request is not to be used for additional fact finding. New information, **which was available but not presented** to the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion by the student, will not be considered.

20.6.3 This letter of appeal must be received by the Office of the Registrar within five (5) business days, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying them of the actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion.

20.6.4 The purpose of the appeal is to ensure that appropriate procedure has been adequately followed so that the opportunity clearly existed to introduce extenuating or other mitigating circumstances.

20.6.5 The Dean may serve alone or may select up to three members of the faculty, administrative staff or others, as they deem appropriate, to serve as an Appeals Advisory Committee to gain the benefit of their input prior to rendering a final decision.

20.6.6 If convened, the Appeals Advisory Committee shall commence to consider the appeal within five (5) working days after receipt of the written notice of the appeal, not including the day of receipt of the appeal letter by the Office of the Registrar. In the absence of the Dean, the Vice President of Academic Affairs of Salus University will appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.

20.6.7 The review will be carried out using all available documents, records of the Committee on Academic Promotion, and, if necessary, testimony by the CAP Committee Chair or other individuals, as deemed appropriate by the Dean or the Appeals Advisory Committee.

20.6.8 The student may elect to forward to the Office of the Registrar written statements in support of the appeal. The student shall be given the opportunity to appear in person before the Dean and the Appeals Advisory Committee.

20.6.9 Upon completion of their investigation, the Dean shall render their decision or the decision of the Appeals Advisory Committee in writing to the student. The student shall be notified of the decision in writing within ten (10) business days of having filed the request for appeal with the Office of the Registrar, not including the day the appeal is received in the Office of the Registrar.

20.6.10 The student shall be accorded full student rights and privileges until all appeals have been exhausted with the exception of participation in patient care activities.

20.6.11 The decision of the Dean is final. There are no further appeals within the College or University.

## **21. STUDENT RECORDS**

### **21.1 Student Records and Files**

- 21.1.1 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintenance of all official academic records of students. Salus University's policy regarding creation and maintenance of student records is based upon practices recommended by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. In addition, the school's policy is governed by regulations affecting educational institutions, written by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education or any other government agency. Students may review a copy of these policies in the Salus University Office of Student Affairs. Please refer to the Student Handbook or the Registrar's Office for current policy.
- 21.1.2 Salus University maintains a Permanent Record File on each student. Included in a student file are the original application form, the undergraduate transcript/record, and the letter of acceptance. Subsequent to enrollment, the student file contains course enrollment/remediation forms, grades, letters of correspondence concerning the student, letters indicating actions of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion, communications concerning scholarships, and other correspondence relating to the student's education.
- 21.1.3 In addition to written material kept in the student file, Salus University maintains computerized general information about each student, courses taken, grades, summary statements of academic action, and enrollment information.
- 21.1.4 It is institutional policy that the material contained in the student records is confidential, with transfer of such information within the College/University permissible only for legitimate academic purposes. The school complies with the provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and as subsequently amended.

### **21.2 Examination of Student Records**

- 21.2.1 A student, by means of a written request submitted to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs and the Office of the Registrar, may examine their student records at Salus University. These records shall be made available to the student for review as promptly as possible. The records shall be examined in the office in which they are kept, under observation of administrative personnel, and shall not be altered, destroyed, or removed from the office. Material in records that relates to more than one individual will not be made available for direct review, but the student will be told about the information in such records which relates to them. Former students have the same access to their records as those currently enrolled; however, certain information will not be retained on a permanent basis by the University (e.g., admissions materials, registration forms, and course withdrawal forms). All persons must sign the written form kept within the record and indicate the date and the reason for the review.
- 21.2.2 A student may obtain a copy of their student record. The costs of photocopying or duplicating records shall be produced by the student.
- 21.2.3 Students may challenge the accuracy of information contained in a record or may challenge that information if a record represents an undue invasion of privacy. In the case of a challenge, the student should meet with the faculty member or administrative official responsible for the information being questioned. The faculty member or administrative official may, through discussions with the student, concur with the

challenged points and correct or delete the information accordingly. Those corrections or deletions must be chronicled in writing. If a change in grade is submitted, the faculty member must indicate in writing the reason for doing so and complete the appropriate change of grade form. If the faculty member is unwilling to amend the academic record, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the department in which the course is offered.

- 21.2.4 Any review of information in the file by faculty members and administrative officers, other than by those persons responsible for keeping the records, requires the dated signature of the faculty member or administrative official on a written form kept within the records. The reviewer must include a brief statement indicating the reason for review of the record.

### **21.3 Transfer of Student Information**

- 21.3.1 The student will be notified of the transfer of any information within the student file to persons or institutions other than those associated or affiliated with Salus University. Such information may be transferred only:
- 21.3.1.1 Upon written request of the student to persons they designate (e.g., educational institutions, hospitals, licensing boards);
  - 21.3.1.2 To organizations responsible for the accreditation of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and Salus University;
  - 21.3.1.3 To federal or state educational agencies, providing the agency requests the information in writing and specifies the purpose for acquiring the information; or
  - 21.3.1.4 By reason of a valid subpoena or judicial order of a court.
  - 21.3.1.4.1 It must be noted that Salus University is not permitted to send to other agencies or individual copies of non-Salus University transcripts, Optometry Admission Test scores, National Board of Examiners in Optometry score results, or other non-Salus University score reports or information. Requests for copies of those transcripts or scores must be made directly to the organizations that originally provided such information.
- 21.3.2 The Office of the Registrar will prepare transcripts of optometry students based upon information in the student file. Upon the receipt of a written request, the student must identify the persons, institutions, hospitals, or licensing boards to which the letters or transcripts are to be sent. A student may also request a copy of the transcript and may challenge the accuracy of the information to be transmitted. The initial challenge should be made to the Office of the Registrar, who prepares the letter or transcript with the ultimate appeal to the Salus University Dean of Student Affairs.
- 21.3.3 Letters of clinical evaluation are the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Optometric Clinical Affairs.
- 21.3.4 The records of students shall be kept under the name used for admission to the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University unless the student files a change of name form with the Office of the Registrar while in attendance at the College. Names cannot be modified after the student's graduation.

### **21.4 Release of Information (Grades, Tests, Scores, etc.)**



- 21.4.1 Official grades can be transmitted from Salus University to another institution only through the Office of the Registrar. Departments may not transmit grade information on behalf of the Office of the Registrar or the College/University to another institution, department, individual faculty member, Registrar, etc.
- 21.4.2 If a student requests a letter of recommendation, the individual faculty member may state the grade received in the course and a narrative.
- 21.4.3 Copies of examinations with or without answers may be made available to students at the instructor's discretion. Curves, distribution, etc., may be posted if desired.
- 21.4.4 Federal and State Laws prohibit the posting of scores, grades, etc., that can in any way identify a student. When a faculty member posts grades, they should do so using the assigned Test Identification Number so that no student is easily identifiable.
- 21.4.5 Scores on examinations may be given to students on an individual basis (i.e., placed in the student's standard or electronic mailbox by departments in a "sealed" manner).

## **21.5 Transcripts**

- 21.5.1 Only final grades appear on transcripts. If a failing (F) grade or grade of D has been received in a course, the grade appears on the transcript as well as the remediation and/or reenrollment grade(s) (see Section 13). The final transcript grades issued at graduation cannot be modified or challenged except for clerical errors.

## **22. ENROLLMENT**

- 22.1 The College expects that all candidates for degrees and certificates will be enrolled full time during consecutive academic periods (years, terms, or months depending on the year of the program) until the completion of the requirements for the degree or program have been completed.

## **23. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

- 23.1 A student enrolled at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry is considered to be making satisfactory academic progress unless notified otherwise.
- 23.2 A student who is experiencing academic difficulty should, at their earliest opportunity, first speak with the course instructor or coordinator, or clinical faculty member/service chief regarding their performance.
- 23.3 The student should contact the Office of Student Affairs regarding tutoring support. Personal counseling opportunities can be explored through the Center for Personal and Professional Development. .
- 23.4 Other individuals within the College and University such as the appropriate Associate Dean, and/or member of the Salus University Office of Student Affairs should also be contacted to discuss the student's academic performance.
- 23.5 Satisfactory academic progress through the various health professions education programs is an eligibility criterion for all students who receive Title IV student financial assistance. Students must carry a minimum of nine (9) credit hours when enrolled in a

semester term or six (6) credit hours when enrolled in a quarter term to have full time student status for financial aid purposes.

23.6 A course not taken for a grade is not counted for these purposes.

23.7 Under normal circumstances, all didactic coursework must be completed in no more than 5 years. A student must complete the entire program within seven (7) years (not including approved Leaves of Absence) and must present evidence of continued satisfactory academic progress at all times. The Dean must approve any exceptions to this total length of program.

## **24. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

24.1 All Salus University programs follow the “Leave of Absence Policy” for student Leave of Absence. This policy is available on the Salus University Website.

### **24.2 Return from a Leave of Absence**

24.2.1 The student must notify the Office of the Registrar in writing of their intent to return to the College. The Office of the Registrar will notify the Dean of Student Affairs of the student’s intent to return. The Dean of Student Affairs will review the student’s request and notify the Dean and or their designee(s) of their status.

24.2.2 Upon approval to return from a Leave of Absence, **regardless of the type**, the student’s permanent record and status is reviewed by the Dean of the College and/or their designee(s). Upon returning from an approved leave, the Dean or their designee(s) will determine the student’s entry point into the curriculum.

24.2.3 A repeat of a course or portions of the curriculum previously completed successfully, or other academic and/or clinical conditions may be required or applied if deemed educationally necessary. Additional tuition/fees for repeated work may also apply.

24.2.4 Students are not permitted to engage in any educational activities until their program of study has been determined by the Dean and/or their designee(s) and recorded in the Office of the Registrar.

## **25. WITHDRAWAL**

25.1 The following sets forth policy guidelines for student withdrawal from Salus University. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of students and of the University. Unusual issues, not anticipated by these guidelines, may arise and will be managed appropriate to the individual circumstances.

25.1.1 A student may withdraw voluntarily from the College/University at any time. A student who wishes to withdraw must obtain a withdrawal from the Office of the Registrar and indicate in writing the reason(s) for the withdrawal. The student must then meet with the Dean and/or their designee(s), followed by a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs.

25.2 The official records of a student will not be released until the student has obtained the required signatures on the withdrawal form and returned the form to the Office of the Registrar.

25.3 A student who wishes to seek re-admission to the Doctor of Optometry degree program must follow the procedures outlined in Section 26 of this policy (Re-admission).

- 25.4 If the student is granted re-admission, the Dean of the College and/or their designee(s) will determine the content of the student's academic program, entry point, conditions, and requirements pertinent to the readmitted student's curriculum.

## **26. RE-ADMISSION**

### **26.1 Student Dismissed for Academic Reasons/Student Who has Withdrawn**

- 26.1.1 A student in either of these categories who wishes to be readmitted to the Pennsylvania College of Optometry should re-apply to the Office of Admissions in the same way as any new applicant. Application procedures are outlined in the Salus University catalog.

### **26.2 Student Dismissed for Non-Academic Reasons**

- 26.2.1 A student in this category should submit their application to the Office of Admissions and the application will be reviewed by the Dean.

## **27. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 27.1 Graduation and the awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of academic, clinical, and professional requirements.
- 27.2 The student is responsible for understanding all requirements for graduation and completing them within the prescribed course of study.
- 27.3 The student must successfully pass all internal examinations and satisfactorily complete all required clinical activities. The student must successfully complete the entire prescribed course of study with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better.
- 27.4 The student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the faculty, the professional attributes and conduct necessary for the practice of optometry.
- 27.5 The student must have demonstrated integrity and honesty through their personal and professional behaviors.
- 27.6 Student misconduct such as cheating on examinations, falsifying clinical data, or activities constituting criminal behavior may result in the denial of the Doctor of Optometry degree even though the individual has satisfactorily completed the academic program.
- 27.7 The College/University reserves the right to place on probation, suspend or expel from the institution any student who willfully violates any rule or regulation of the College/University or the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or other state, Federal, or local government, whether or not convicted in a criminal court.
- 27.8 Upon satisfactory completion of the academic and professional standards set by the College/University and the optometry curriculum, the faculty and Dean of the College will recommend candidates to the Provost/VicePresident of Academic Affairs for conferral of the Doctor of Optometry degree.

## **27.9 Graduation with Honors**

- 27.9.1 Exceptional work accomplished by a student is acknowledged after completion of the academic and clinical program by awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree with Summa Cum Laude (3.75 GPA), Magna Cum Laude (3.5 GPA), or Cum Laude (3.25 GPA) for exceptional academic/clinical work throughout the period of optometric education. In addition to the stated grade point averages for academic performance to receive the above designations, students must have also demonstrated superior clinical performance by having receiving the following:
- 27.9.2 A grade of Honors (H) in four (4) of the seven (7) Patient Care/Externships, beginning with the summer term of the third year.

## **28. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- 28.1 The University complies with federal and state regulations regarding students with disabilities. The policy pertaining to Students with Disabilities is detailed in the Salus University website.