



MEDICAL SCHOOL POLICY

Scholastic Standing Committees

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Policy Owner: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

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

Associate Dean of Student Life and Academic Affairs - Duluth

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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.

Each of UMMS's two campuses has its own Scholastic Standing Committee. These bodies are: the Committee on Student Scholastic Standing – Twin Cities (COSSS-TC), and the Scholastic Standing Committee – Duluth (SSC-DU). This document covers both committees (referred to generally as "scholastic standing committees" or "committees"). Instances where procedures are distinct to a given committee are noted.

Jurisdiction

COSSS-TC: The COSSS-TC holds jurisdiction over students matriculated at the Central Campus in the Twin Cities during the preclinical and clinical phases of the curriculum and over students previously matriculated at the Regional Campus in Duluth who have transitioned to the Twin Cities campus for the clinical phase.

SSC-DU: The SSC-DU holds jurisdiction over students matriculated at the Regional Campus in Duluth during the preclinical phase of the curriculum.

Authority

Each scholastic standing committee is empowered to make or recommend decisions which can affect, alter, modify or even halt a student's academic progress. The responsibilities of the scholastic standing committees are to:

1. Monitor the progress of medical students within their jurisdiction, especially in instances where a medical student is failing to meet the academic, technical, or professional standards for progression and graduation (see *Academic Progress and Graduation Policy*).

2. Evaluate a medical student's performance and adherence to University of Minnesota (UMN) and UMMS academic and professional policies, develop and enforce remediation plans or sanctions, and make decisions regarding a student's academic standing, as outlined in this policy.
3. Evaluate whether medical students have met the requirements for awarding of the MD Degree.

Composition and Membership

COSSS-TC

In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, The COSSS-TC is composed of a minimum of six voting faculty members and two voting student representatives (counted as a single vote). Faculty membership is representative of the foundational science and clinical areas. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs is a non-voting ex officio member.

SSC-DU

In accordance with the UMMS Bylaws, The SSC-DU is composed of six voting faculty members and two voting student representatives, elected by their classmates from the Year 1 and 2 classes. Membership is representative of the medical school departments on the Duluth Campus. In addition, SSC-DU includes the Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs, and a representative from the Center of American Indian and Minority Health as non-voting ex officio members.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy exists to outline the role and procedures of the scholastic standing committees 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 Committee

A medical student may be referred to the relevant scholastic standing committee 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 scholastic standing committee outcome
- d. The student is referred to a scholastic standing committee 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 requirements set by a scholastic standing committee as a result of a prior scholastic standing committee outcome
- e. The student is referred to a scholastic standing committee 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. On receipt of a referral, the scholastic standing committee 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 scholastic standing committee 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 committee 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 committee may designate any employee of the UMN to undertake any such investigatory action on its behalf.
- c. The committee 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 scholastic standing committee.

2. Appearances

A scholastic standing committee 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 committee determines a formal Hearing is not needed. Instances where there is disagreement with the decision of the committee 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 scholastic standing committee allows presentation of additional, relevant information not available during the committee'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 committee 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 scholastic standing committee 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 committee 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. Rendering a Final Decision

Upon completion of its review or investigation, including any Hearings, committee members will deliberate and render a decision. Decisions of the committee are carried by a motion and determined by a simple majority vote of members present. Members may vote in favor, against, or in abstention. Decisions include:

- a. Allowing the student to continue making satisfactory academic progress without interruption (ie, maintaining or returning to good academic standing)
- b. Outcomes that alter, modify, or halt the student's progress with relevant conditions (See "*Article III. Outcomes*" below)

Students will be notified in writing of the final decision, 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.

- c. **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 committee's outcomes can be based on every factor involved. As such, the committee sets the standard of proof as a preponderance of the evidence. In other words, the committee, to the best of its ability and relying on currently available information, makes its determination(s) based on the convincing nature of any evidence and its probable truth or accuracy.

5. Tracking and Review of Progress

Once a decision is rendered, it is the student's responsibility to ensure all outcomes are resolved within the specified timeframe and to work with designated UMMS faculty and administration as needed. In addition, the committee may request progress reports at any time. The committee shall receive an update in the event the student fails to meet the conditions established by the committee either prior to, or by their expected completion date. In these instances the committee will engage in further review, including conducting hearings, that may modify or add to existing outcomes and/or conditions, extend deadlines, or take 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 UMMS 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 scholastic standing committee who will determine 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 scholastic standing committee 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 committee will rule (vote) on all challenges in accordance with their standard voting procedures. The outcome of this vote by the scholastic standing committee in this matter is final.

8. Due Process Protections

Students referred to a scholastic standing committee are entitled to:

- a. Receive a written explanation as to the nature of the referral
- b. Request that a Hearing before the scholastic standing committee 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 scholastic standing committee used in their investigation, prior to, or at, a Hearing
- e. Examine witnesses appearing before the scholastic standing committee
- 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 scholastic standing committee 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 a scholastic standing committee may impose. However, this list is intended to be representative, and not exclusive in nature.

Outcomes may be imposed as a result of the initial referral or in instances where a student fails to meet previously established outcomes. Scholastic Standing Committees may also consider their own outcomes above, or in the absence of, any that may be imposed by the University. Failure to meet the conditions established by a scholastic standing committee are subject to further, and more severe outcomes.

- a. Verbal or written warning
- b. Placement/retention on Academic Probation
- c. Denial of academic advancement to subsequent terms, academic years, or phases
- d. Limitations/Restrictions on student privileges (e.g. access to academic experiences, facilities)
- e. Denial of credit, grades, honors, or revocation of degree previously awarded

- f. Imposing a grade of failure for any course, clerkship, or program of the UMMS
- g. Placement in a decelerated program (reduction in course load). 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*)
- h. Placement on a 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*)
- i. 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, or an entire academic year
 - iii. Additional or specially-designed coursework
- j. Denial of transition to the Twin Cities Campus for students on the Duluth Campus
- k. 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
- l. Official notification of outcomes to be placed within a student's academic record
- m. Suspension from the medical school
- n. Dismissal from the medical school (in instances of a Hearing) or the convening of a Dismissal Hearing (in instances of an Appearance)
- o. **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

Outcomes can impact the ability of a student to progress in the academic program as outlined in the *Academic Progress and Graduation Policy*. The scholastic standing committee reserves the right to impose sanctions or recommend dismissal, regardless of current academic standing at the time of review.

ARTICLE IV.Appeals

Students may challenge a decision of the scholastic standing committee as follows:

- a. Disciplinary sanctions:¹ Medical students on both 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 both 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 scholastic standing committee and to ensure the integrity of the process, the committees strongly enforce the University's non-retaliation policy (see "*Related Information*").

No student should experience concern of retaliation for statements or information shared during any part of their interactions with a scholastic standing committee, whether from another student, scholastic standing committee member, faculty or staff, or other member 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 committee.

Each of the Scholastic Standing Committees will report on their activities to the Dean and the Faculty Assembly at least once each year. In addition, each Scholastic Standing Committee should, ideally, submit a report to the Education Council with appropriate quantitative and qualitative information so as to inform the effectiveness of academic policies and curriculum requirements enforced by the Education Council.

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.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Phone	Fax/Email
Primary Contact	Name	Phone	Fax/Email
COSSS Administrator, Twin Cities	Nou Ka Yang	(625) 626-0163	yang6652@umn.edu
SSC Administrator - Duluth	Shawn Evanson	(218) 726-8873	sevenson@d.umn.edu

DEFINITIONS

Academic Record

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

Educational Record

Educational Records include all records maintained by the school and/or University (ie, 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 scholastic standing committee in question.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Position/Office
Responsibilities

Position/Office
Responsibilities

RELATED INFORMATION

Academic Progress and Graduation Policy:

https://med.umn.edu/sites/med.umn.edu/files/osa.0819.016.1_academic_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