

**Assessment and Program Dismissal  
Virginia Commonwealth University Health System  
Pharmacy Residency Programs**

**Description**

The responsibility for judging the competence and professionalism of residents in pharmacy graduate programs (PGY1 and PGY2) rests principally with department directors, managers, and program directors. These educators are guided in their judgment of resident performance by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists, by certifying and licensing Boards, by ethical standards for their professions, and by applicable policies of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System. The resident relationship with the institution is an education and training relationship. Residents are compensated as employees of the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, the teaching hospital of Virginia Commonwealth University, but the resident's employment relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University Health System is derivative of and dependent upon the resident's continued enrollment in a graduate pharmacy training program of the Health System.

The following policies and procedures for the Assessment and Program Dismissal of residents in Graduate Pharmacy Education (hereinafter Assessment Policy) apply to all residents enrolled in graduate pharmacy education programs at Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems. The Assessment Policy governs the qualifications of residents to remain in training as well as their completion of residency certification requirement, and its provisions apply in all instances in which such qualification and/or certification is at issue.

**Procedures**

Residency Program Assessment Structure and Plan

The program director for each residency program has primary responsibility for monitoring the competence and professionalism of program residents, initial counseling, probation or other remedial or adverse action. Residents will be evaluated on individual specialty requirements, program requirements, and compliance with University and Health System policies. The programs coordinator may assist the program director in these functions. The Director of Pharmacy Services may exercise the option to serve as the final departmental decision-maker in response to the programs coordinator's or program director's recommendations. The programs assessment structure and plan must be in writing.

Performance Reviews

Each resident receives a written summative evaluation at the conclusion of each rotation. Quarterly summative evaluations are provided for longitudinal residency requirements (i.e., ambulatory care, research project, and staffing). Criteria-based evaluations are provided to assess performance relating to presentations. All rotation evaluations are signed by the resident, preceptor of record, and the program director. Quarterly reviews of the annual training plans are performed by the program director and signed by the resident, resident advisor, and program director.

Additionally, requirements of the residency include meeting all deadlines and demonstrating a professional attitude throughout all activities. All pharmacy staff members may provide feedback to the program director regarding timeliness and professionalism.



### Discipline/Dismissal for Academic Reasons

GROUND: Residents are required to maintain satisfactory academic performance. Academic performance that is below satisfactory is grounds for discipline and/or dismissal. Below satisfactory academic performance is defined as a failed rotation, and/or marginal or unsatisfactory performance, as evidenced by preceptor evaluations in the areas of clinical judgment, pharmacy knowledge, interpretation of data, patient management, communication skills, interactions with patients and other healthcare professionals, professional appearance and demeanor, and/or motivation and initiative.

It is expected that all residents will be licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia by the start of the program on July 1st. Failure to be licensed in the Virginia before the start of the first clinical rotation will jeopardize the anticipated progress of the program as an alternative first rotation may be necessary. Residents who fail to become licensed in Virginia before the start of the second rotation, or who do not pass the NAPLEX or Virginia Law Exam within two attempts, will be dismissed from the program.

PROCEDURES: Before dismissing a resident for academic reasons, the program must give the resident:

1. Notice of performance deficiencies;
2. An opportunity to remedy the deficiencies; and
3. Written notice of the possibility of dismissal if the deficiencies are not corrected.

Residents disciplined and/or dismissed for academic reasons may appeal the action via the Departmental Appeals process described in Section VIII (below).

### Discipline/Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons

GROUND: Grounds for discipline and/or dismissal of a resident for non-academic reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to comply with the bylaws, policies, rules, or regulations of the University and the Health System, affiliated hospitals, medical/pharmacy staff, department or with the terms and conditions of this document.
2. Commission by the resident of an offense under federal, state or local laws or ordinances which impacts upon the abilities of the resident to appropriately perform his/her normal duties in the residency program.
3. Conduct, which violates professional and/or ethical standards; disrupts the operations of the University or Health System, their departments, or affiliated hospitals; or disregards the rights or welfare of patients, visitors, or hospital/clinical staff.

PROCEDURES: Prior to the imposition of any discipline for non-academic reasons, the resident shall be afforded:

1. Clear and actual notice by the appropriate University or Health System representative of charges that may result in discipline, including where appropriate, the identification of persons who have made allegations against the resident and the specific nature of the allegations; and
2. An opportunity for the resident to appear in person and respond to the allegations.

It is preferable that this notification be in writing; however, on occasion, it may be done verbally. If notification is verbal, then it must be followed by a written notification within three business days.



Residents disciplined and/or dismissed for academic reasons may appeal the action via the Departmental Appeals process described in Section VIII (below).

### Probation

**INITIAL PROBATION:** The program director must document counseling of a resident who is not performing at an adequate level of competence, demonstrates unprofessional or unethical behavior, engages in misconduct, or otherwise fails to fulfill the responsibilities of the program in which he/she is enrolled. If the resident does not demonstrate sufficient improvement following counseling (as defined by the program director) then the resident may be placed on probation. The program director may place the resident on probation without prior counseling if the lack of competence or behavior is sufficiently severe.

The purpose of probation is to give the resident specific notice of performance deficiencies and an opportunity to correct those deficiencies. Depending on the resident's performance during probation, the possible outcomes of the probationary period are: removal from probation with a return to good academic standing; continued probation with new or remaining deficiencies cited; or dismissal.

The resident must be informed in person of probation decisions and must be provided with a probation document that includes the following:

1. A statement of the grounds for probation including identified deficiencies or problem behaviors;
2. The duration of the probation which, ordinarily, will be at least one month;
3. A plan for remediation and criteria by which successful remediation will be judged;
4. Notice that failure to meet the conditions of probation could result in extended probation, additional training time, and/or suspension or dismissal from the program during or at the conclusion of the probationary period, and
5. Written acknowledgement by the resident of the receipt of the probation document.

**EXTENDED PROBATION:** The status of a resident on probation should be evaluated periodically, preferably every month, but at a minimum, every two months. If, at the end of the initial probation, the resident's performance remains unsatisfactory, probation either may be extended in accordance with the above guidelines (VII.A.1-5) or the resident may be suspended or dismissed from the program. Probationary actions must be reported to the Director of Pharmacy Services, and probation documents must be forwarded to the Director of Pharmacy Services for review before they are issued.

### Suspension and Dismissal

**SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL:** A resident may be suspended from clinical activities by his/her program director, the programs coordinator, or the Director of Pharmacy Services. This action may be taken in any situation in which continuation of clinical activities by the resident is deemed potentially detrimental or threatening to patient safety or the quality of patient care. Unless otherwise directed, a resident suspended from clinical activities may participate in other program activities. A decision involving suspension of clinical activities of a resident must be reviewed within three working days by the Director of Pharmacy Services (or his/her designee) to determine if the resident may return to clinical activities, and/or whether further actions is warranted (including, but not limited to, counseling, probation, fitness for duty evaluation, or summary dismissal).

**PROGRAM SUSPENSION:** A resident may be suspended from all program activities and duties by his or her program director, the programs coordinator, or the Director of Pharmacy Services. Program suspension may be imposed for conduct that is deemed to be grossly unprofessional, incompetent, erratic, potentially criminal, or threatening to the well-being of patients, staff, or the resident. A decision



involving program suspension of a resident must be reviewed within three working days by the Director of Pharmacy Services (or his/her designee) to determine if the resident may return to some or all program activities and duties and/or whether further action is warranted (including, but not limited to, counseling, probation, fitness for duty evaluation, or summary dismissal).

**DISMISSAL DURING OR AT THE CONCLUSION OF PROBATION:** Probationary status in a residency program constitutes notification to the resident that dismissal from the program can occur at any time (i.e., during or at the conclusion of probation). Dismissal prior to the conclusion of a probationary period may occur if conduct which gave rise to probation, is repeated or if grounds for Program Suspension or Summary Dismissal exist. Dismissal at the end of a probationary period may occur if the resident's performance remains unsatisfactory or for any of the foregoing reasons. The Director of Pharmacy Services must be notified prior to the dismissal of any resident during or at the conclusion of the probationary period.

**SUMMARY DISMISSAL:** For serious acts of incompetence, impairment, or unprofessional behavior, the program director, program coordinator, or Director of Pharmacy Services may immediately suspend a resident from all program activities and duties for a minimum of three days and, concurrently, issue a notice of dismissal effective at the end of the suspension period. The resident does not need to be on probation, nor at the end of a probationary period, for this action to be taken. The resident must be notified in writing for the reason for suspension and dismissal, and have an opportunity to respond to the action before dismissal is effective. The Director of Pharmacy Services must be notified of the dismissal plan.

### Residency Appeals Process

In the event a resident is dismissed from a program, or is the subject of any adverse action that is reported to the State Board of Pharmacy or a relevant specialty board, the resident may appeal such dismissal or adverse action as follows:

**DEPARTMENTAL APPEAL:** A resident may initiate a departmental appeal by submitting a written notice of appeal to the program director (with a copy to the programs coordinator and the Director of Pharmacy Services) within ten (10) working days of the date of the appealable action (hereinafter 'adverse action'). A departmental reviews committee that includes the program director, the programs coordinator, the Director of Pharmacy Services, resident's advisor, and departmental staff and rotation preceptors, if deemed appropriate will hear the department review. A departmental review hearing will be held within thirty (30) days following the receipt of the notice of appeal. The resident may select a preceptor advisor advocate to appear and participate on the resident's behalf at the hearing. It is the responsibility of the resident to secure the participation of a preceptor advisor. At the departmental review hearing, the program director (or his/her designee) will present a statement to support the adverse action and may present any relevant documentation, or other evidence. The resident will have the right to present evidence, and make statements in defense of his or her own position. After presentation of the evidence and arguments by both sides, the departmental reviews committee will meet in a closed session to consider the adverse action. The committee may uphold or reject the adverse action or may impose alternative action that may be more or less severe than the initial action. The committee's decision must be submitted in writing to the resident within ten (10) working dates of the close of the hearing.

### Other Considerations

External rules, regulations or laws govern mandatory reporting of problematic behavior or performance to licensing agencies or professional boards. The fact that such a report is made is not a matter which may give rise to the appeals process, only the adverse action as specified by this document is appealable.



Where mandatory reporting of problematic behavior or performance occurs, external agencies will be notified of the status of any internal appeal regarding the matter reported and its outcome. Residents should be aware that participation in the residency appeals process does not preclude investigation or action on the part of external entities.

The stipend of the resident shall be continued until the termination date of the resident's contract or the expiration of the appeals process that results in the dismissal of the resident, whichever occurs first.

