

Guidelines Pertaining to Academic Performance

1. Promotion

Students must successfully complete all academic requirements of the pre-clerkship curriculum (Stage 1) before being promoted to the clinical curriculum (Stage 2). Students must pass all core clerkships in Stage 2 and receive a passing score on USMLE Step 1, prior to taking their advanced clerkships. In addition, students must pass all core clerkships, and receive a passing score on USMLE Step 1, in order to be eligible to participate in one of our five-year dual degree programs OR our five-year MD research program (additional dedicated year of full-time research).

2. Grading System

The grading system for the pre-clerkship modules and clinical electives is Pass/Fail. The grading system for required core clinical clerkships and Selectives is Honors, High Pass, Pass, and Fail. An Incomplete (I) is a temporary grade assigned by a Module, Clerkship, Selective or Elective Director after approval by the Office of Medical Education (OME) only for students unable to complete the academic requirements within the allotted time because of unexpected events. A failing grade is recorded on the student transcript as No Credit (NC).

3. Unexcused Absence

An unexcused absence from an examination or other required exercise will be considered a failure. Except for emergencies, students must submit a written request to be excused to, and receive written approval from, the Dean for Student Affairs before the examination or required exercise.

4. Advisement and Tutoring

To facilitate advisement and remediation, the OME receives information on students in possible academic difficulty as grades become available during the progress of each module or clerkship. After each examination or major exercise for which a grade or comment is generated, the Module or Clerkship Director provides the OME with: (1) a list of students who received either a failing grade or an “Incomplete”; (2) their scores or reasons for the failure or incomplete grade; and (3) a description of the performance of the entire class so that the grade can be placed in context. Module or Clerkship Directors meet with students while their modules or clerkships are in progress. The OME, together with the office of Student Affairs, meets with students who experience academic difficulty to determine the source of the difficulty, advise, recommend various resources (such as a tutor or learning skills specialist), and make other referrals as appropriate in an effort to ensure academic success. Students judged by the faculty to be in academic difficulty or at risk are eligible for tutoring. Students are also encouraged to take the initiative in discussing their academic progress or in asking for assistance from Module, Content or Clerkship Directors, and the Dean for Student Affairs.

5. Pre-Clinical Board on Academic Standing

The Pre-Clinical Board on Academic Standing (referred to hereafter as the “Preclinical Board”), chaired by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education, is comprised of Module and Content Directors and the Associate Deans for Student Affairs and Curriculum. The Preclinical Board meets several times a year to review the performance of students in academic difficulty and make recommendations to the Dean. The voting members of the Preclinical Board are the Module and Content Directors for each preclinical module, or their designee. The Deans for Curriculum, Medical Education and Student Affairs shall also be in attendance but are **not** voting members. Additional faculty members may be invited as needed, but shall not be granted a vote. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs acts in the role of student advocate to the board, and will bring additional information regarding a student’s situation to the board. Students may also communicate with the board in writing to elaborate on their unique circumstances. Students in significant academic difficulty are strongly encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for support, guidance and advocacy and should submit letters to the board to this dean in advance of the board meeting.

6. Clinical Board on Academic Standing

The Clinical Board on Academic Standing (referred to hereafter as the “Clinical Board”) is comprised of the Clerkship Directors, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Senior Associate Dean for OME and is Chaired by the Director of Education in the Clinical Sciences. The Clinical Board meets several times a year

to review the performance of students in academic difficulty and make recommendations to the Dean. The voting members of the Clinical Board are the Clerkship Director(s) for each Clinical Clerkship, or his/her designee. The Deans for Curriculum, Medical Education and Student Affairs shall also be in attendance but are **not** voting members. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs acts in the role of student advocate to the board, and will bring additional information regarding a student's situation to the board. Students may also communicate with the board in writing to elaborate on their unique circumstances. Students in significant academic difficulty are strongly encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for support, guidance and advocacy and should submit letters to the board to this dean in advance of the board meeting. Additional faculty members may be invited as needed, but shall not be granted a vote.

7. Quorum and Voting

A simple majority of either Board must be in attendance to achieve a quorum. Quorum is required in order for a Board to vote on significant academic issues. A significant academic issue will be tabled in the event of a failure to make quorum until a subsequent Board meeting can take place. Once quorum has been reached, a majority recommendation in a recorded vote is required for any decisions regarding remediation, suspension, or dismissal for academic reasons. The office of medical education may call a special board meeting to review students' academic performance.

8. Academic versus Disciplinary Jurisdiction

In general, jurisdiction regarding decisions of remediation, suspension, or dismissal of a student for academic reasons (i.e. failure to successfully complete academic requirements) rests with either the Preclinical or Clinical Boards as appropriate. In cases of Honor Code violations, including violations of the "Statement on Exam Conduct", the School of Medicine Honor Council will hold jurisdiction and may make recommendations that have academic consequences. In cases where the Honor Council determines that a student's behavior is in violation of School or University policy, this may include, but will not be limited to, academic remediation, suspension, permanent failure of a Module/Clerkship, or even an entire academic year, and dismissal (refer to the Section on the "Honor Code" in this Handbook for more detailed description of the Honor Council and its role). Any questions of jurisdiction will be determined by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

9. Appeals of Academic Recommendations

A student who objects to a recommendation from either the Preclinical or Clinical Boards may petition the Dean for a review of its action. This appeal must be in writing, state the basis for the student's objection, and be received by the Dean within **two weeks** of the date either Board notified the student of its recommendation. The basis for an appeal would be discovery of new information that was not available to the Board at the time of its decision or evidence that the School of Medicine Academic Guidelines were applied unfairly.

The appeal will be heard by an Appeals Committee consisting of three senior faculty appointed by the Dean. The Appeals Committee shall act upon the appeal as soon as is practical after appointment by the Dean. The Appeals Committee shall review the Board's recommendations and, in so doing, it shall hear the student in person if the student wishes to make a personal appearance before it; shall review such records as it deems pertinent, including a personal written statement submitted by the student; and shall, if it deems necessary, review any report by, or consult with, representatives of the corresponding Board. The Appeals Committee shall submit a written report of its review, including a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean shall convey a written decision on the appeal to the student. The Dean's decision will be final and binding.

10. Interim Suspension for Academic Reasons

The Dean may suspend a student (1) pending consideration of a complaint against him or her by the Honor Council (see *Honor Code*), (2) upon academic recommendation by the OME in consultation with appropriate faculty or, (3) upon recommendation by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Such summary suspension may be made for reasons relating to significantly poor academic performance, the student's physical or emotional well-being, the safety and well-being of University students, faculty, or staff, or of University

property, the maintenance of public order, or the effective continuation of the education process. When such a suspension occurs, the student shall be afforded the opportunity to request expedited review by the appropriate Board, which shall occur as soon as is reasonably possible (preferably within 72 hours) after the student's request for expedition.

Guidelines Pertaining to an Original Academic Year

1. Procedures During an Original Academic Year

A. Make-up Exercises

To prevent decisions from being made out of the context of the student's overall performance and individual needs, no make-up examination or exercise will be allowed before a meeting of the Board. Further, only one examination or required exercise may be made up during the academic year, and that remediation will only be allowed during or immediately after a holiday break.

In all cases, make-up examinations and other make-up work will be equivalent in level of difficulty to the original requirement(s). The academic standards of the School of Medicine will not be compromised by the remediation process. All remedial work must be completed before a student is allowed to pursue a summer academic activity. Any exceptions to the above are made on a case-by-case basis by the OME in consultation with the Associate Dean For Student Affairs.

B. Leave of Absence

A Leave may be granted by the Associate Dean For Student Affairs upon written request by the student. Leaves are granted for reasons of academic difficulty, personal/health problems, or for an educational purpose. When a Leave is granted while academic work is in progress, the permanent record will show the grades at the time of the Leave. The student's educational program will be determined (either before the Leave or upon the student's return) by the OME in consultation with the appropriate Board and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. A first Leave of Absence may be granted for up to one year. A request for an extension of the Leave will be at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs if the request is received no less than 45 days before the end of the Leave. An extension will be granted only upon written application, and generally after a personal meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If a student fails to return, or request an extension in writing by the deadline, the school may dismiss the student. Leaves of Absence for more than two years, or a second Leave of Absence for the same set of reasons, are generally not granted. A rare exception to this could be made by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for reasons of disability, serious illness, or other personal hardship. When necessary, and with approval by the Dean, a Board may impose a Leave of Absence either for academic difficulty or for an inability to meet the School of Medicine's Technical Standards.

In either case described above, the terms of the Leave will be explained to the student both in person and in writing by the OME as well as the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The letter will include the conditions, such as appropriate medical evaluation, that must be met before the student can return, and a deadline by which the student must request termination of the Leave for a place to be held in the appropriate class. Termination of the Leave of Absence is not automatic and must be requested by the student in writing no less than 45 days before the end of the Leave.

C. Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from the School of Medicine upon written request by the student to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

2. Procedures at the End of an Original Academic Year

A. Possible Outcomes

Three outcomes are possible after completing a module or clerkship: (1) A passing grade recorded as “P” in pre-clinical modules and clinical electives; and recorded as Honors, High Pass, or Pass in Clinical Clerkships and Selectives; (2) An incomplete (I). The Incomplete is a temporary grade assigned by the Module or Clerkship Director after approval by the OME only for students unable to complete the requirements of the module or clerkship within the allotted time because of unexpected events. This grade cannot be assigned to a student whose performance on completed work is failing; (3) A failure will be recorded as No Credit (NC) on the transcript.

B. Remediation: General considerations

Eligibility: Whether remediation is appropriate and what method will be followed for remediation will be determined by the appropriate Board. The Board will make a recommendation through the the OME to the Dean as to whether a student qualifies for remediation. The Board may request that the Associate Dean for Student Affairs obtain health or educational evaluations or other pertinent information for their deliberations. This information will only be shared with the Board if consent is given by the student. In order for a pedagogically sound remedial program to be developed, the student’s entire performance to date will be considered. Students at risk of being required to repeat an academic year, take a leave of absence, or be dismissed, are strongly encouraged to submit a letter to the Board on their behalf explaining the reason(s) for their academic performance. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs is available to guide and support students through this process.

Content and Schedule: If remediation is recommended by the Board, the appropriate Module/Content Director(s) or Clerkship Director(s), in consultation with the OME, will determine the work necessary to fulfill the requirements of the module and the timetable for remediation. All summer make-up examinations and other remedial work must be completed by August 1.

Notification: The student, Module Director(s) and Clerkship Director(s) will be notified in writing by the OME of all specific work required and the schedule for the work.

Limitations: A student cannot repeat the same academic year, or module or clerkship, more than once. After successful completion of a repeated year, repetition of a different failed academic year will be allowed only upon a 3/4 majority recommendation of the Board in a recorded vote and with the approval of the Dean. A student may take no more than six academic years following the course of study to complete the four-year curriculum.

C. Remediation: Students with one or two failures or incompletes

Make-up work: A student who received a grade of “I” or “NC” in one or two modules or clerkships will usually be offered an opportunity to achieve a passing status by taking a make-up examination, doing additional clinical work, or submitting other work needed to meet the curricular or module requirements. In some cases, a student may be able to repeat a full module before the next academic semester. If a student passes the make-up opportunity, the permanent record will reflect the passing grade only (i.e. an “I” or “NC” will be converted to a “P” or Honors, High Honors, or Pass).

Leave of Absence: See Section 1. B above, under the general heading of “Procedures During an Original Academic Year.”

D. Remediation: Students with three or more failures or incompletes

There are four possible recommendations that the Boards may make to the OME for a student who received an “NC” or “I” grade for three or more modules or clerkships. Which outcome is appropriate and what method will be followed will be determined by the individual Board. The four possible recommendations and guidelines for their selection are outlined below.

1. ***Make-up work within the same academic year:*** After consideration of all relevant factors, the Board may decide that the student is able to successfully complete makeup work before the beginning of the next academic semester. In special cases, a student

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may be able to repeat all the required work before the next academic year. This option will not be considered for students with “NC” or “I” in more than three preclinical modules.

2. *Make-up work during another academic year:* In contrast to the situation described in “1” above, the Board may conclude that three, and certainly more than three, failures represent not a marginal, but a seriously inadequate performance. If the Board also concludes that a student may be capable of succeeding in the School of Medicine, it may recommend that the student repeat the academic block in its entirety. It should be recognized that this repeat year is a form of academic probation. In this case, grades of “NC” and “I” obtained in the first unsuccessful year remain permanently on the student record.

In the case of students who have already repeated a year, the repetition of a different failed academic year will be allowed only upon a 3/4 majority recommendation of the Board in a recorded vote and with the approval of the Dean.

3. *Leave of Absence:* See Section 1B above under the general heading of “Procedures During an Original Academic Year.”

4. *Dismissal:* If none of the above options are considered to be appropriate by the Boards then dismissal will be considered. A recommendation for dismissal requires a 3/4 majority of the voting members of the Board in a recorded vote. A recommendation by the Board to dismiss is conveyed in writing to the Dean together with a complete written record of the student’s performance prepared by OME. A student may appeal this decision to the Dean (see Section 9 on Academic Appeals above).

3. *Procedures at the End of the First Remedial Experience*

A. Students making up work within the same academic year

Passing: The permanent record of a student who has successfully fulfilled all make-up work within the same academic block will show the passing grades only: “P” in the pre-clinical years and electives; Honors, High Honors, or Pass, in the Clinical Clerkships and Selectives.

Not Passing: The Board, depending on the number of grades of “NC” or “I”, will consider whether to recommend that the student be allowed further remediation, take a Leave of Absence, or be dismissed. If, in the rare instance in which a second make-up opportunity is granted by the Board, the permanent record will show the original module or clerkship grade (NC) and a second listing of that module or clerkship with a passing grade when the module or clerkship is passed (e.g. NC/P). A student must Pass all modules/blocks before being promoted to the next academic block.

B. Students making up work during another academic year

See “Procedures at the end of a Repeat Academic Year” below.

Guidelines Pertaining To a Repeat Academic Year

1. *Procedures During the Repeat Academic Year*

Throughout the repeat year, the Board will receive progress reports from Module and Clerkship Directors to determine if repeating students have met the academic requirements. At these times, the Board will make a recommendation to the Dean indicating whether the student should be allowed to continue, placed on a Leave of Absence, or dismissed from the School. Students are expected to successfully pass each module or clerkship on the first try during a repeat year. In the rare instance that a student has an extenuating circumstance the board will consider whether the student qualifies for a make up exam at the end of the block.

2. Procedures at the end of the Repeat Academic Year

The permanent record of a student repeating a year will show the grade obtained in the original attempt and the passing grade in the semester in which it is achieved.

A. Possible outcomes

Three outcomes are possible after repeating a module or clerkship: (1) A passing grade recorded as “P” in Preclinical Modules and electives; and recorded as Honors, High Pass, or Pass in the Clinical years. (2) An incomplete “I”. This is a temporary grade assigned by the Module or Clerkship Director after approval by the OME only for students unable to complete requirements for the module within the allotted time because of unexpected events. This grade cannot be assigned to a student whose performance on completed work is failing. (3) A failure will be recorded as No Credit “NC”.

B. Repeated Failures of Remedial Exercises

The Board, in consultation with the OME, may consider whether to recommend that a student with any grades of “NC” or “I” be dismissed, or, under extenuating circumstances, recommend further remediation or a Leave of Absence. In the case of extenuating circumstances the Associate Dean for Student Affairs may make a rare exception for further remediation in consultation with OME.

Should the Board recommend that a repeating student be dismissed a complete written record of the student’s performance will be prepared by the OME. This record, together with the Board’s recommendation, will be forwarded to the Dean. A student may appeal this decision to the Dean (see Section 9 on Academic Appeals above).

3. Procedures Regarding a Second Remedial Experience

Throughout the second remediation, the OME will receive progress reports from Module or Clerkship Directors to determine if repeating students have met the academic requirements. If the student fails either an examination or graded exercise, the OME may call a special meeting of the Board to consider dismissal.