



## Medical School Policy

# Scholastic Standing Committee

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**Senior Leader:** Medical School Dean

**Responsible University Officer:** Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

**Policy Owner:** Chair, Scholastic Standing Committee

**Policy Contact:** Manager of Student Affairs - TC

## 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.

The UMMS maintains a Medical Student Scholastic Standing Committee - MSSSC (Referred to hereafter as the “Committee on Student Scholastic Standing” - COSSS) to engage in effective monitoring and evaluation of performance in order to approve, modify, or halt academic advancement or to address areas of deficiency. The COSSS ensures students are meeting the academic and professional expectations required to make satisfactory progress and to graduate.

## Jurisdiction

The COSSS holds jurisdiction over all matriculated UMMS students and serves as the final authority on decisions impacting progress and/or graduation. This includes authorizing standardized criteria for remediation of courses and clerkships.

## Authority

The COSSS

- enforces the requirements for advancing in the medical education program and for graduating from the medical school
- serves as the final authority on decisions that impact academic progress and/or graduation
- develops and enforces academic remediation plans for students brought before the COSSS
- conducts investigations and holds hearings as outlined herein

## Composition and Membership

**COSSS:** In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, the voting membership of the COSSS consists of at least three elected faculty members and at least three medical student representatives. At least one faculty member and one student member must be from each regional campus.

Designated medical school officers representing the Dean and the regional campus deans are

non-voting members. Neither the dean nor the regional campus dean(s) may be a member of the COSSS.

## Procedures

### ARTICLE I. Referral to a Scholastic Standing Subcommittee

A medical student may be referred to the COSSS 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 COSSS authorized decision
- d. The student is referred to the COSSS by an appropriate UMN/UMMS representative. This includes referrals from the Honor Council, 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 made by the COSSS
- e. The student is referred to the COSSS by an appropriate UMN/UMMS representative. This includes referrals from the Honor Council or the Peer 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, including all Appearances, Hearings, investigations, and recommended outcomes, are handled by the COSSS. On receipt of a referral, the COSSS 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 all subsequent communications will be via UMN email, the University of Minnesota's official means of communication.
- b. The COSSS 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 COSSS may request additional information from any source it deems necessary in conducting its initial, and subsequent, investigations including but not limited to, Foundations and Clinical Course Directors, Deans for Student Affairs, registrar, affiliate site representatives, or witnesses. The Chair of the COSSS may designate any employee of the UMN to undertake any such investigatory action on its behalf.

- c. The COSSS 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

The COSSS 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 COSSS determines a formal Hearing is not needed. Instances where there is disagreement with the decision of the COSSS 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 the COSSS 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 COSSS 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 COSSS 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 COSSS 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, COSSS members will deliberate and vote. COSSS 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

Once a decision has been made, the COSSS 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 COSSS, 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 COSSS 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 the COSSS 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 the COSSS 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 COSSS will rule (vote) on all challenges in accordance with their standard voting procedures. The outcome of this vote by the COSSS in this matter is final.

## **8. Due Process Protections**

Students referred to the COSSS 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 COSSS used in its investigation, prior to, or at, a Hearing
- e. Examine witnesses appearing before the COSSS

- 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 COSSS 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 COSSS reserves 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 COSSS are subject to further, and more severe, outcomes.

- a. Verbal or written warning related to academic or professionalism issues not impacting progression or graduation
- b. Verbal or written warning impacting progression and/or graduation
- c. Placement/retention on Academic Probation
- d. Limitations/Restrictions on student privileges (e.g., access to academic experiences, facilities)
- e. Requiring a remediation plan 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
    - **Prescribed Limitation:** Re-examination will not be permitted for students with more than two course failures in the Foundations Phase, whether remediated or not
  - 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. Plans that delay progression to the next academic year or graduation (i.e., repeating an entire academic year)
  - iv. Additional or specially-designed coursework
- f. Requiring participation in programs outside of the medical school; these may be at the student's expense
- g. Official notification of outcomes to be placed within a student's academic record
- h. Denial of academic advancement to subsequent terms, academic years, or phases
- i. Denial of credit, grades, honors, or revocation of degree previously awarded
- j. Imposing a grade of failure for any course, clerkship, or program of the UMMS (see "Definitions")
- k. 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*)
- l. 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*)

- m. Denial of transition to the Twin Cities Campus for students on the Duluth Campus
- n. Suspension from the medical school
- o. Dismissal from the medical school

#### **ARTICLE IV. Appeals**

Students may challenge a decision of the COSSS as follows:

- a. Disciplinary sanctions:<sup>1</sup> Medical students on any campus may challenge disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the [Student Conduct Code Procedure: Twin Cities](#)
- b. Academic sanctions:<sup>1</sup> Medical students on any campus may challenge academic sanctions in accordance with the [Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints: Twin Cities](#)

<sup>1</sup> 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 the COSSS and to ensure the integrity of the process, the COSSS strongly enforces 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 COSSS, whether from another student, COSSS 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 COSSS. The COSSS will report on its activities to the Dean and the Faculty Assembly at least once each year.

#### **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 the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions in Duluth, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs in the Twin Cities, or the Assistant Dean for UME in St. Cloud.

## Imposing a Failing Grade

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

## Related Information

Refer to the [Medical Student Policies](#) webpage for links to the following, related policies and procedures:

- Academic Progress and Graduation Policy
- Competencies Required for Graduation
- Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal

## LCME Accreditation Relevance

This policy 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.”

## 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

**Reviewed, Amended, and Approved:** COSSS, March 2025