



Scholastic Standing Committees

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Policy Owner: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Responsible University Officer: Assistant Dean of Student Affairs - Twin Cities

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POLICY STATEMENT

Student performance encompasses academic knowledge and clinical skills, as well as development of personal and professional attributes expected of a practicing physician. Meeting the performance standards established by the University of Minnesota Medical School (UMMS) allows for advancement in, and graduation from, the educational program. Scholastic standing committees engage in effective monitoring and evaluation of performance in order to approve, modify, or halt academic advancement or to address areas of deficiency.

The UMMS maintains a Medical Student Scholastic Standing Committee (MSSSC) with campus-specific advisory subcommittees. These ensure that students are meeting the academic and professional expectations required to make satisfactory progress and to graduate from the UMMS. This document covers the MSSSC as well as the advisory subcommittees (referred to generally as "subcommittees"). Instances where procedures are distinct to the MSSSC or a subcommittee are noted.

Jurisdiction

MSSSC: The MSSSC holds jurisdiction over all matriculated UMMS students, provides oversight to the subcommittees, and serves as the final authority on decisions impacting progress and/or graduation. This includes authorizing standardized criteria for remediation of courses and clerkships as guidance for subcommittee decisions. When a subcommittee's recommended outcomes impacting progress and/or graduation are considered by the MSSSC, the MSSSC's review is generally limited to a review of the record to determine: (a) whether the subcommittee violated policy or practice; and (b) to ensure consistent outcomes between both campuses of the Medical School.

TCSSC: As an advisory subcommittee to the MSSSC, the TCSSC holds jurisdiction over students matriculated at the Central Campus in the Twin Cities during the preclerkship and clerkship phases and over students previously matriculated at the Regional Campus in Duluth who have transitioned to the Twin Cities campus for the clerkship phase.

DSSC: As an advisory subcommittee to the MSSSC, the DSSC holds jurisdiction over students matriculated at the Regional Campus in Duluth during the preclerkship phase of the curriculum.

Authority

The MSSSC

- enforces the requirements medical students must meet in order to advance in the medical education program and to graduate from the medical school
- serves as the final authority on outcomes, as recommended by its subcommittees, that impact progress and/or graduation
- empowers its subcommittees to develop and enforce academic remediation plans
- acts as final authority in determining whether a student may advance to the next year or be eligible for graduation as a result of unsatisfactory or unresolved remediation
- authorizes its subcommittees to conduct investigations and hold hearings as outlined herein

Composition and Membership

MSSSC: In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, the voting membership of the MSSSC consists of at least three elected faculty members and at least two medical student representatives. At least one faculty member and one student member must be from the Duluth campus. Members cannot be current members of MSSSC subcommittees.

TCSSC: In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, the voting membership of the TCSSC consists of at least nine elected faculty members and at least two medical student representatives. The designated medical school officers representing the dean and the regional campus dean are non-voting members of the TCSSC. Neither the dean nor the regional campus dean may be a member of the TCSSC.

DSSC: In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, the voting membership of the DSSC consists of at least three elected faculty members and two medical student representatives. A designated medical school officer from the Duluth campus and a representative from the Center of American Indian and Minority Health are non-voting members of the DSSC. Neither the dean nor the regional campus dean may be a member of the DSSC.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy exists to clarify the roles and procedures of the scholastic standing committee and its subcommittees in their capacity to:

- Evaluate academic standing and approve the academic progression of individual medical students including eligibility to graduate from the MD program
- Address deficiencies in meeting the academic, technical, or professional competencies and standards
- Make recommendations for dismissal

This policy also ensures the UMMS meets Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 9.9: STUDENT ADVANCEMENT AND APPEAL PROCESS. “A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is 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 advancement, graduation, or dismissal.”

PROCEDURES

ARTICLE I. Referral to a Scholastic Standing Subcommittee

A medical student may be referred to the relevant subcommittee for the following reasons:

Academic Reasons:

- a. The student is not making satisfactory academic progress as detailed in the **Academic Progress and Graduation Policy**
- b. Failure to make adequate progress towards the established Competencies Required for Graduation
- c. The student is failing, or has failed to meet the requirements of a remediation plan or MSSSC authorized decision
- d. The student is referred to a subcommittee by an appropriate UMN/UMMS representative. This includes referrals from the Duluth Honor Council, the Twin Cities Peer Review Committee (PRC), or by individual faculty/administration in cases where additional review of a student's academic standing is warranted, irrespective of current academic status

Non-Academic Reasons:

- a. The student has (or is alleged to have) engaged in conduct which violates any of these behavior codes: UMN Student Conduct Code, Medical Student Professionalism Code or the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility; policies/rules of affiliated sites which apply to students in a clinical setting
- b. The student has (or is alleged to have) engaged in conduct which violates behavioral and/or ethical standards of the medical profession; disrupts the operations of the UMN, UMMS or clinical training sites; or disregards the rights or welfare of patients, fellow students, UMMS staff or other individuals
- c. The student has (or is alleged to have) engaged in unlawful conduct or improper behavior within or outside the UMN community which impairs the student's capacity to function as a medical student/prospective physician
- d. The student is failing, or has failed to meet decisions authorized by the MSSSC
- e. The student is referred to a subcommittee by an appropriate UMN/UMMS representative. This includes referrals from the Duluth Honor Council or the Twin Cities Professionalism Review Committee or by individual faculty/administration in cases where additional review of the student's academic standing, remediation, or continuation is warranted irrespective of current academic status

ARTICLE II. Conduct of Proceedings

1. Referral and Investigation

- a. Conduct and Proceedings for academic or professionalism referrals are handled by the subcommittees as a delegated authority of the MSSSC. All Appearances, Hearings, investigations, and recommended outcomes will be in the purview of the subcommittee. On receipt of a referral, the subcommittee will notify the student in writing about the referral. This notification shall occur as promptly as possible following the initial date of the referral. This and subsequent communications will be via email, the University of Minnesota's official means of communication.
- b. The subcommittee will conduct a review of the circumstances leading to the referral to determine the appropriate course of action up to, and including, scheduling an appearance or hearing. The subcommittee may request additional information from any source it deems necessary in conducting its initial, and subsequent, investigations including but not limited to,

Basic Science and Clinical Course Directors, the Dean for Student Affairs, educational records, affiliate site representatives, or witnesses. The Chair of the subcommittee may designate any employee of the UMN to undertake any such investigatory action on its behalf.

- c. The subcommittee may also require a physical and/or mental evaluation of the student in any case where there is reason to consider the physical or mental competency of the student. Appropriate consultants shall carry out such evaluation and a report of the evaluation shall be forwarded to the subcommittee.

2. Appearances

A subcommittee may choose to hold an Appearance, rather than a formal Hearing. This may be done for purposes of evaluating a student's academic plans for success, assessing academic readiness, or other such reasons where the subcommittee determines a formal Hearing is not needed. Instances where there is disagreement with the decision of the subcommittee resulting from an Appearance can be referred for a formal Hearing.

3. Hearings

Hearings are used to review significant failures of academic progress or professionalism concerns. A Hearing before a subcommittee allows presentation of additional, relevant information not available during the subcommittee's initial review before any final decision is reached. New information may be presented that can add context to, or provide previously unknown details about the current situation. The subcommittee will determine which documents, interviews, or other information to accept as part of its official deliberations, based on its determination of the relevance of such information.

- a. The subcommittee is not obligated to hold a Hearing if it deems that such a Hearing is not necessary in order to render a decision (see "*Due Process*" below). A Hearing will be held for any student who is being considered for dismissal
- b. Students will be sent a written notice of Hearings at least ten (10) days before the date. The notice will stipulate the reason for the Hearing and relevant guidelines on subcommittee procedures. Notice of an Appearance is not subject to the ten day requirement
- c. **Failure to appear:** If the student(s) should fail to be present for, or refuse to testify in, a Hearing, the Hearing may nonetheless proceed
- d. **Quorum:** A quorum consisting of a majority of voting members must be present to conduct a Hearing (before any recusals take place).
- e. **Personal Advisor:** Students are permitted personal advisors to be present during a Hearing (see "*Due Process Protections*" below). Advisors may not be included in the list of witnesses. Advisors function to assist the advisee in preparation for a Hearing, taking notes during a Hearing, and providing support to the advisee.

4. Determining Outcomes

Upon completion of its review or investigation, including any Hearings, subcommittee members will deliberate and vote. Subcommittee votes are carried by a motion and determined by a simple majority of members present. Members may vote in favor, against, or in abstention. Outcomes include:

- a. Allowing the student to continue making satisfactory academic progress without interruption (i.e., maintaining or returning to good academic standing)
- b. Allowing the student to continue making satisfactory academic progress with remediation
- c. Altering, modifying, or halting the student's progress with relevant outcomes

Outcomes impacting academic progress and/or graduation, as further outlined in Article III, will be submitted to the MSSSC for review and a final decision. The MSSSC review will be conducted consistent with the *Jurisdiction* Section of this Policy.

Final decisions by the MSSSC are determined by a simple majority vote by members. Members may vote in favor, against, or in abstention. In the case of a tie vote, the Chair of MSSSC will determine the final decision.

Once a decision has been authorized, the subcommittee will notify the student(s) in writing, which will

include the outcomes and any conditions they must satisfy in order to return to making satisfactory academic progress. This includes the timeframe for completing any conditions. The Dean of Students (See “*Definitions*” below) will also receive a copy of the notification. If a dismissal is authorized by the MSSSC, the Dean of the Medical School will also receive a copy of the notification.

Standard of proof: Each student’s situation has unique characteristics and it is a rare occurrence when a student’s circumstances are fully known and/or the subcommittee’s outcomes can be based on every factor involved. As such, the standard of proof is set as a preponderance of the evidence. In other words, a determination will be made relying on currently available information and based on the convincing nature of any evidence and its probable truth or accuracy.

5. Tracking and Review of Progress

Once an outcome is rendered, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure they are resolved within the specified timeframe and to work with designated UMMS faculty and administration as needed. In addition, the MSSSC or its subcommittees may request progress reports at any time and will receive timely updates on progress towards meeting established conditions. Further reviews, including conducting Hearings, may be conducted that may modify or add to existing outcomes and/or conditions, extend deadlines, or result in any actions deemed necessary.

6. Interim Suspension

The Dean of Students (or designee), in consultation with appropriate medical school officials, may impose an immediate suspension on a medical student (1) to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the University community, including patients at affiliate sites, or to preserve the property of the University or its affiliate sites, (2) to ensure the student’s own physical or emotional safety and well-being, or (3) if the student poses an ongoing threat of disrupting or interfering with the operations of the University or affiliate sites.

During the interim suspension, the student may be denied access to UMN, UMMS, and affiliate site activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible. Every effort will be made to ensure a prompt Hearing with a subcommittee to evaluate whether the interim suspension remains in effect and the impact the suspension has on their academic standing and progress.

7. Recusals

At any time if a member of a committee (MSSSC or its subcommittees) has a bias or conflict of interest in a given medical student case, that member **must** recuse themselves (see ‘*Definitions*’). Recusals will be made without regard to whether a quorum remains in place.

Further, at any time prior to the start of any Hearing, students have the right to challenge any member or guest in attendance at the Hearing whose objectivity is in question. The subcommittee will rule (vote) on all challenges in accordance with their standard voting procedures. The outcome of this vote by the subcommittee in this matter is final.

8. Due Process Protections

Students referred to a scholastic standing subcommittee are entitled to:

- a. Receive a written explanation as to the nature of the referral
- b. Request that a Hearing before the subcommittee take place
- c. Challenge any member or guest in attendance, prior to the start of a Hearing, whose objectivity is in question
- d. Examine the file provided to the subcommittee used in their investigation, prior to, or at, a Hearing
- e. Examine witnesses appearing before the subcommittee
- f. Present their own statement and/or the statements of witnesses on their behalf
- g. Bring personal advisors to a Hearing. An advisor may be a faculty member, fellow student, attorney, or any other person. Students intending to bring an advisor must notify the subcommittee with the advisor’s name and status no less than two days prior to the scheduled Hearing
- h. Access the oral recording of a **dismissal** Hearing, which will be made available within thirty

(30) days from the date of the hearing

ARTICLE III. Outcomes

The following list, individually or in combination, includes outcomes that may be imposed on a student for failure to meet the academic and/or professional requirements. The MSSSC and its subcommittees reserve the right to enforce outcomes or recommend dismissal, regardless of current academic standing at the time of review.

Outcomes may be imposed as a result of the initial referral or in instances where a student fails to meet previously established outcomes. Outcomes may also be considered in addition to, or in the absence of, any that may be imposed by the University. Failure to meet the conditions authorized by the MSSSC are subject to further, and more severe, outcomes.

A. Where a subcommittee's recommendations would not directly impact progression and/or graduation the MSSSC authorizes the following outcomes and empowers the subcommittee to use them in the enforcement of its duties:

- a. Verbal or written warning related to academic or professionalism issues not impacting progression or graduation
- b. Placement/retention on Academic Probation
- c. Limitations/Restrictions on student privileges (e.g., access to academic experiences, facilities)
- d. Requiring a remediation program including the expected time for such remediation to be completed. Remediation plans will be developed in coordination with appropriate administrative designees (i.e., Course Director or Office of Student Affairs staff) and may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Re-examination of a failed exam within a given course
 - ii. Re-taking entire courses or clerkships where such remediation does not delay progression to the next academic year or graduation (see 'e' below)
 - iii. Additional or specially-designed coursework
- e. Requiring participation in programs outside of the medical school (e.g., professionalism development programs, counseling, or therapy); these may be at the student's expense
- f. Official notification of outcomes to be placed within a student's academic record
- g. **Prescribed Limitation:** Re-examination will not be permitted for students with more than two course failures in a single pre-clinical year, whether remediated or not

B. The following outcomes must be submitted as recommendations by the subcommittees to the MSSSC for final authorization:

- a. Verbal or written warning impacting progression and/or graduation
- b. Denial of academic advancement to subsequent terms, academic years, or phases
- c. Denial of credit, grades, honors, or revocation of degree previously awarded
- d. Imposing a grade of failure for any course, clerkship, or program of the UMMS (see "Definitions")
- e. Remediation plans that delay progression to the next academic year or graduation (i.e., repeating an entire academic year)
- f. Placement in a decelerated program (reduction in course load). (Note: This may result in part-time status. In addition, should this extend the length of the program it will be counted toward time to completion of the degree (see *Academic Progression and Graduation Policy*))
- g. Placement on an imposed Leave of Absence, with or without additional requirements to be met prior to, during, or subsequent to the Leave (see *Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy*)
- h. Denial of transition to the Twin Cities Campus for students on the Duluth Campus
- i. Suspension from the medical school

- j. Dismissal from the medical school

ARTICLE IV.Appeals

Students may challenge a decision of the MSSSC or subcommittee as follows:

- a. Disciplinary sanctions:¹ Medical students on either the Duluth and Twin Cities campuses can challenge disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the [Student Conduct Code Procedure: Twin Cities](#)
- b. Academic sanctions ¹ Medical students on either the Duluth and Twin Cities campuses can challenge academic sanctions in accordance with the [Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints: Twin Cities](#)

¹ Academic sanctions are implemented immediately, even pending appeal. Disciplinary sanctions generally are stayed pending appeal, unless sanctions should be immediately implemented because the offense involved serious harm to another person or the student otherwise presents a continuing risk of harm or disruption to the community.

ARTICLE V.Non-Retaliation

In order to protect the rights and freedoms of students who come before a subcommittee and to ensure the integrity of the process, the MSSC and its subcommittees strongly enforce the University's non-retaliation policy (see "*Related Information*").

No student shall experience retaliation for statements or information shared during any part of their interactions with the MSSC and its subcommittees, whether from another student, MSSC or its subcommittees members, faculty or staff, or other members of the community.

Reports of retaliation will be reviewed and investigated in the same manner in which other concerns of misconduct are handled and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

ARTICLE VI.Record Keeping and Reporting

Written records are maintained for five years; recordings of Dismissal Hearings are maintained for ten years. Records are kept by the administrative coordinator for the relevant subcommittee or MSSSC.

The MSSSC will report on its activities to the Dean and the Faculty Assembly at least once each year.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

There are no forms associated with this policy.

APPENDICES

There are no appendices associated with this policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There is no FAQ associated with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Record

Academic Records are those official school records maintained by the Registrar containing information related to academic progress (i.e., transcripts).

Educational Record

Educational Records include all records maintained by the school and/or University (i.e., academic records, disciplinary records, admissions records).

Dean of Students

Dean of Students refers to either the Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs on the Regional Campus in Duluth or the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs on the Central Campus in the Twin Cities as determined by the specific subcommittee in question.

Imposing a Failing Grade

The MSSC may impose a "grading penalty" in circumstances where the MSSC finds a student has, either intentionally or unintentionally, committed academic or professional misconduct.

RELATED INFORMATION

Academic Progress and Graduation Policy:

https://med.umn.edu/sites/med.umn.edu/files/osa.0819.016.1academic_progress_graduation.pdf

Competencies Required for Graduation

<https://med.umn.edu/md-students/academics/competencies-required-graduation>

HISTORY

Amended: COSSS/SSC, January 2020

Approved: COSSS/SSC, April, 2021

Revised: November, 2021

Approved: MSSSC, January 2022

Reviewed: Office of Accreditation, January 2023

Reviewed and Approved: MSSSC, January 2023