

Policies on Student Performance and Promotions

I. POLICY

The subsections of this document are:

1. Policy on Requirements for Granting of the MD Degree
2. Policy on Standards for Performance and Academic Progress
3. Policy on Time Limitations for Completing Portions of the MD Degree Program
4. Policy on USMLE Examinations and Clinical Competency Assessment
5. Policy on Leave of Absence
6. Policy on Academic Remediation
7. Policy on Academic Probation
8. Policy on Appeals of Decisions by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee

These eight components of this overall policy are listed in numbered sections, below.

The Policy on Structure and Function of the Student Performance and Promotion Committee is a separate document that provides the basic details about the Committee. It also describes key aspects of communicating with students and how a student will have an opportunity to submit a letter to the Committee prior to a meeting where an adverse action would be discussed, or to appear at the meeting to support their case.

II. PURPOSE

This combined set of policies addresses the core standards for the advancement and graduation of medical students and the policies and procedures that form the basis for review of students' academic progress, advancement, graduation, remediation and dismissal. Purposes for each subsection are listed below the policy statements.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Medical students

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

- Office of Student Affairs

V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Policies on Student Performance and Promotions

VI. REFERENCES

- LCME Element 9.9: Single Standard for Promotion, Graduation and Appeal Process: A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single standard for the promotion and graduation of medical students across all locations and a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to promotion, graduation, or dismissal.

- LCME Element 10.3: Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination: The faculty of a medical school establish criteria for student selection and develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student application, selection, admission, assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters.

VII. APPROVALS

Dean, School of Medicine

1. Policy on Requirements for Granting of the MD Degree

I. POLICY

In order to receive the MD degree, each student must satisfy academic, professional, and technical standards on an ongoing basis and fulfill specific requirements:

A student must have successfully completed the curricular requirements for each of the four curriculum years.

A student must complete the Whole Health Innovation Project requirement, including submission of the Whole Health Innovation Project Final Report.

A student must have received a passing grade on United States Medical Licensing Examination Steps 1 and 2-CK.

A student must have passed or successfully remediated the Clinical Competency Assessment.

A student must meet accepted standards of professional behavior. A student who meets all other curricular and technical requirements but does not meet accepted standards of professional behavior will not be granted the MD degree.

A student must have continued satisfactory fulfillment of the technical standards.

A student must have no unresolved concerns regarding academic performance (including remediation of failures), professional behavior, or fulfillment of the technical standards.

II. PURPOSE

WHSOM strives to graduate professionals who are knowledgeable, skillful, compassionate and caring. This policy provides a framework to determine eligibility for graduation and conferral of the Doctor of Medicine degree, taking into account that graduates with a MD degree who achieve licensure will have the prerogative to provide patient care in the future.

To be considered for graduation, students must have satisfactorily completed all course work; demonstrate motivation, maturity, sound judgment, responsibility, and acceptable professional behavior; demonstrate the required technical skills; and possess other such attributes as the faculty deems to be essential to become a reliable and effective physician.

The faculty and administrators assigned the responsibility to make decisions regarding academic standing, promotion, remediation, and dismissal are charged to globally evaluate individual student performance and use their judgment in making decisions.

2. Policy on Standards for Performance and Satisfactory Academic Progress

I. POLICY

In order to make satisfactory progress towards the MD degree, each student must satisfy academic, professional, and technical standards on an ongoing basis.

1. Academic: To be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress, a student must:

- Successfully complete and pass all courses, clerkships and other experiences in the periods offered.
- Meet all Whole Health Innovation Project requirements.
- Meet all examination requirements, such as the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2-CK, and Clinical Competency Assessment.
- Correct all academic deficiencies within one year (or otherwise within the time limit specifically set by the Student Performance and Promotions Committee and in the individual case).

Under certain circumstances the Student Performance and Promotions Committee may recommend dismissal. Such circumstances may include (but are not limited to) when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Two failures in clinical clerkships.
- Failures in more than three sections of pre-clerkship required coursework in a given academic year or over the course of the pre-clerkship curriculum (whether or not remediated).
- Failure to pass the USMLE Step 1 or Step 2-CK examinations within the time frame specified in the Policy on USMLE Examinations and Clinical Competency Assessment.

A student's failure to attend required meetings, comply with Student Performance and Promotions Committee directives for remediation, or meet Student Performance and Promotions Committee deadlines may preclude remediation and result in immediate dismissal from the MD Degree Program.

2. Professional Behavior: Students are required on an ongoing basis to demonstrate satisfactory professional behavior. A serious breach of professionalism may result in immediate dismissal from the MD Degree Program.

3. Technical Standards: Students are required on an ongoing basis to satisfy technical standards, as outlined in the Policy on Technical Standards. Continued fulfillment of such standards is a requirement for ongoing registration in the MD Degree program.

A student who has at the end of an academic year has successfully completed all courses without deficiency, who has demonstrated the professional attitudes, values and behaviors expected of physicians, and who is otherwise in good academic standing will be promoted to the next academic year of study or recommended for graduation. Students may be conditionally enrolled in a subsequent year of the program pending receipt of requirements for advancement, such as score reports for USMLE or grade reports for courses or clerkships that end immediately prior to the next academic year.

Additional graduation requirements, including national and local examination requirements, are listed in the Policy on USMLE Examinations and Clinical Competency Assessment and Policy on Requirements for Granting of the MD Degree.

Overall, a student who is not making satisfactory academic progress will be considered by the Student Performance and Promotions Committee. The Student Performance and Promotions Committee will review the student's progress and will determine the acceptability of any proposed remediation efforts.

II. PURPOSE

WHSOM strives to graduate professionals who are knowledgeable, skillful, compassionate and caring. This policy provides a framework to determine eligibility for academic advancement, taking into account that graduates with a Doctor of Medicine degree who achieve licensure will have the prerogative to provide patient care in the future.

The student evaluation for advancement involves both objective criteria and subjective judgments. To be considered for advancement, students must have satisfactorily completed all course work; demonstrate motivation, maturity, sound judgment, responsibility, and acceptable professional behavior; demonstrate the required technical skills; and possess other such attributes as the faculty deems to be essential to become a reliable and effective physician.

The faculty and administrators assigned the responsibility to make decisions regarding academic standing, promotion, remediation, and dismissal are charged to globally evaluate individual student performance and use their judgment in making decisions.

3. Policy on Time Limitations for Completing Portions of the MD Degree Program

I. POLICY

WHSOM requires that students must be academically eligible to receive the MD degree at the regular spring commencement exercises during the 6th academic year following initial enrollment.

In order to be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress, students must successfully complete all first and second year course work in no more than 3 years in order to proceed to the third year, and all third and fourth year course work in no more than 3 years in order to be permitted to graduate.

Exceptions to the time limitations may be made for students who are enrolled in special study research fellowships or similar academic activities and who have not had academic difficulties; and students who are placed on a leave of absence for reasons such as illness or other extenuating circumstances.

A student may be granted a leave of absence, for a variety of reasons. The period of time for which an individual student has an approved leave shall be excluded from the maximum time frame in which a student will be expected to complete the MD degree program.

Any exceptions to this policy are granted by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee.

II. PURPOSE

To provide a time-based framework for decisions about student advancement and promotion to guide decisions of the Student Performance and Promotion Committee.

4. Policy on USMLE Examinations and Clinical Competency Assessment

I. POLICY

All students must pass USMLE Step 1 and Step 2-CK, and achieve a passing score on the WHSOM Clinical Competency Assessment as graduation requirements for the MD degree.

USMLE Examinations:

USMLE Step 1 should not be attempted prior to successful completion of the second year curriculum. USMLE Step 2-CK should not be attempted prior to successful completion of the first year of the clinical curriculum (typically, the third year). The Associate Dean for Medical Education must approve any exceptions in advance.

USMLE Step 1:

All students must take USMLE Step 1 prior to the start of the Preclerkship Course (and therefore, before beginning any clerkship, clinical elective, or research elective).

If a student fails the Step 1 examination, the student will be permitted to complete their current clerkship, and then will be removed from course work until Step 1 is retaken. The student will be permitted to conditionally return to clerkships, pending the Step 1 results. If the student fails Step 1 on the second attempt, the student will be immediately placed on academic leave of absence for a maximum of one calendar year. The student will not be permitted to participate in any clerkships, or clinical or research electives until a passing score on Step 1 is received and recorded. Any partially completed clerkships during that time must be retaken in their entirety.

Any student who does not receive a passing score on Step 1 by the end of the calendar year intended for board study will be reviewed by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee. The committee will review the entire academic record and any information the student provides. The Committee would typically recommend dismissal of the student unless compelling circumstances are presented that would warrant consideration of a one-time extension of the leave of absence in order to attain a passing score. This extension would be no longer than one year.

Under certain circumstances, students will be guided to defer their first attempt at Step 1 until later than the Preclerkship Course. In all cases, students may not begin clerkships or year 3 electives until they have attempted Step 1.

USMLE Step 2:

The USMLE Step 2-CK examination must be taken after successful completion of the third year curriculum and no later than November 30 of the final year of the curriculum.

For students on an off-cycle schedule, the deadline for taking Step 2-CK is two months after completing the third year curriculum (Phase 4) in its entirety (clerkships and other courses), if this is later than the routine deadlines listed above. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs must approve any exceptions to this requirement in advance.

Failure to register passing scores on the Step 2-CK exams prior to certification for the NRMP match may require the School of Medicine to remove the names of such candidates. Exceptions to this policy will be made by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

A student must pass Sep 2-CK within one year of completing all other curriculum requirements, in order to be eligible to be granted the MD degree.

Clinical Competency Assessment (CCA):

During the fourth year, all students are required to take a comprehensive clinical competency examination utilizing standardized patients. A passing score on the CCA is required for graduation. The CCA is administered early in the fourth year to permit students with unsatisfactory performance time to remediate deficiencies prior to graduation.

A CCA Subcommittee, led by the Chair of the Performance-Based Assessment Subcommittee, will review all student performances on the CCA and define individualized remediation programs for students. Students who are referred for CCA remediation are required to satisfactorily complete the specified remediation program. If a student fails the remediation program, the student will be referred to the Student Performance and Promotion Committee.

II. PURPOSE

To define requirements for USMLE and Clinical Competency Assessment completion.

5. Policy on Leave of Absence

I. POLICY

ACADEMIC

Leaves of Absence for academic failure must be granted only with the concurrence of the Student Performance and Promotion Committee which shall specify the duration of such leaves.

MEDICAL

Student in Good Academic Standing

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may grant a one-year leave of absence for medical or personal reasons for a student who is in good academic standing. Extensions of leaves of absence beyond one year shall be considered by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee and granted only under extraordinary circumstances.

Student Not in Good Academic Standing

If a student is not in good academic standing and has a medical condition, the Student Performance and Promotion Committee has the option of granting up to a one-year leave of absence, with the requisite documentation from a physician, to be provided when requesting the leave of absence and again when requesting permission to return to active participation in the curriculum. Extensions of leaves of absence beyond one year shall be considered by the Committee and granted only under extraordinary circumstances.

Returning Students Unable to Meet Technical or Academic Standards

A letter from the treating physician certifying the student's fitness to resume study shall be required a minimum of one month prior to reentry. A student who re-enters after medical leave and is unable to meet Technical or Academic Standards in any course shall be reviewed by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee. The Office of Student Affairs shall share all official academic and medical records with the Committee. The Committee shall recommend dismissal to the Dean unless there are convincing medical or academic reasons to permit a second Leave of Absence.

SPECIAL ACADEMIC STUDY

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may grant a one-year leave of absence for special academic study for a student who is in good academic standing. Students in the MD program may choose to take a leave of absence to participate in a dual or joint degree program, pursue an

advanced degree outside of an official program, or be accepted for a student research scholarship. With proper documentation, this leave will be granted.

Students registered in an academic program will have student status through that program's registration. Students who have been awarded a competitive research fellowship will retain their full time student status through special registration for a period of one year. This registration will assess no tuition; applicable fees will be charged. A student may request a one-year extension of a special study leave of absence. Such an extension would require review and approval by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee. Students whose special academic study activity does not involve enrollment in a degree program may take a maximum of two years leave of absence for special study.

II. PURPOSE

Students may need to take a leave of absence from the MD degree program, for personal or medical reasons, or if they are encountering academic difficulties.

6. Policy on Academic Remediation

I. POLICY

A student who has failed to make satisfactory progress towards the MD degree will be considered by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee.

If the Student Performance and Promotion Committee determines that remediation is indicated, the Committee will determine the acceptable remediation approach. The following table summarizes the usual approaches that may be selected for specific situations:

Remediation approaches for Year 1				
Approaches	Failure in 1 curriculum section	Failure in 2 curriculum sections	Failure in 3 or more curriculum sections	Incomplete grade, not completed prior to the June meeting of the Student Performance and Promotion Committee
Proceed to the next curriculum section with STRUCTURED remediation of the deficiencies.	X	X		
Academic leave of absence, with repeat of some or all the entire first year coursework.*	X	X	X	
Dismissal		X	X	
Summer remediation as specified by the course director.				X

During year 1 coursework, a second failure in a curriculum section that is being repeated would lead to automatic dismissal. The WHSOM policy is that a student may only register twice for any section.

All curriculum sections of year 1 must be successfully passed before entry into year 2.

Remediation approaches for Year 2

Approaches	Failure in 1 curriculum section	Failure in 2 curriculum sections	Failure in 3 or more curriculum sections	Incomplete grade, not completed prior to the beginning of year 3 coursework
Proceed to the next curriculum section with summer remediation of the deficiencies.	X	X		
Academic leave of absence, with repeat of some or all of the second year coursework.*	X	X	X	X
Dismissal	X	X	X	

All curriculum sections of years 1 and 2 must be successfully passed before entry into year 3.

Remediation approaches for Year 3 and 4

Approaches	Failure in 1 required clerkship or course	Failure in 2 required clerkships or courses	Failure in 1 elective	Failure in 2 or more electives
Remediation as specified by the course director	X		X	
Remediation of failed clerkships plus repeat of some or all of the clerkship year*		X		
Dismissal		X		
Repeat each failed elective				X

*NOTE: A student who is required to repeat the entire year will be required to take and pass all of the courses during that year, including courses that had previously been completed satisfactorily. This applies to all curriculum years.

II. PURPOSE

Students who fail courses must be provided with an opportunity to remediate their failing performance and to develop the necessary level of mastery of the subject matter. The Student Performance and Promotion Committee has a key role in determining the type of remediation activity that is appropriate for each student's situation. The faculty on the Student Performance and Promotion Committee are charged to globally evaluate individual student performance and

use their judgment in making decisions. This policy defines the usual approaches that may be selected for specific situations.

7. Policy on Academic Probation

I. POLICY

Any student who fails any course shall be placed on academic probation for a specified period as recommended by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee. The student will be notified in writing of the probationary status both when it starts and when it ends.

A student who is repeating a year, or who has made up a deficiency over the summer, will be on academic probation for the next academic year.

Any student who fails a course while on academic probation will be discussed by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee for a decision regarding remediation or dismissal.

All students on academic probation shall be reviewed at the Committee meeting pertaining to the advancement of his/her class to the next academic level.

Any student placed on probation a second time (for example, at the end of the first year for a deficiency in a first year course and again at the end of the second year for a deficiency in a second year course) will remain on academic probation until graduation.

A request from a student on probation to participate in extramural electives, international electives, or for a student-requested non-medical leave of absence will be reviewed to assess the potential impact of the requested activity on the student's academic success. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may request a review and recommendations from the Student Performance and Promotion Committee before approving or denying such requests.

Probation is an internal status that is resolved before graduation and is not recorded on a transcript or Dean's Letter. However, probation status must be disclosed if a student on probation is applying for a "good standing" letter of reference from the SOM. Once a student's academic probation has ended, this prior probation status will not be disclosed in a SOM reference letter.

GROUP – WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS? HOW SHOULD IT BE HANDLED?

II. PURPOSE

A student who fails a course is at higher risk for experiencing additional academic difficulties. As a part of being placed on academic probation, students are specifically alerted to the possibility that additional unsatisfactory coursework could lead to dismissal from the MD degree

program. It also initiates additional close monitoring by the Student Performance and Promotion Committee.

8. Policy on Appeals of Decisions by the Student Performance and Promotions Committee

I. POLICY

Decisions of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee are based on established policies set forth in this document.

An appeal of a Student Performance and Promotions Committee decision should not be undertaken without substantial indications that the policies were misapplied, and/or that the procedures employed in arriving at the decision were inadequate or discriminatory.

A. Appeal to the Vice Dean for Education

A student may appeal a decision of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee by petitioning the Vice Dean for Education within ten days after notification of the decision. The petition must be submitted in written form and must include the reason on which the appeal is based.

The Vice Dean for Education, after reviewing the student's petition and pertinent records and documents, may at their discretion:

- 1) Affirm the decision of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee and deny the appeal;
- 2) Grant the appeal; or
- 3) Appoint an Ad Hoc Appeal Committee to evaluate the basis for and the merits of the appeal.

An Ad Hoc Appeal Committee shall consist of five members of the faculty of the School of Medicine, none of whom shall be members or alternates of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee which originally rendered the decision in question.

The Ad Hoc Appeal Committee will be advised by the Vice Dean for Education as to their role. The Ad Hoc Appeal Committee is not to render an independent decision on the entire case. The Ad Hoc Appeal Committee will be directed to evaluate whether the student's case was judged in accordance with the Guidelines on Student Promotion. The Ad Hoc Appeal Committee is to address whether the procedures employed in arriving at the decision were inadequate, misapplied, or discriminatory.

To inform their deliberations, the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee shall obtain pertinent documentation (e.g., records and correspondence) from the student, the Student Performance and Promotions Committee and the Office of Student Affairs. In addition, the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee shall meet separately with the student and with the Chair of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee.

Extramural counsel shall not be permitted, but a representative from within the WHSOM community shall be permitted to accompany the student and the Committee Chair to the interview with the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee, if either wishes to be so accompanied.

The Ad Hoc Appeal Committee shall submit its findings to the Vice Dean for Education within 14 days after the Committee was convened, with a recommendation to accept or reject the appeal. Once a recommendation is made by the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee, the Vice Dean for Education will review the recommendations of both the Student Performance and Promotions Committee and the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee. The Vice Dean for Education will make the final decision to uphold the original decision of the Student Performance and Promotions Committee or to support the appeal. The Vice Dean for Education will notify the student in writing of this decision within 14 days of receipt of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Appeal Committee.

B. Appeal to the Dean of the School of Medicine

The student may appeal the decision of the Vice Dean for Education. This written appeal must be received within ten days of receipt of written notification from the Vice Dean for Education. The Dean will notify the student of the decision in writing within 14 days. The decision of the Dean will be final.

II. PURPOSE

A student who fails to achieve satisfactory academic progress will be reviewed by the Student Performance and Promotions Committee. Students must have an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to promotion, graduation, or dismissal.