



**Promotion and Graduation  
For all SMHS Medical Students**

Section: 4  
Policy number: 4.10  
Responsible Office: Education Resources  
Issued: 06.20.16  
Latest Review: 06.20.16

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## POLICY STATEMENT

Promotion from one educational level of the curriculum to the next is based on a student satisfactorily meeting the academic performance standards for the previous level. Graduation from the program with the granting of the M.D. degree is based on a student satisfactorily meeting the academic performance standards established by the faculty of the SMHS and passing of the USMLE Step examinations.

Satisfactory performance in individual courses does not guarantee that the student's performance, when viewed as a whole, meets the expectations necessary for awarding the M.D. degree.

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## REASON for POLICY

Each student in the M.D. degree program has the responsibility of meeting the standards of academic performance. Students must achieve the satisfactory criterion level established by the faculty and presented to all students at the beginning of each course. The curriculum is built upon objectives and responsibilities that are unique to each year of medical school. Students acquire knowledge and learn skills at each curricular level that prepares them for the next level, therefore students must satisfactorily complete the preceding level before advancing to subsequent levels.

A medical school has the responsibility to society and to the medical profession to certify that its graduates have the cognitive knowledge and skills and the behavioral qualities necessary to function as competent and safe physicians. Therefore, the granting of the M.D. degree is based on students satisfactorily meeting **all** academic performance standards established by the faculty of SMHS.

Additionally, students who achieve satisfactory performance in individual courses, but whose collective performance overall is not befitting the medical profession, may be denied the M.D. degree.

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## SCOPE of POLICY

This policy applies to:

√Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

√Faculty

√Managers and supervisors

√Staff

√Students

Others: Optional.

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## WEB SITE REFERENCES

Policy Office: <http://www.med.und.edu/policies/index.cfm>

Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean: <http://www.med.und.edu/administration/deans-office/index.cfm>

Education Resources: <http://www.med.und.edu/medical-education/>

USMLE: <http://www.usmle.org/>

MSAPC: <http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/academic-performance-committee.pdf>

Curriculum: <http://www.med.und.edu/medical-education/curriculum.cfm>

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## DEFINITIONS

SMHS	University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Educational level	Sequence of instruction starting with Year 1 followed by Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4
Academic Performance	Includes both the cognitive measures of academic performance (e.g. performance on assessment tools used within all components of the curriculum and professional skills) and behavioral measures of academic performance (e.g. professional conduct and academic dishonesty).
USMLE Step Examinations	<p>The three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States and is sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®).</p> <p>The USMLE assesses a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills, that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.</p>
Course	The term course shall refer to a unit of education. In the first two years this can be either a block or a course, in the third year it refers to a clerkship or a course and in the fourth year it refers to an acting internship, rotation or an elective (either on or off campus).
MSI	A medical student who is in the first year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.
MSII	A medical student who is in the second year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.
MSIII	A medical student who is in the third year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.
MSIV	A medical student who is in the fourth year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.
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MSIV	A medical student who is in the fourth year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.

## RELATED INFORMATION

SMHS Policy Page	<a href="http://www.med.und.edu/policies/index.cfm">http://www.med.und.edu/policies/index.cfm</a>
Grading and Academic Performance	<a href="http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/grading-academic-performance.pdf">http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/grading-academic-performance.pdf</a>
Consequences of "Unsatisfactory" Academic Performance	<a href="http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/unsatisfactory-academic-performance.pdf">http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/unsatisfactory-academic-performance.pdf</a>

## CONTACTS

General questions about this policy can be answered by your department's administrative office. Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone/FAX	Email contact
Policy clarification	Student Affairs	777.4221/777.4942	
Policy format	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	judy.solberg@med.und.edu

## PRINCIPLES

- I. Promotion from one educational level of the curriculum to the next is based on a student satisfactorily meeting the academic performance standards for the previous level. Graduation from the program with the granting of the M.D. degree is based on a student satisfactorily meeting the academic performance standards established by the faculty of the SMHS and passing of the USMLE Step examinations.

Satisfactory performance in individual courses does not guarantee that the student's performance, when viewed as a whole, meets the expectations necessary for awarding the M.D. degree.

- II. The following process has been developed to provide students with the skill set and knowledge expected and needed for a student to be successful in subsequent course work. The block curriculum is integrated and graduated from year one to year two, therefore a student is required to satisfactorily complete all year one course work before promotion to year two. Students advancing to year three shall have satisfactorily completed years one and two in order to have the basic knowledge expected of a third year medical student. Third year medical students must have taken the USMLE Step 1 prior to beginning their clerkships in order to devote their energies to the junior course work. Finally before a student can advance to elective rotations and acting internships they must have completed the basic clinical course work presented in the third year. This provides the student with the best opportunity to be fully effective in demonstrating skills and knowledge during the final year of medical school.

- III. Although USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills are usually taken after the completion of year 3 clerkships. This is not required. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions may require proof that the student who has not completed all required clerkships is adequately prepared for USMLE Step 2 before granting permission to sit for the test.

## PROCEDURES

- I. MSI-A first year medical student must pass all curricular requirements of Year 1 in order to be promoted to Year 2 of medical school.
- II. MSII-A second year medical student must pass all curricular requirements of Year 2 in order to be promoted to Year 3 of medical school. In addition the student must take the USMLE Step 1 prior to starting Year 3; and must pass USMLE Step 1 prior to beginning the second half of the third year curriculum (Section 5.C. see below) and with an allowable number of attempts as stated by the rules promulgated by the North Dakota Board of Medical Practice.
- III. MSIII-a third year medical student must pass all curricular requirements of Year 3 in order to be promoted to Year 4 of medical school.
- IV. MSIV-a fourth year medical student must pass all curricular requirements of Year 4 in order to be promoted to graduation. In addition fourth year medical students must pass USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills prior to graduation with an allowable number of attempts as stated by the rules promulgated by the North Dakota Board of Medical Examiners.
- V. USMLE Step Examinations
  - a. Passing performance on Steps 1 and 2 (Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills examinations) of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), according to established National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) criteria, is a requirement for graduation and granting of the M.D. degree at SMHS.
  - b. A student is required to take USMLE Step 1 before beginning the Year 3 curriculum.
  - c. Should a student fail Step 1, the student will be placed on probation and be allowed to complete their current clerkship. However, prior to starting subsequent clerkships the student must consult with the campus dean and develop a plan to address the deficiency. This plan must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. Third year medical students may not begin a clerkship after January 1 of the Year 3 curriculum without passing Step 1 unless they have obtained permission from MSAPC. (See attached Step Exam Failure Re-Examination Plan)
  - d. A student must take and pass USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Skills as a requirement for graduation.
  - e. Should a student fail Step 2 Clinical Knowledge or Clinical Skills, the student will be placed on probation and allowed to complete the current rotation but must consult with the campus dean to develop a plan for re-taking and passing the examination; the plan will be sent to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions for approval prior to starting the next course. After consulting with these individuals, the student may petition for a Leave of Absence to adequately prepare to repeat the exam or may continue on with fourth year

rotations depending on the agreed upon plan. (See attached Step Exam Failure Re-Examination Plan)

- f. Students who do not pass a USMLE Step Examination after the second attempt will have a hearing of the Medical Student Academic Performance Committee (MSAPC)
- g. Although USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills are usually taken after the completion of year 3 clerkships. This is not required. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions may require proof that the student who has not completed all required clerkships is adequately prepared for USMLE Step 2 before granting permission to sit for the test.

VI. Students who achieve satisfactory performance in individual courses, but whose collective performance overall is not befitting the medical profession, may be denied the M.D. degree.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

(Medical) Student	Satisfactorily complete (pass) all elements of the MSI, MSII, MSIII and MSIV curriculum as well as the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 (CK and CS).
Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions	<p>Meet with students receiving an “Unsatisfactory” grade for a course.</p> <p>Approve remediation plan agreed upon by campus dean and student for failed USMLE Step examination.</p> <p>Notify chair of MSAPC of unsatisfactory student performance and assist with the arrangements for hearings of students when appropriate.</p> <p>With the Chair of MSPAC act on requests for LOA.</p>
Assistant Dean for Medical Curriculum	<p>Inform the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions of “Unsatisfactory” student academic performance for years 1 and 2.</p> <p>Arrange for block reexamination and remediation for year 1 and 2.</p> <p>Assign year 1 and 2 grades and communicate such with students.</p> <p>As a member of the Honors Committee, determine the award of “Honors” for second year student block grades.</p> <p>With the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, inform students of all manner of unsatisfactory academic performance for years 1 and 2.</p> <p>Inform the Chair of MSAPC of students who have received an “Unsatisfactory” grade for a course in year 1 and 2.</p> <p>Inform students of process for reexamination or remediation following receipt of an “Unsatisfactory” grade during years 1 and 2.</p> <p>Arrange for reexamination of students receiving an “Unsatisfactory” grade on a single examinations for years 1 and 2.</p>

Campus Deans	<p>Assign MS IV elective grades and communicate such with students and the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.</p> <p>Develop a remediation plan with students who have failed a step of the USMLE examination.</p> <p>Inform students of the process for reexamination or remediation following receipt of an “Unsatisfactory” grade for years 3 and 4.</p> <p>Arrange for reexamination of students receiving an “Unsatisfactory” grade on a single examination for years 3 and 4.</p> <p>Arrange remediation for students receiving an “Unsatisfactory” grade in a course for years 3 and 4.</p>
Chair of Medical Student Academic Performance Committee (MSAPC)	<p>Receive communications from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and the Assistant Dean for Medical Curriculum regarding student unsatisfactory academic performance, issue letters of probation/suspension and conduct hearings for students when appropriate.</p>
Clerkship/Course Director	<p>Assign third year grades and communicate such with students and the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.</p>

## FORMS

Step Exam Failure Re-Examination Form	Attached
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## REVISION RECORD

06.20.16—FAC Approved

06.20.16—Dean Approved

Step Exam Failure Re-Examination Plan

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Step Failed: \_\_\_\_\_

First Failure                       Second Failure

Plan for re-examination including any extra time off for studying: \_\_\_\_\_

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Will a study course be used?  Yes     No

Please indicate which study course will be used and if none, the planned study strategy:

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Will a Leave of Absence (LOA) be required for extra time off for studying?  Yes     No

If yes, has the application for LOA with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and Medical Student Academic Performance Committee (MSAPC) been started?  Yes     No     N/A

Dates of LOA: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_                      Campus Dean: \_\_\_\_\_