

A Remediation Program to Promote On-Time Graduation and Reduce Student Attrition

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INTRODUCTION

After receiving an unsatisfactory grade, remediation is a process to correct knowledge deficiency in a shortened amount of time to allow progression of the student.¹ The average attrition rate for pharmacy schools in the US is 12.3% which is significantly higher than medical schools in the US which average 3.2% attrition.^{2,3} Medical schools have been providing remediation longer than pharmacy schools, with the first article published in 1981.⁴ ACPE-directed attrition rates pose a significant challenge for our institution and remediation offerings have been inconsistent and individualized based on the circumstances. Implementation of a standardized remediation program was expected to aid student progression and reduce attrition. The scholastic standing policy was revised simultaneously in favor of student progression and was also expected to reduce attrition.

OBJECTIVE

To implement a formalized voluntary remediation program to aid in student retention, progression, and on-time graduation (while reducing attrition).

METHODS

Information was gathered on remediation from PharmD programs via school websites and publications. A remediation policy and program were drafted after two regional remediation coordinators were interviewed for feedback on their programs. The proposed policy and remediation program were presented to faculty for feedback and subsequent approval for implementation for the fall 2021 semester. Skills-based courses and elective courses were excluded from remediation. Students are allowed to remediate up to three courses during their P1 through P3 years.

The scholastic standing policy was changed simultaneously to eliminate Ds as a probationary event. This prevents students from being punished for successfully completing remediation in a course that allows Ds. An F in two courses or three probationary events (semester GPA < 2.0 or three professionalism citations for unprofessional behavior) result in dismissal of a student from our program.

A Progression Committee meets at the end of each semester to approve students for remediation participation based on criteria specified in the remediation policy.

METHODS (cont.)

Criteria that need to be met to be eligible for remediation are:

1. Final grade must be within 10% of passing. (Some classes allow Ds and some allow nothing below a C)
2. Only one class can be failed in a single semester. If more than one class is failed in a semester, the scholastic standing policy is followed, the student is dismissed from the program and must apply for reinstatement.
3. Resources must have been utilized throughout the semester. This can include tutors, instructors, Academic Success Consultants, recitation and course mentors.
4. All examinations and quizzes must be attempted, and all assignments must be completed on time.

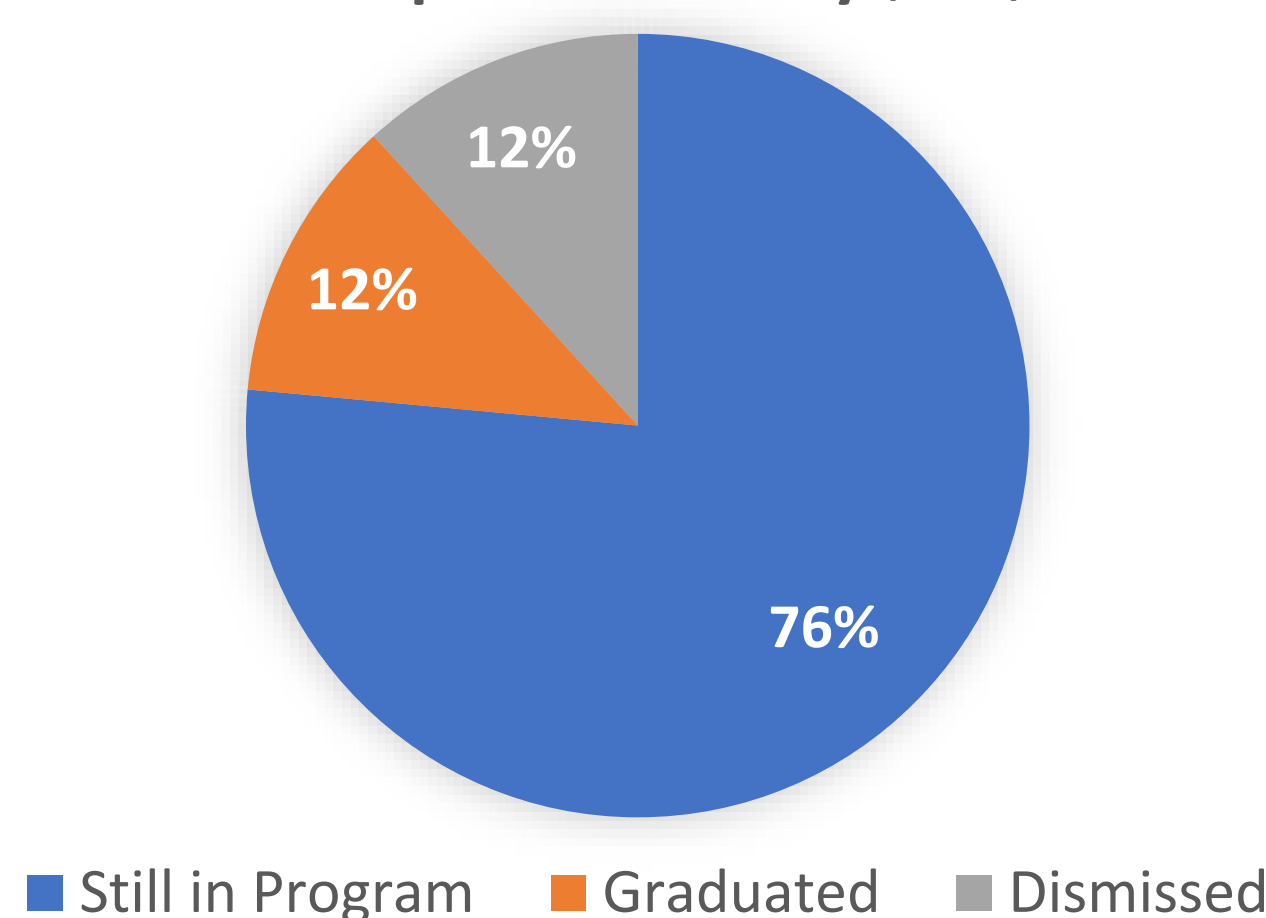
RESULTS

After four semesters of remediation, 34 students have been approved for 42 remediation sessions in 12 different courses.

Course Name	Total Offerings
P1 Year	
Calculations	6
Biochemistry	3
Microbiology	2
Pharmacokinetics	1
P2 Year	
Pharmacotherapeutics 2	9
Pharmacotherapeutics 1	2
Pharmacology 1	1
Professional Development 3	1
Chemical Basis 1	1
P3 Year	
Pharmacotherapeutics 3	9
Pharmacotherapeutics 4	6
Immunopharmacology	1

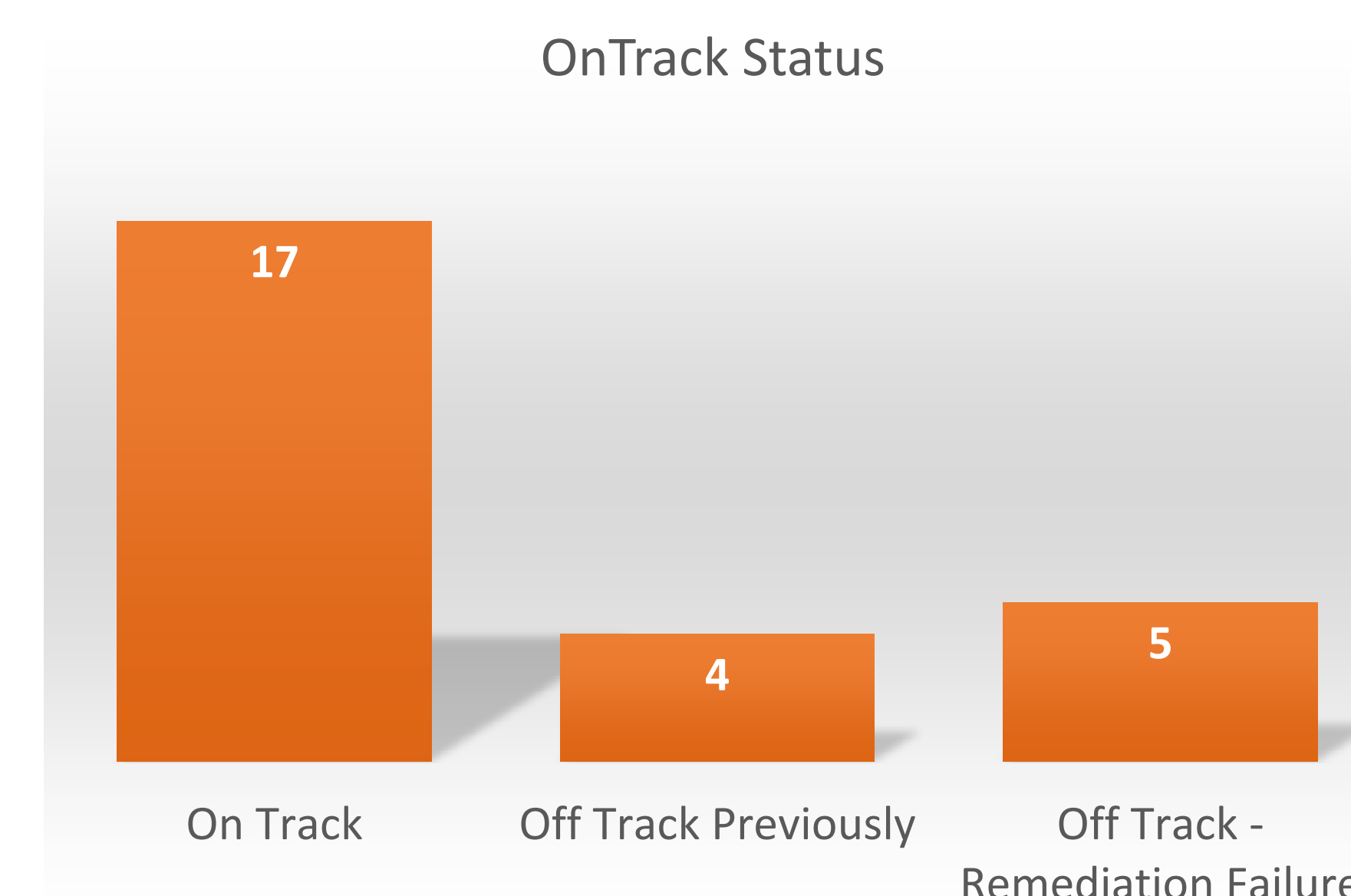
Of the 42 remediation sessions that were completed, 32 (76%) were successful. Of the 34 students, four have graduated, four have been dismissed and 26 remain in the program.

Participant Summary (n=34)



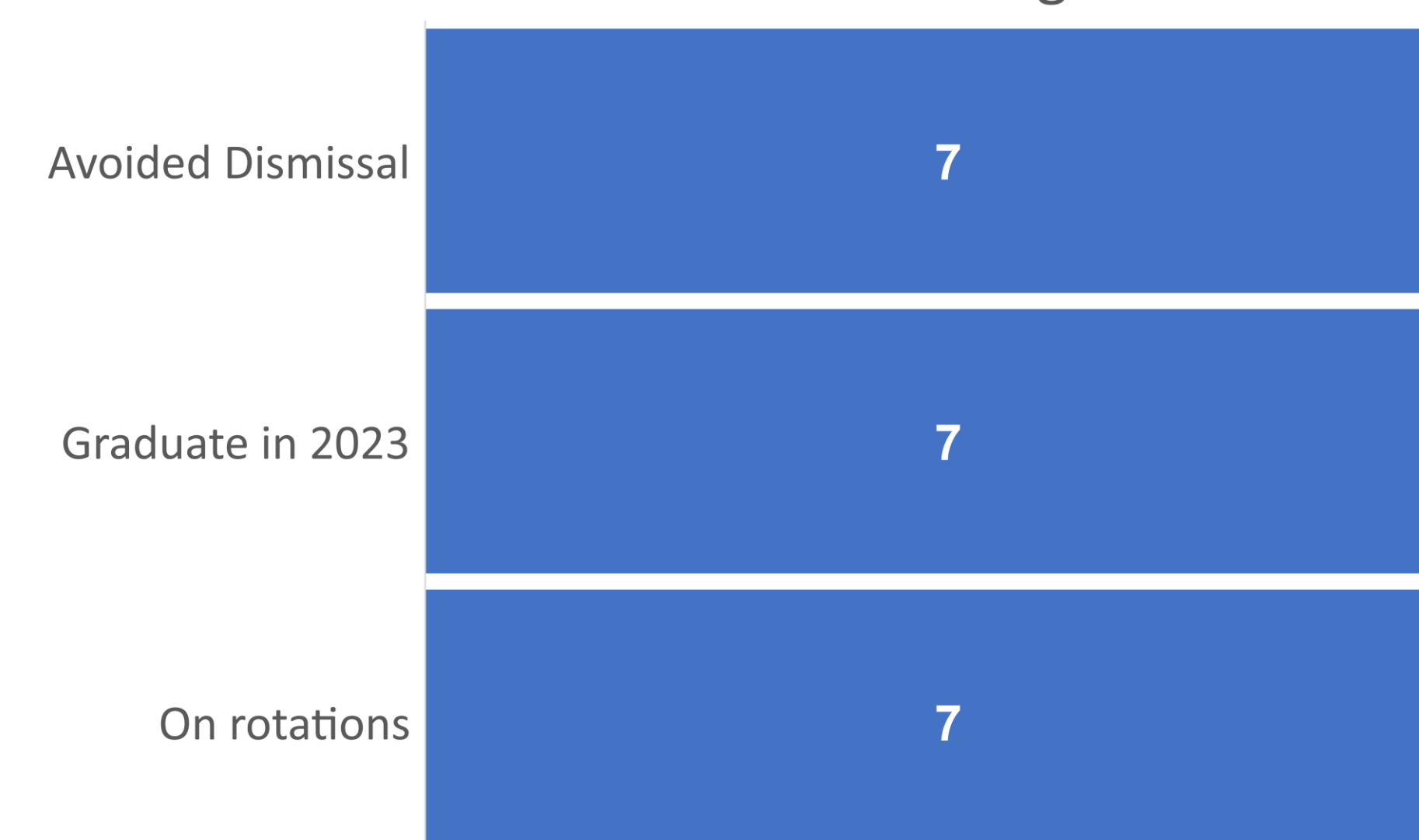
RESULTS (cont.)

Of the 26 students still in the program, 17 (65%) remain on track to graduate on time.



Seven students (21%) have avoided dismissal with this policy and continue to progress in the program (six students) or have graduated (one student). Of the seven students who have or will graduate in 2023, four graduated on time because of remediation. Two more will graduate in August and one will graduate in December.

Remediation Outcomes - Progression



For the Class of 2023, remediation was only available for the last didactic year. Remediation helped to improve the on-time graduation rate from 78% for the class of 2022 to 82% for the class of 2023.

While our APPE grading scale was changed to Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory in 2022, for those who participated in remediation, there was no difference in overall grade when compared to those students who did not remediate (91.08% vs 91.90%).

We are in compliance with all ACPE attrition benchmarks for our current students except for the incoming class of 2020 where the withdrawals exceed 6%. This is mainly attributed to issues out of our control including COVID and a student death.

DISCUSSION

What we know after two years:

The remediation policy, in conjunction with the change in the scholastic standing policy, has positively affected attrition rates.

Of those students who have passed remediation, 80% (20 students) have remediated only 1 course.

Of the four students who graduated in 2023, none had to remediate an advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) and it appears they did as well as students who did not remediate.

What we don't know after two years:

If remediation will continue to keep students on track or if it will just delay academic failures and dismissals until later in the curriculum.

There are three students who have remediated three courses each, with two who started APPE's in July, and one student who has remediated two courses to date.

How multiple remediations will affect student performance on APPEs.

It appears that students who remediated one course performed just as well on APPEs as students who did not remediate, but we do not know how students who remediate multiple courses and have multiple Ds will perform.

CONCLUSIONS

A formalized, voluntary remediation program to aid in student retention, progression, and on-time graduation (while reducing attrition) was implemented in the fall of 2021. Preliminary data suggest that remediation has had a positive impact for students. The full impact of remediation will not be known for several years.

REFERENCES

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