

Maintaining On-Time Progression with a Student Driven Remediation Process

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BACKGROUND

Students at Duquesne University School of Pharmacy must complete all required courses in a professional year prior to progressing to the next professional year. Failure of a required course in the curriculum can place a student in a yearlong hold until they are able to retake a course, thus affecting their on-time progression through the program.

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) requires pharmacy programs to monitor total attrition rates. If the total attrition rate is greater than or equal to twenty four percent of the matriculating class, the school or college of pharmacy must identify a cause and provide an action plan to ACPE.

Student options for progression following failure of a course included taking an approved equivalent course at an outside university, repeating the course via an alternate pathway at Duquesne (e.g. online), or repeating the course at Duquesne the following year. The latter would result in the student delaying their matriculation through the program.

To improve this process and offer students an option to maintain normal progression through the program, a School of Pharmacy ad hoc remediation taskforce convened in March 2019. This workgroup developed a remediation exam policy taking into account faculty workload, University class enrollment requirements, and improving student outcomes for the program. The final faculty-approved policy was implemented in Academic Year 2019-2020.

Considering the aforementioned progression requirements, University class enrollment requirements, and faculty workload concerns, this remediation policy was developed to be student-driven. Students are encouraged to utilize course exam strengths and opportunities reports, review missed exam questions with faculty, and review course materials to self-identify areas of deficiency in the course.

METHODS

Remediation Exam Eligibility

1. The student must earn a 'D' in a required course during their first attempt.
2. A student may only attempt remediation in a maximum of two courses in an academic year and must not currently be on Academic Probation.
3. Remediation does not count as a second attempt at the class. If the student is unsuccessful, it will count as a first-time course deficiency.

Remediation Exam Preparation

1. Preparation for the remediation comprehensive exam is the student's responsibility.
2. Students are responsible for reviewing areas of deficiency in the course.
3. Faculty will provide support to students via (i) in person or virtual meetings, (ii) exam reports, (iii), lecture recordings, and/or (iv) access to class notes not stored on learning management system.

Remediation Exam

1. The remediation exam is a comprehensive exam that is reflective of the entire content and rigor of the course.
2. Exams are limited to two (2) hours per course, are administered using ExamSoft®, and are consistent with the expectations of a 2-hour exam.
3. Instructors will grade and evaluate the remediation exam within 24 hours of the exam and notify students.

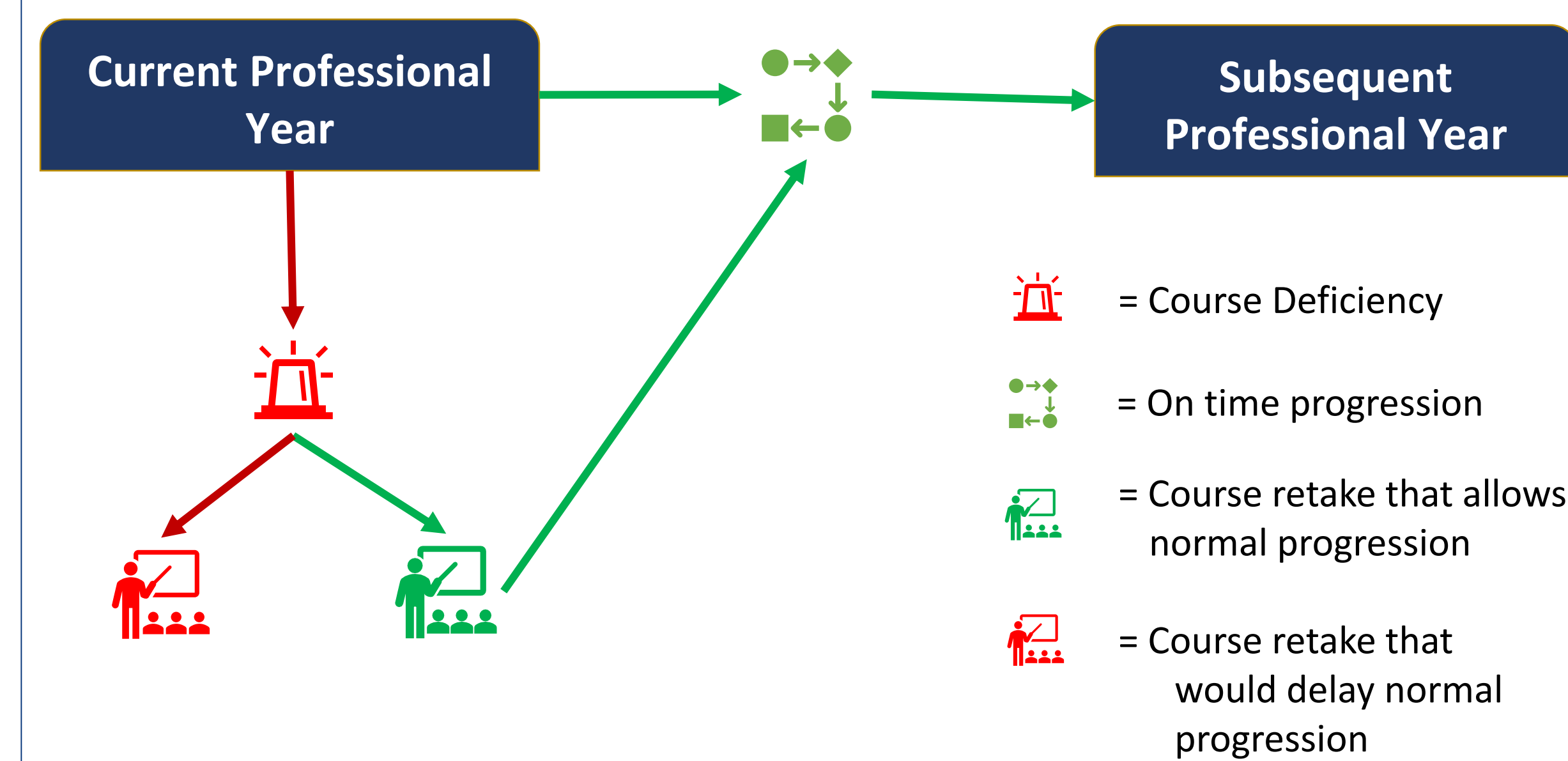
DATA AND FIGURES

Progression Through Professional Program

- Students must complete all courses in a professional year with a passing "C" grade or better before moving to the subsequent professional year.
- Students that are not successful in one or more courses must clear the course deficiency prior to advancing to the next year in the curriculum

Prior to Remediation Exam Policy

- Wait to retake course during next offering in the weekday or online pathway
- Take an approved course from an outside institution



After Remediation Exam Policy

- Apply to take and pass remediation exam
- Wait to retake course during next offering in the weekday or online pathway
- Take an approved course from an outside institution

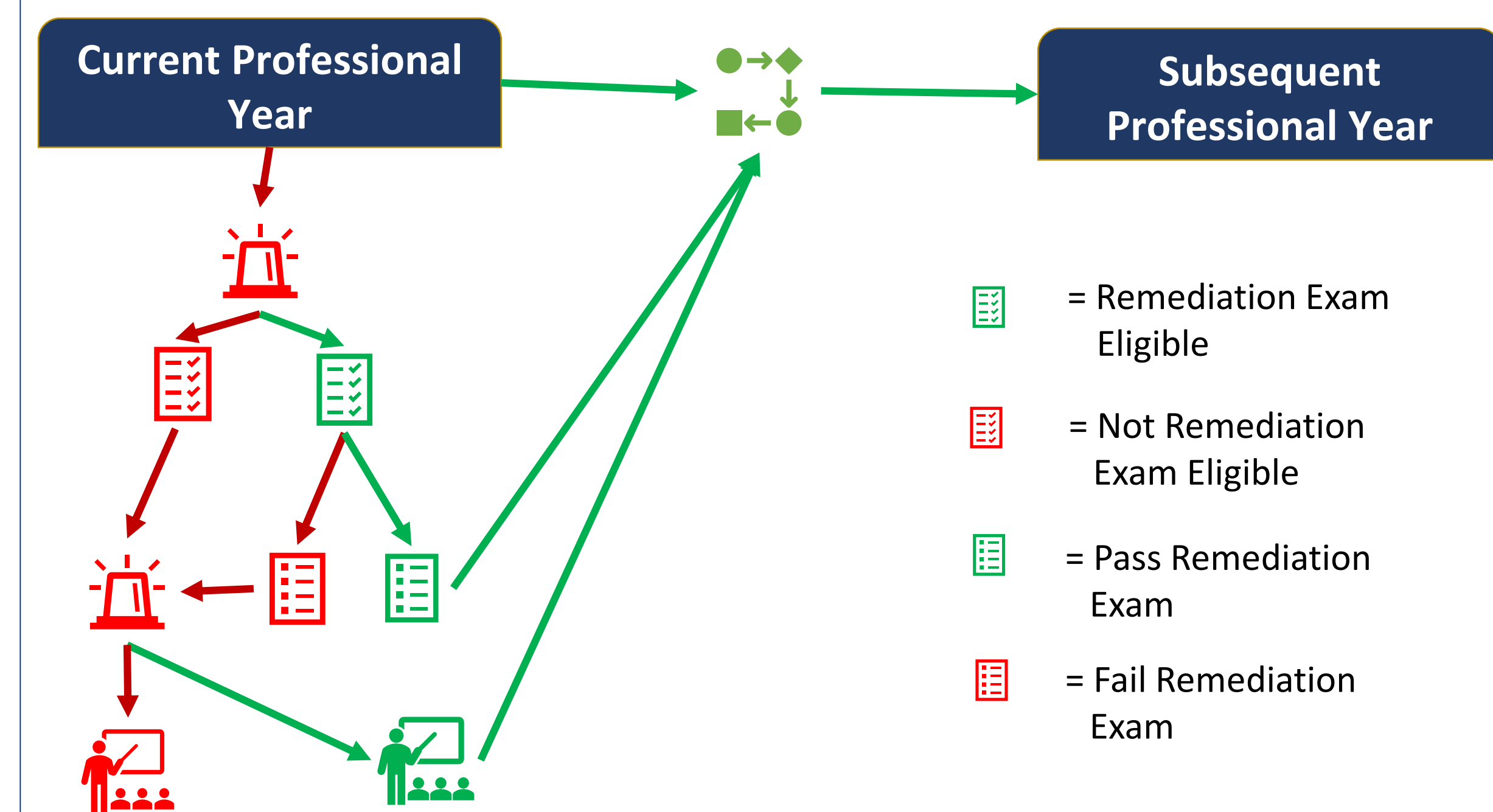


Table 1. Remediation Exam Policy Usage Across All Professional Years and Pathways

Academic Year	2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
Semester	Fall	Spring / Summer	Fall	Spring / Summer	Fall	Spring / Summer	Fall	Spring / Summer
Number of courses w/remediation exams	13	12	12	15	12	11	12	*
Number of remediation requests	78	54	78	48	44	36	29	*
Number of requests granted	57	50	70	42	36	29	27	*
Number of requests denied	21	4	8	6	9	7	2	*
Number of students who took remediation exams	52	45	51	40	29	27	21	*
Number of students who took 2 remediation exams	5	5	17	2	7	2	6	*

Table 2. Remediation Exam Usage and Return to Normal Progression Per Professional Year (PY)

Academic Year	2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
Semester	Fall	Spring/ Summer	# Achieving Normal Progression	Fall	Spring/ Summer	# Achieving Normal Progression	Fall	Spring/ Summer	# Achieving Normal Progression
PY1	31	25	11	36	10	19	15	10	8
PY2	21	18	16	26	23	19	19	14	12
PY3	5	7	6	6	9	8	5	2	2
Academic Year Total	107	33	110	46	65	22			

	Emergency Remote Learning
	Hybrid Learning
	Summer Course Exams Not Complete

Table 3. Remediation Exam Policy usage on first graduating cohort

Number of remediation exams taken during professional phase	Percentage of on-time graduates that matriculated into the professional program in academic year 2019-2020	
	Traditional Pathway n=100 (%)	Online Pathway n=13 (%)
0	82	76.9
1	8	15.4
2	5	7.7
3	4	n/a
4	1	n/a
5	n/a	n/a
6	n/a	n/a

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 205 students have met eligibility criteria for the remediation exam since the policy went into effect in academic year 2019-2020.

The formal remediation process allowed for 101 (49%) of eligible students to maintain normal progression. The number of students entering into the remediation process is highest in the first professional year with 45% of exam attempts, followed by the second professional year with 43%, then the third professional year with 12%.

The students that matriculated into the professional program during academic year 2019-2020 were the first cohort of students that could utilize the policy throughout the entire program. A majority of students that maintained on-time progression to graduation (82% Traditional Pathway and 76.9% Online Pathway), did not utilize the remediation exam policy. Of the 21 students (18 traditional pathway and 3 Online Pathway) that were eligible for remediation maintained an on-time graduation, 9 (42.8%) used 1 exam, 7 (33.3%) used 2 exams, and 5 (23.8%) used more than 2 exams. While the remediation exam helped these students, there were still students in the overall cohort that did not maintain on-time graduation and were delayed 1 to 2 years or left the program. This was due mainly to multiple course deficiencies that made students ineligible for the remediation exam policy.

While the ACPE on-time graduation standards were a factor in the development of this policy, faculty and academic advisors did recognize that outside forces could significantly impact the final course grade of a student. Non-academic issues such as a death in the family, financial necessity to work an increase number of hours, health and/or mental wellness concerns, etc. could affect student performance on a major assessment leading to a course deficiency. The remediation exam does serve to be inclusive of students that may have additional outside factors affecting their academic performance.

The policy was updated three years after implementation. During academic year 2022-2023, the maximum number of remediation exams that a student could take during one professional year was increased from two to three, with a maximum of six exams across all three professional years prior to rotations.

CONCLUSION

The remediation policy provides students an avenue to maintain normal progression by demonstrating their correction of knowledge gaps through a student driven remediation plan.

REFERENCES

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