

# **Policies and Procedures Related to Scholastic Standing at the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Campus**

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures governing student scholastic standing at the Duluth campus of the University of Minnesota Medical School. Effective Academic Year 2004-05, the Medical School Twin Cities and the Medical School Duluth have integrated into a single medical school with unitary accreditation. However, each campus maintains its own procedures and committee structure to oversee the progress of students enrolled on that campus.

## **ROLE AND JURISDICTION OF SCHOLASTIC STANDING COMMITTEES**

Each campus has a Scholastic Standing Committee which has been charged with the responsibility of monitoring medical student progress on that campus. These scholastic bodies are: The Committee on Student Scholastic Standing-Minneapolis (COSSS) and The Scholastic Standing Committee-Duluth (SSC).

Students admitted to the Duluth campus are under the jurisdiction of the SSC during their first two years of course work and until they pass Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE).

The COSSS has jurisdiction over students who have matriculated on the Twin Cities campus and students who have transitioned from the Duluth campus after completing their coursework and passing Step 1 of the USMLE. Students from Duluth who have begun clinical rotations pending results of the Step 1 exam are under the jurisdiction of the COSSS for purposes of that clinical work, but remain under the jurisdiction of the SSC regarding their overall student status until they pass the Step 1 exam and are approved for transition to the Twin Cities campus.

The SSC provides a formal written report to the COSSS at the end of each year documenting status of all students enrolled on the Duluth campus. Both committees strive to assist students who are experiencing academic difficulty and to assure fairness to each student. The committees evaluate student performance and progress based on the student's individual record, taking into account the unique circumstance of each student's situation. Student performance encompasses academic knowledge and clinical skills, as well as development of the personal and professional attributes expected of a practicing physician. Insofar as student behavior reflects on any student's qualifications or potential to become a competent and ethical professional, such conduct will be within the jurisdiction of the appropriate Scholastic Standing Committee. The SSC-Duluth will report to the Education Council on its activities annually (reference: Medical School Bylaws).

## **I. Introduction**

These are the policies and procedures followed by the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Scholastic Standing Committee (SSC) when evaluating medical students' academic performance and related issues. The role of the Committee is to monitor each student's progress through medical school and to ensure that each student is qualified to transition to the University of Minnesota Medical School. These policies and procedures will be applied taking into account the unique circumstances of each student's situation.

The policies of the Scholastic Standing Committee are developed to conform to broader University policies on academic performance and ethics. The responsibilities of the University of

Minnesota Medical School Duluth Scholastic Standing Committee are: to ensure that the students of the Medical School have met the requirements for transition to the University of Minnesota Medical School; to monitor each student's progress through medical school; and to ensure that the work of the Scholastic Standing Committee has been conducted properly, providing fairness to each student.

The responsibility of the Duluth Campus Scholastic Standing Committee is expressed in the following statement, from the Bylaws to the University of Minnesota Medical School Constitution:

Duluth Campus Scholastic Standing Committee. The Scholastic Standing Committee shall be composed of eight faculty from the Departments of Biobehavioral Health and Population Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, and Family Medicine, and Community Health, Duluth Campus; and one medical student from each class, participating as feasible, and shall include the representative of the Regional Campus Dean for the Duluth Campus for student affairs as a non-voting ex officio member. Faculty members shall be elected from a slate of candidates prepared by the Nominations Committee for a term of one year; medical students shall be selected for a term of one year through such procedures as the Student Body may establish.

The Scholastic Standing Committee shall monitor the quality of student performance in a continuous and consistent fashion. To this end, it shall determine guidelines for student academic standing, and it shall monitor each student's progress toward the Doctor of Medicine degree. This committee shall make recommendations to the Duluth Campus Faculty Assembly concerning each student's promotion, transfer, termination, and/or special programming. The Duluth Campus's actions on such recommendations will then be transmitted to the Regional Campus Dean for the Duluth Campus for action. The Scholastic Standing Committee will annually report to the Twin Cities campus through the Chair of the Committee of Student Scholastic Standing, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Students and Student Learning. The Duluth Campus Scholastic Standing Committee will report on its activities to the Education Council and the Faculty Assembly at least once each year. Any action to deny advancement to students deemed ineligible will be reported to the Dean of the Medical School through the Regional Campus Dean for the Duluth Campus.

## II. Faculty Assembly Policies

### A. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Medical students must complete all required courses and Milestone Exams (1, 2) satisfactorily and follow the credit requirements for the M.D. degree as outlined in the current University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Bulletin, or as stated by the Office of Curricular Affairs, course directors, and/or the Scholastic Standing Committee; complete all regularly scheduled assignments; and take all scheduled examinations unless excused by the course director or his/her delegated faculty representative.

All basic science coursework and Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) must be successfully completed within four years from the student's beginning date of enrollment, and the Years Three and Four curriculum and USMLE Step 2 within a three year period, not to exceed seven years total from the beginning date of enrollment, with the exception of those enrolled in any dual degree program or on an approved decelerated program. These students must be in good academic standing in the medical school while pursuing a second degree in order to receive an extension of any time limit.

### B. GRADING POLICIES

#### Year 1 and 2: Course Grades

##### **Policy Statement**

All final course grades in Years I and 2 will be either Pass (P); Not Pass (N) or Honors (H).

Final course grades in Years 1 and 2 will be set at a pass (P) no lower than 70% of the cumulative points available for the entire course and students must also accumulate 70% or more of the cumulative points available on the final exam. Up to 66% of the pass/fail decision for the course may be comprised of the score from the final exam. All courses are required to have a final exam\* that includes content representative of the entire course.

Final course grades will be criterion referenced.

Each course will determine Honors (H) for that course using criteria representing the work required for that course.

##### **Reason for Policy**

A standard grading policy across the first two years of medical school is important to provide continuity and understanding of the learning that a grade represents. A pass/no pass/honors grade provides information on the mastery of content by each student and is not a comparison to the performance of others in their class.

##### **Procedures**

1. The policies of the Committee on Student Scholastic Standing (Twin Cities campus) and Scholastic Standing Committee (years 1-2, Duluth campus) determine the actions to be taken for a No Pass course grade.  
Twin Cities - <http://www.meded.umn.edu/handbook/policies/cosss>  
Duluth - [http://www.d.umn.edu/medweb/student\\_manual.pdf](http://www.d.umn.edu/medweb/student_manual.pdf)
2. Course grades in both Years 1 and 2 will be criterion referenced, not norm referenced. (Students will be assessed on their own independent mastery of the material; their course grades will be dependent on their own true scores, not scores referenced to a class mean.)

3. Final exams may contribute up to 66% of the pass/fail decision for the course.
4. The balance of a student's course grade (34% or more) should be based on measures such as but not limited to:
  - Midterm (if applicable)
  - Participation in small groups, etc.
  - Quizzes
  - Professionalism (including peer assessments)
  - Essays/papers/presentations
  - Concurrent Foundations of Critical Thinking case contributions
  - Projects
5. The requirements for Pass and Honors must be stipulated in the course syllabus prior to the beginning of the course. These requirements must be criterion referenced and not dependent on student scores referenced to the class mean. In determining Honors, the course director may include any elements of the course requirements (i.e., test scores, peer assessments, quizzes, attendance, papers, etc.)

Approved – Education Steering Committee, March 21, 2011

Approved – Education Council, April 19, 2011

## Year 1 and 2: Exam Grades

### **Policy Statement**

All exam grades will be criterion referenced. All exam grades in Years 1 and 2 will be set at a pass no lower than 70% of the cumulative points available for the entire exam. Final exam scores may contribute up to 66% of the pass/fail decision for the course.

All courses are required to have a final exam that includes content representative of the entire course.

### **Reason for Policy**

A standard exam grading policy across Years 1 and 2 is important to provide continuity and understanding that a pass/fail grade is actually providing information on the mastery of subject area content by each student and not a comparison of their mastery level to others in their class.

### **Procedures**

1. Students must receive timely feedback on all performance measures.
2. For integrated exams, discipline specific sub-scores will be available for students to better inform their own learning progress in individual subject areas. The Course Director may at their own discretion refer to students to the Director of Learner Development (TC)/Assistant Education Specialist (D) if they feel that students have exhibited areas of academic deficiency or need.
3. Exam grades in both Years 1 and 2 will be criterion referenced, not norm referenced. (Students will be assessed on their own independent mastery of the material; their exam grades will be dependent on their own true scores, not scores referenced to a class mean.)

Approved by Education Steering Committee March 21, 2011

Approved by Education Council April 19, 2011

### **Definitions**

Criterion referenced: Criterion referenced exams measure how well a student has mastered a specific body of knowledge and/or skills.

Norm referenced: Norm referenced exams are designed to measure how well a student has mastered a specific body of knowledge and/or skills in comparison to others who take the same exam.

Course Component: Any subject area or defined skills set represented in a course (anatomy, pharmacology, etc).

**Related Information**

- Principles for Course-based Student Assessments in the Scientific Foundations Courses, Twin Cities

**C. Policy on Dropping a Course**

Anytime a student drops a course due to academic difficulty and fifty percent or more of the points in the course have been given (exams, quizzes, etc.), the student will receive a grade of “N” (Not Pass) rather than a grade of “I” (Incomplete). Repetition of the course in the following year will be considered a remedial program.

Approved by Scholastic Standing Committee: April 20, 1996

### **III. Guidelines For Academic Standing**

#### **A. Academic Standing**

A student will be considered in good standing academically if the student is not on probation as defined below.

#### **B. Determination of Academic Standing**

Determination of academic standing will be made by the Scholastic Standing Committee four calendar weeks after the conclusion of each semester grading period.

#### **C. Probationary Status**

If a student retains a grade of “N” (Not Pass) at the determination of academic standing, this student shall be placed on academic probation. If a student retains more than three “I” (Incomplete) grades on his/her record at the conclusion of the second grading period for the first academic year or beyond, the Scholastic Standing Committee may consider placing the student on academic probation.

#### **D. Remedial Program**

A remedial program for a student receiving a grade of “N” will be devised by the course director involved after consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs and the student. The Scholastic Standing Committee will be informed of the nature of the devised remedial program, in writing, by the course director. Such remedial programs may include, but are not limited to, self-study, tutorials, or repetition of the course in which the grade of “N” was received. At the completion of a remedial program, the course director shall communicate to the Scholastic Standing Committee, in writing, the results of the student’s performance.

Students failing one or more courses, including courses initially failed but later successfully remediated or repeated, must appear before the Scholastic Standing Committee. The Committee will then determine whether the student shall be:

1. allowed to continue academic progress without interruption;
2. allowed to take more classes, but possibly at a reduced academic load;
3. required to suspend academic progress through Medical School until specified conditions are met;
4. given the opportunity to take re-examinations;
5. allowed to complete defined remedial coursework;
6. placed on academic probation; or
7. subject to a hearing for dismissal.

#### **E. Removal from Academic Probation**

Any student who has been placed on academic probation due to a grade or grades of “N” will be removed from academic probation and returned to good academic standing after satisfactory completion of all remedial programs. A change of grade shall be submitted by the course director immediately to update the student’s academic record. If it is deemed necessary to place a student on academic probation due to multiple Incompletes (I’s), that student will be removed from probation when all Incompletes have been removed. Removal from academic probation shall be communicated to the student in writing by the Scholastic Standing Committee.

#### **F. Re-examination or repeated course with an “N” Grade**

The primary responsibility for removal of any grade of “N” rests with the student. The Scholastic Standing Committee, may, on occasion, act in a consultative role with the student and the appropriate course director in an attempt to facilitate progress through the remedial program. The Chairperson of the Scholastic Standing Committee may communicate with the course director to determine the progress of the student.

## G. Recommendation of Academic Dismissal

The Scholastic Standing Committee has the authority to recommend a student’s dismissal from the Medical School to the School Assembly. Such a recommendation will normally be made when: 1) the student has one or more grades of “N” at the determination of academic standing; or 2) the student fails to successfully complete a remedial program; 3) the student fails to pass USMLE Step 1 after three attempts; or 4) the student otherwise fails to make satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion. Each of these situations will result in a hearing for dismissal at which time the student’s entire academic record will be reviewed. Courses for which remedial programs are already prepared and agreed upon but not yet completed will be considered as grades of “N” when academic status is being considered by the Scholastic Standing Committee. As noted in Section D, students failing one or more courses, including courses initially failed but later successfully remediated or repeated, may be subject to a hearing for dismissal.

A student is only permitted to take a course twice and is only permitted one reexamination in that course. Failure to pass the course the second time will result in a hearing for dismissal.

## H. Behavioral, Conduct Code or Professionalism Violations

A student will be subject to Scholastic Standing Committee recommendations, sanctions or dismissal for the following behaviors:

1. Conduct which violates any of these behavior codes: University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Campus Honor Code; University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code; Student Behavioral Code; policies/rules of affiliated sites, which apply to students in a clinical experience.
2. Conduct which violates professional and/or ethical standards of the medical professions; disrupts the operations of the University, University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth Campus, or clinical training sites; or disregards the rights or welfare of patients, fellow students, college/clinical staff or other individuals.
3. Unlawful conduct or improper behavior within or outside the University of Minnesota, Medical School Duluth Campus community which impairs the student’s capacity to function as a medical student/prospective physician.

The Committee may subject students who have violated the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)

Medical Student Professionalism Code

<http://www.meded.umn.edu/handbook/policies/professionalism.php>

or the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility

[http://www.meded.umn.edu/handbook/policies/intellectual\\_responsibility.php](http://www.meded.umn.edu/handbook/policies/intellectual_responsibility.php)

to a number of options including, but not limited to:

1. allowing the student to continue academic progress without interruption;
2. requiring that certain conditions be met to resume academic progress;
3. imposing a leave of absence;
4. suspending academic progress in Medical School until specified conditions are met;
5. requiring additional or specially-designed coursework;
6. requiring participation in programs outside of the Medical School; or
7. recommending a hearing for dismissal.

## I. Decelerated Program

The Scholastic Standing Committee may, on occasion, recommend or approve decelerated programs for students. Such programs may consist of reduced load/split year programs or exemption from registration for previously completed comparable coursework.

Any and all requests for decelerated programs must be presented by the student, in writing, to the Scholastic Standing Committee; the Scholastic Standing Committee has the final authority for approval or disapproval of such requests. The Scholastic Standing Committee also has the authority to alter the final structure of any proposal presented by the student. Any such alteration or change shall be communicated, in writing, to the student and the student shall respond, in writing, with his/her acceptance of that altered program.

If the student wishes an exemption from registration for previously completed coursework, the student is responsible for requesting this exemption in writing from the appropriate course director. If approved by the course director and course faculty, the course director must submit written approval to the Scholastic Standing Committee explaining how the requirements were met. The written documentation and approval must be received by the Scholastic Standing Committee at least two weeks prior to the registration date for that course.

## J. Communication

The Scholastic Standing Committee, through its Chairperson, will communicate any and all actions to the student in writing. All responses and/or requests to the Scholastic Standing Committee from the student, or in the student's behalf, will be communicated in writing.

## K. Promotion and Transition

No student who is on academic probation or who has a grade of "I" or "X" will be recommended for promotion to the second year or for transition to the Twin Cities campus or transfer to another school. All grades of "N", "I", and/or "X" must be removed from the student's record before such recommendation will be made.

No student will be recommended for transition to the Twin Cities campus until that student has recorded a passing score on Step 1 of the USMLE.

## L. Application

These Guidelines for Academic Standing supersede all previous Guidelines for Academic Standing and apply to all students entering the Medical School for the first time commencing with the Fall Semester of 2006.

Approved School Assembly: August 23, 2006.

#### **IV. Scholastic Standing Committee Operational Policy on Leave of Absence**

Whereas the Scholastic Standing Committee may grant a leave of absence to a student, a proper mechanism to process appropriate requests shall be followed. To avoid unnecessary meetings, and to expedite student requests, a procedure for request of leave of absence is hereby established.

Procedure:

- A. A student who is in good academic standing may request a leave of absence through the following procedure.
  1. The student shall request a leave of absence only after discussion of additional options with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. This discussion shall cover factors impacting financial assistance.
  2. The student shall petition the Scholastic Standing Committee in writing for such a leave, not to exceed a period longer than one (1) year.
  3. The student shall be interviewed by the Regional Campus Dean of the Medical School Duluth Campus and the Chairperson of the Scholastic Standing Committee, as to appropriateness of request.
  4. Upon recommendation by unanimous agreement of the above three interviewing officials, the Scholastic Standing Committee Chairperson may grant a leave of absence from academic studies for not more than one (1) year. All actions must be reported to the Committee at its next regular meeting.
  5. The student will be requested to respond to the Scholastic Standing Committee regarding her/his intentions to return to school by a date four (4) months preceding reentry.
  6. If reentry is requested, the student will again be interviewed by the above three officials. They will forward a recommendation to the Scholastic Standing Committee for action on readmission prior to the beginning of the semester to be reentered.
- B. Other requests for leave of absence shall be handled by a meeting of the Committee of the whole, following interviews by the previously stated school officials.

## V. Policy on United States Medical Licensure Examinations

It is the policy of the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth that each student must pass Part 1 of the United States Medical Licensure Examination (USMLE) to complete our requirements before officially transitioning to the Medical School in Minneapolis. Passing standards are those established by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Year Two students may provisionally enter the clinical phase of the medical school curriculum pending notification of the results. Under no circumstances will such a student be permitted more than eighteen weeks of clinical work before receiving notification of passing Step 1.

The Scholastic Standing Committee has established the following policies with regard to the USMLE:

- 1) The Scholastic Standing Committee shall be advised of student performance on Step 1 of the USMLE.
- 2) Failure to pass Step 1 may result in a hearing before the Scholastic Standing Committee at which time courses of remedial action may be recommended.
- 3) Failure to pass Step 1 after *three* attempts will result in a hearing for dismissal, at which time the student's entire academic record will be reviewed.

Applies to students who have not previously taken Step 1 USMLE.

Approved by Scholastic Standing Committee: December, 1995  
Approved by School Assembly: June 20, 1999

## **VI. Due Process Policy Governing Student Dismissal**

The Scholastic Standing Committee (SSC) is charged with the responsibility of monitoring each student's performance while enrolled. Guidelines for Academic Standing are established by the Scholastic Standing Committee and distributed to incoming students by the Office of Student Affairs. In circumstances where the development of clinical skills, acquisition of knowledge, or the student's personal conduct and relationships in a clinical setting are inconsistent with the student's future success as a physician, the inadequacies shall be brought to the student's attention by the instructor involved and the departmental representative to the Scholastic Standing Committee. Failure to correct these inadequacies may lead the Scholastic Standing Committee to recommend dismissal of the student. It is also recognized that the medical student is subject to the University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code

[http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html) and its provisions, actions and penalties while enrolled in the Medical School.

The Scholastic Standing Committee considers the student as a whole person and realizes a student may have personal, medical or emotional problems, which contribute to the student's academic deficiencies and/or behavioral violations. These problems may be recognized by the student, faculty members, fellow students, or the Scholastic Standing Committee.

When a student appears before the Scholastic Standing Committee based on academic deficiencies or alleged behavioral violations, the Scholastic Standing Committee may recommend evaluation and/or counseling for the student if it determines that personal, medical or emotional difficulties have contributed to the student's situation. The student's progress in addressing these difficulties may be factors in the Scholastic Standing Committee's decision regarding the student's status in the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth. If a student with academic deficiencies or behavioral violations is placed on a mandatory leave of absence, the student may be required to demonstrate progress in treatment or counseling as a condition of re-entry into the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth. Any evaluation or treatment information transmitted to the Scholastic Standing Committee is private and will not be released outside the Scholastic Standing Committee without the written consent of the student, except as legally required.

Prior to a Scholastic Standing Committee recommendation of dismissal, the student will be:

1. Informed, by the Chairperson of the Scholastic Standing Committee, in writing, of reasons for the proposed recommendation. If the student chooses to have a hearing with the Scholastic Standing Committee, sufficient time (no more than ten days) must be allowed for the student to prepare for the hearing;
2. Guaranteed the right to appear before the Scholastic Standing Committee on his/her own behalf;
3. Guaranteed the right to examine their file prior to or at the hearing;
4. Allowed to select an advisor or counselor of his/her choice for assisting him/her during the Scholastic Standing Committee hearing; a faculty or staff member of the School is not excluded from this role;
5. Given an opportunity to present evidence or witnesses on his/her own behalf and to question adverse witnesses before the Scholastic Standing Committee.

In such hearings, all matters related to the decision to recommend dismissal of the student must be introduced into evidence before the Scholastic Standing Committee. The Scholastic Standing

Committee shall consider only statements or written material which are made available to the student and which the student has had an opportunity to discuss and/or dispute in the hearing.

A record shall be kept of the hearing proceedings and kept on file for a period of three (3) years following the final disposition of the case. This record shall be available for review only by parties who have obtained the written consent of the student, unless otherwise provided by statutory law or these due process procedures.

For students subject to a dismissal hearing on academic grounds, the SSC may:

1. Continue the student's present enrollment in the curriculum on either a full-time or part-time basis.
2. Place the student on Academic Probation status with specific criteria to satisfy in order to return to good academic standing and/or remain in the Medical School.
3. Require the student to stop academic progress in order to receive appropriate intervention before being allowed to proceed in the full curriculum. Re-entry in the full curriculum is contingent upon successful completion of the designated remedial program.
4. Interrupt the student's curriculum for a specified period. At the end of the stipulated time, the student may petition for permission to resume the full curriculum. Failure to contact the SSC at that time will be interpreted as a resignation from Medical School.
5. Dismiss the student from Medical School.

For students found to have committed non-academic behavioral violations, the SSC may impose disciplinary sanctions, including but not limited to: warning, required compliance, probation, suspension and/or dismissal. Such sanctions will become a permanent part of the student's academic file.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the SSC will notify the student of its decision and provide the student with a statement of the reasons for the decision.

Students may submit a written request to the SSC for reconsideration of its decision with ten (10) days of the hearing, but only upon the basis of new information not reasonably available at the time of the hearing.

Following reconsideration, decisions of the SSC are final subject to the student's right to appeal findings of behavioral violations to the Provost's Appeal Committee.

Approved by School Assembly: May 15, 2002

## **VII. Students with Personal, Medical, or Emotional Problems**

The SSC considers the student as a whole person and realizes a student may have personal, medical or emotional problems which contribute to the student's academic deficiencies and/or behavioral violations. These problems may be recognized by the student, faculty members, fellow students, or the SSC.

If the problem is substance abuse/dependence the student will be required to follow a standard monitoring plan developed by the Medical School. This monitoring information does not become a permanent part of the student's file unless the student violates the plan. If this occurs, the student must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and/or SSC chair, who will determine whether the student is required to appear before SSC.

When a student appears before the SSC based either on academic deficiencies or alleged behavioral violations, the Committee may recommend evaluation and/or counseling for the student if it determines that personal, medical or emotional difficulties have contributed to the student's situation. The student's progress in addressing these difficulties may be a factor in the Committee's decision regarding the student's status in the Medical School. If a student with academic deficiencies or behavioral violations is placed on a mandatory leave of absence, the student may be required to demonstrate progress in treatment or counseling as a condition of re-entry into the Medical School and continuing student status. The student's provider must provide a letter to SSC certifying that the student is ready to re-enter medical school. Any evaluation or treatment information transmitted to the SSC is private, will be maintained separate from the student file and will not be released outside the Committee without the written consent of the student, except as legally required.