

# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

**Academic Year 2021-2022**

**Public Health Program**

**DOCTOR IN PUBLIC HEALTH  
EPIDEMIOLOGY**

# Ponce Health Sciences University



Tamdiu Discendum Est. Quamdiu Vivas

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## List of Abbreviations

1. SAP- Satisfactory Academic Progress
2. DrPH- Doctor in Public Health
3. SPC- Student Promotion Committee
4. PHP- Public Health Program
5. PHSU- Ponce Health Sciences University
6. ILE- Integrative Learning Experience
7. APE- Applied Practical Experience
8. P- pass
9. NP- No Pass
10. I- Incomplete

# SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

## I. Introduction

A Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) has been established to ensure that the Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) students complete the academic program within the acceptable time frame and with the expected quality of performance. This policy also ensures that the student financial aid requirements set forth by federal regulations have been met.

The Coordinators should evaluate student's academic progress at the end of each trimester. This document will be revised when institutional catalog its updated, or before that if necessary.

## II. Scope

This policy applies to all DrPH students enrolled at Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU).

## III. General Requirements

### ***A. Time Frame for Completion of the Academic Program***

A student will have a time frame for completion of the DrPH degree of five (5) years. In some cases, after the academic advising of the track coordinator and authorization of the Public Health Program Associate Dean, the student will be allowed to enroll for another three (3) years beyond the established time frame, for a total maximum time frame of eight (8) years.

The total of 63 credits for completion of a degree include those graduate courses accredited on admission to the Program.

### Student Status (Full time, Part time)

*“Student Status (full-time or half-time). A student with six or more credits per semester/trimester will be considered a full-time student. A student with three to five credits per semester/trimester will be considered a half-time student and a student with less 3 credits will be considered a less than half time student” (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, (p. 75) & PHSU Catalog 2017-2020, (p. 13)). A student should be enrolled to at least 3 credits to be eligible for financial aid.*

## **B. Completion of the DrPH Requirements**

### **1. DrPH Students Progress and Grade Requirements:**

Students must complete all courses within the established time frame (maximum of 8 years). The Program requires a minimum of 63 credits.

#### **a. At the Student Promotion Committee (SPC) level:**

- A student must complete each academic year with a minimum grade point average of 3.00 (in a 4.0 scale grade). Any student failing to meet 3.00-point GPA standard of performance at the end of the academic year will be:
  - Referred by the Public Health Program (PHP) Associate Dean to the SPC for the following classification and/or remedial actions below:
    - ✓ Placed on **probation** and referred by the PHP Associate Dean to the PHSU Student Promotion Committee (PHSU-SPC).
    - ✓ Will be sent to academic counseling by the track coordinator and could be provided with a special enrollment with a decreased academic load,
  - Failing to the remedial actions consecutively at the SPC level, he/she will be referred by the PHP Associate Dean to the SPC for his/her **dismissal**.

#### **b. At the Public Health Program (PHP) level:**

##### **i. Required Courses:**

- A student that failed (obtaining less than B) at any **Required** course at the end of any trimester:
  - Will be referred by the PHP Track Coordinator for the following classification and/or remedial actions below:
    - ✓ Repeat the course when available (only one opportunity will be provided), this is mandatory and no replaceable.
    - ✓ Should obtain A or B when repeated.
    - ✓ Will be sent to academic counseling by the track coordinator and could be provided with a special enrollment with a decreased academic load,

- Failing to the remedial actions consecutively at the SPC level, he/she will be referred by the PHP Associate Dean to the SPC for his/her **dismissal**.

**ii. Elective Courses:**

- A student that **failed** (obtaining less than C) at any **Elective** course at the end of any trimester:
  - Will be referred by the PHP Track Coordinator for the following classification and/or remedial actions below:
    - ✓ Repeat the course when available (only one opportunity will be provided). (This is mandatory and not replaceable)
    - ✓ Only a **maximum** of 1 elective courses could be repeated.
    - ✓ Should obtain A or B when repeated.
    - ✓ Will be sent to academic counseling by the track coordinator and could be provided with a special enrollment with a decreased academic load,
- Failing to the remedial actions consecutively at the SPC level, he/she will be referred by the PHP Associate Dean to the SPC for his/her **dismissal**.

## **DrPH Required Courses**

REQUIRED COURSES	
DPH 6010. Epidemiological Research Methods	3
DPH 6011 Epidemiological Research Methods Application	3
DPH 6300: Public Health Leadership & Advocacy	3
DPH 7015: Biostatistics for Epidemiology	3
DPH 7163: Sampling	3
DPH 5503: Bioethics in Public Health	3
DPH 6340: Health Services Administration and Management	3
DPH 6253: Survey Questionnaire Design in Public Health; Epidemiology	3

- Test Construction	
DPH 7002: Advance Biostatistics	3
DPH 7047: Epidemiological Data Analysis	3
DPH 6350: Planning and Evaluation Health Programs	3
DPH 6320: Teaching Epidemiology	3
DPH 7184: Demography	3
DPH 7023: Applied Epidemiology and Surveillance	3
DPH 5502: Health Policy	3
IHD-919: Inter-Professional Perspectives in Health Disparities	1
DPH 7082: CONSULTING PRACTICUM	2
DPH 8005: DISSERTATION	9
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>

## DrPH Electives Courses

ELECTIVES (SELECT 6 CREDITS)	
DPH 6203: Clinical Trials	3
DPH 7181: Public Health Education	3
DPH 7143: Epidemiology of Tobacco	3
DPH 6601: Grant Writing in Epidemiology	3
DPH 6103: Epidemiology of Diseases of Major Public Health Importance	3
DPH 7201: Meta-analysis	3
DPH 5601: Writing Papers in Public Health	3
DPH 7073: Epidemiology of Chronic Diseases	3
DPH 7173: Social Epidemiology	3
DPH 6133: Epidemiology of Work Related Diseases	3
DPH 6153: Epidemiology of Transmissible Diseases	3
DPH 7193: Cancer Epidemiology	3
DPH 6123: Cardiovascular Epidemiology	3
DPH 7113: Mental Health Epidemiology	3
DPH 7200: Bias	3
DPH7103: Genetic Epidemiology	3
DPH 7153: Epidemiology of Arthritis, Autoimmune and Musculoskeletal Disease	3
DPH 5734: Fundamentals of Pathophysiology	3
DPH 7133: Environmental Problems & Solutions in Epidemiology	3
DPH 6330: Health Economics	3
DPH 7123: Laboratory Rotation	3
DPH 6310: Legal Issues in Epidemiology	3
DPH 7024: Toxicology	3
DPH 7043: Injury Epidemiology	3
DPH 7700: Independent Study: Special project	3
DPH 7014: Environmental Epidemiology	3
DPH 7183: Post Market Surveillance	3
DPH 7010: Epidemiology Communicable and Tropical Diseases	3
DPH 7300: Applied Public Health Project	3

## 2. Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) Grading Requirement

The Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) is graded on a *Pass/Fail* basis and it is constituted by two requirements: to pass a comprehensive examination at their 2<sup>nd</sup> year, and to defend and approve a dissertation.

### a. Comprehensive Examination

All students are required to take and pass the overall Comprehensive Examination with a grade of 80%. Students who pass the overall examination and who complete all DrPH requirements can graduate. Students who do not pass the first opportunity of the Comprehensive Examination have the opportunity for one retake, preferable within the same trimester but up to one academic year. This retake may contain different questions than the first Comprehensive Examination. Waiting for the retake longer than one trimester will delay the enrollment to DPH 8005 (dissertation).

Students who are not successful on either the first attempt or the retake within the same trimester will need to enroll, when available, at the course(s) were the student failed the competencies. Students who failed at these repeated courses, will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee for dismissal. Please refer to DrPH-Epidemiology ILE 2020 Manual for details.

### b. Dissertation

All students are required to develop and defend a dissertation to graduate. Students will enroll at dissertation after approving comprehensive examinations which usually occurs at the beginning of their third year. The dissertation process and actions that should be expected to happen during dissertation to be qualified as In-Progress or Pass are available at the following table:



ETAPAS DISERTACION DOCTORAL	Year/Trim ester
<b>Phase No.1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation Director Assigned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Search for the dissertation topic</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Compulsory attendance to workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workshop: “Overcoming Obstacles to be Successful in my Doctoral Thesis” (“Superando obstáculos para tener éxito en mi tesis doctoral”)</li> <li>○ Workshop: Dissertation Manual</li> <li>○ Workshop: Reference search and bibliography at PHSU library database.</li> <li>○ Workshop: APA Style references.</li> <li>○ Workshop: <i>Endnote</i>.</li> <li>○ Workshop: Plagiarism</li> <li>○ Workshop: IRB. Provide evidence of having obtained CITI certifications</li> <li>○ Development and approval of “Prospectus” (“Prospecto” -<b>Appendix 3</b>)</li> <li>○ Dissertation Committee Formation (<b>Appendix 1</b>)</li> <li>○ Sign Release of Responsibility in case of non-approval of the Dissertation Defense form (<i>Hoja de Relevode Responsabilidad ante la No Aprobación de Defensa de Disertación - Appendix 2</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> year (1 <sup>st</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No.2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the Dissertation Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Justification</li> <li>○ Literature Review</li> <li>○ Methodology</li> <li>○ Bibliography (100 or more)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> year (2 <sup>nd</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No.3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Dissertation Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Justification</li> <li>○ Literature Review</li> <li>○ Methodology</li> <li>○ Bibliography (100 or more)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3 <sup>rd</sup> year, (3 <sup>rd</sup> trimestre)
<b>Phase No.4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turning in documents of dissertation proposal defense two weeks before the established date (<b>Appendix 6</b>)</li> <li>• Dissertation Proposal Defense (<b>Appendixes 7-9, 15-17, 19</b>)</li> <li>• Incorporation of Recommendations</li> <li>• Turning in documents to IRB</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> year (1 <sup>st</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No. 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Gathering</li> <li>• Creation and/or management of Data banks</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> year (2 <sup>nd</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No. 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Gathering</li> <li>• Creation and/or management of Data banks</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> year (3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No.7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Interpretation of Results</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Conclusions</li> </ul>	5 <sup>th</sup> year (1 <sup>st</sup> semester)
<b>Phase No.8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turning in doctoral thesis defense documents two weeks before the established date (<b>Appendix 10</b>)</li> <li>• Sign the Release of Responsibility upon the Non-Approval of Dissertation Form (<i>Hoja de Relevode Responsabilidad ante la No Aprobación de Defensa de Disertación Appendix 2</i>)</li> <li>• Doctoral Thesis (DISSERTATION?) Defense (<b>Appendixes 11-14</b>)</li> </ul>	5 <sup>th</sup> year (2 <sup>nd</sup> trimester)
<b>Phase No.9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turning in bound manuscript (<b>Appendix 18</b>)</li> <li>• Present evidence of an article submits to peer-reviewed and indexed journal.</li> </ul>	5 <sup>th</sup> year (3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester)

### 3. Applied Practical Experience (APE) Grading Requirement

To graduate, the student must complete an Applied Practical Experience (APE) course, DPH 7082.

Regardless of the amount or level of prior experience, all DrPH students engage in one or more applied practice experiences in which students are responsible for completion of at least one project that is meaningful for an organization and to advanced public health practice. The meaningful project(s) may be completed as a discrete experience (such as a practicum or internship), qualified workplace activities or integrated into program coursework.

1. The grading for the DPH 7082 (APE) is Pass (P) or Fail (F). Obtaining F at DPH 7082 (APE) will be required to repeat and/or retake the course(s) when available.
2. If the student fails again to Pass the course, he/she will be referred to the PHSU SPC.
3. The DPH 7082 course-passing grade is independent to the 3.00 GPA average criteria.
4. A grade of "I" (Incomplete) will only be allowed under very special circumstances as determined by the faculty member teaching that course. The student must remove the "I" (Incomplete) by the end of the next trimester or an administrative "F" will replace it.

*"Incomplete work due to illness or other serious circumstances during the course will be handled according to departmental policies, which must be provided to the students in writing at the beginning of each term. Faculty are not obligated to repeat lecture/laboratory topics that were presented at scheduled times and dates"* (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, p. 43).

## IV. PHSU-PHP Policies & Protocols

### A. Class Attendance Policy

The Public Health Program of the Ponce Health Sciences University class attendance is compulsory. Student should contact the instructor by phone or mail if they cannot attend or will arrive late. More than three non-excused session absences per course may constitute a course dismissal. The Instructor is responsible to inform Registrar office of no-show students or students with three unjustified absences for their corresponding action.

## **B. Cross Registration Courses Policy**

Graduate courses not offered at PHSU could be taken at other institution only with permission and approval of the DrPH Coordinator, Associate Dean for Public Health and the Dean for Health Sciences. See catalog information related to Cross Registration:

*“Cross Registration Upon the approval of the Program Directors, students enrolled in a Program may take courses from another graduate Program at PHSU. The courses taken from the other Program must not be offered in their Program. A maximum of credit hours for cross registration is determined by the Program Director based on the maximum free elective courses in the Program’s curriculum. The student must be a regular student in his/her Program and in satisfactory academic progress to be able to benefit from cross registration. The process to be followed is:*

- 1. Student must submit a written request to his/her Program Director with the intention with evidence of his/her status as regular student and satisfactory academic progress.*
- 2. The Program Director will consult with the other Program Director to receive authorization.*
- 3. The primary Program Director will submit a written request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval or disapproval. If it is approved, copy of the approval will be sent to the Registrar’s and Financial Aid Office.*
- 4. The Program Director will inform the student of the decision.” (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, pp. 9-10).*

## **C. Reverse Dismissal**

If the student obtained a reversed dismissal, after being sent to Promotions Committee he/she should comply with the program Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for the approval of financial aid.

#### **D. Professional Behavior Requirement (Honor Code)**

The students should conduct themselves in accordance with the norms for professional conduct set forth by the Ponce Health Science University at all times. In case of unacceptable professional behavior, the corresponding Dean or the Program Chairperson will refer the case to the Promotions Committee. If the recommendation of the Student Promotion Committee is to dismiss the student, the student has the right to follow the appeal process (PHSU Catalog 2017-2020, p. 153).

*“In their pursuit for academic, personal, and professional excellence, students of the Ponce Health Sciences University have adopted this Honor Code. The principles of this Honor Code are intended to aid students in maintaining a high level of ethical conduct in concordance with the educational philosophy of our institution. These are standards to enable students to determine the propriety of their conduct in relation to peers, members of the faculty, administration, and patients” (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, (p.63) & PSHU Catalog 2017-2020, (p. 69)).*

#### **Principles**

- Students have the responsibility to uphold and maintain the highest degree of personal and professional integrity.
- Students are encouraged to seek appropriate counsel if deemed necessary.
- Ethical growth should be coincident with academic growth among the student body.
- To evidence the need to combine personal honor with communal responsibility the following precepts are specifically, but not exclusively, expected to guide the conduct of each member of the Ponce Health Science University student body:
- Each student must work independently and honestly on all examinations.
- Plagiarism is considered a major ethical offense and subject to reprimands, referrals to corresponding committees
- Each student will be trustful and dutiful in carrying out clinical and academic responsibilities.

The success of the Honor Code depends on the personal integrity, mutual trust, and cooperation of all members of the Ponce Health Sciences University community: students, faculty, and administration.

## ***E. Academic Probation and Financial Aid Eligibility***

Any student failing to meet the grade requirement might be placed on academic probation for one trimester but will be eligible for financial aid. Students that fail to comply with grade requirements after the prescribed probation time will be referred to the Student Promotion Committee for dismissal from the program.

## ***F. Student Promotion Committee Process & Appeal***

### **1. Academic Issues**

Students referred to the PHSU Student Promotion Committee (SPC) will have the opportunity to send a letter to be considered at the meeting with information and details related to this referral. The student also could request to have audience at the meeting with the PHSU-SPC for explaining his/her case.

Students notified that the PHSU Students Promotion Committee (SPC) decided to dismiss them from the DrPH Program, or that he/she must repeat failed courses during the next academic year, will have the right to appeal the decision within seven working days after receiving the notification.

The appeal or due process presented below must be followed.

The student will appeal in writing to the Public Health Students Promotion Committee (SPC). The letter should include all relevant documentation to support the request. The Committee will evaluate the reasons and evidence submitted to determine if they would change their initial decision. The SPC has 48 hours to submit its decision to the Associate Dean for Public Health, who will notify the decision to the student.

If an Ad-Hoc Committee is appointed, they will notify the student in writing the date and time set to appealing meeting. The Ad-Hoc Committee has forty-eight (48) hours to submit a recommendation to the Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs. The Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs will consider the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation and make the final decision within forty-eight (48) hours.

Any decision will be reported to the student in writing. The decision made by the Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs is final.

## 2. Unacceptable Professional Behavior

The Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs or the Executive Director of Student Affairs will refer the case to the PHSU SPC. If the recommendation of the SPC is to dismiss the student, the appeal process will include the appointment of an Ad Hoc committee to sustain or change the Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs or the Executive Director of Student Affairs decision. After this institutional instance, the student may appeal again to the Chancellor. The Chancellor decision is final.

### *G. Reinstatement of Financial Aid*

Financial Aid eligibility is contingent upon satisfactory academic progress. It is the student's responsibility to request reinstatement of financial aid.

### *H. Leave of Absence Policy (LOA)*

*“A student must request from the Registrar’s office an LOA at least 30 days prior to the LOA commencement date, unless medical circumstances require immediate authorization (e.g., automobile accident). A personal or medical leave may be authorized when a student is experiencing compelling personal and medical circumstances that are temporarily affecting his/her academic progress. The students must submit a physician’s note certifying the medical problem or reason. The total time of leave cannot exceed 180 days within a 12-month period. A student who fails to return after an authorized LOA will be academically withdrawn and a R2T4 calculation will be performed and subsequently an exit counseling instructional letter will be sent to the student. (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, p. 44).”*

## **I. Withdrawal Policy**

A student that decides to withdraw from the School must submit a letter of resignation to the President stating their reasons for the withdrawal. Once the Dean has accepted the letter of resignation, the student shall proceed as follows:

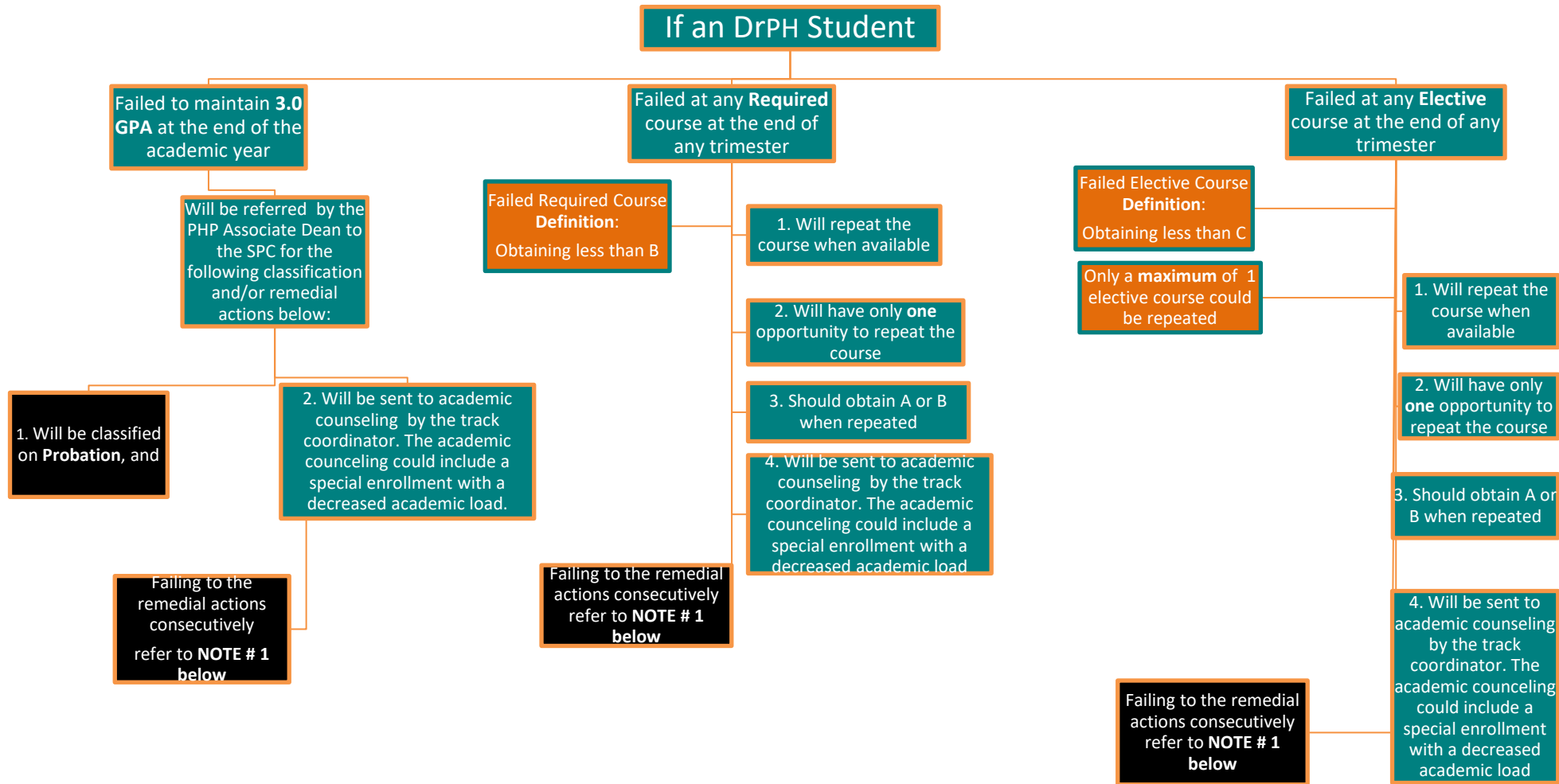
- “1. The student must obtain a withdrawal form from the Registrar's Office and fill out the required information about academic program and courses.*
- 2. The student must obtain clearance for withdrawal from the following:*
  - a. Library: The Librarian must certify that the student does not have any outstanding debt or have any library materials checked out.*
  - b. Finance Office: Must state that the student has no outstanding debts to the School before any other further step is taken.*
  - c. Financial Aid Office: Students, who have applied for or obtained any kind of financial aid or loan through the School, must attend an exit interview and obtain the signature of the Director of Financial Aid.*
  - d. Student Affairs or any other department prescribed at the Clearance form: Students must obtain the signature of each Director or Dean.*
  - e. Registrar: After all signatures, have been obtained, the Registrar will certify the student's withdrawal and make the proper entry in their records.*
  - f. The student must settle all financial obligations with PHSU or no transcripts or certifications will be issued.*
  - g. The withdrawal is allowed until the last day of class (semester/trimester), before start the final exams. (Ponce Health Sciences University Student Policy Manual 2018-2020, (p. 10) & PHSU Catalog 2017-2020, (pp. 72-73)).”*

## **J. Enforcement**

The President, the Dean for Academic Affairs and the Dean for Student Affairs, the Registrar and the Financial Aid Director will receive all pertinent data to ensure proper enforcement of the policies set forth.

**DrPH SAP revised on July, 2021**  
**By: PHP-CC Curriculum Committee**

# DrPH SAP ACTION FLOWCHART 2021



## NOTES:

1. In case that the student, after being provided with the recommended remedial actions, at the SPC or PHP level, continues to fail, he/she will be referred by the PHP Associate Dean to the SPC for his/her **dismissal**.
2. When a student is in Probation category due to not achieving the 3.0 GPA, he/she will have one trimester to obtain 3.0 GPA BUT this should be checked by the SPC for the availability of the course to repeat.
3. All these actions apply to the entire period as an DrPH student.