

Academic Expectations of Students

Section: 3

Policy number: 3.1

Responsible Office: Vice President for Health Affairs/Dean

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POLICY STATEMENT

Each medical student has the responsibility of meeting the standards of academic performance.

REASON for POLICY

Each student in the SMHS has the responsibility of meeting the standards of academic performance. Student academic performance is determined on the basis of achievement in a block, clerkship, or an elective. Students must achieve the satisfactory criterion level established by the faculty and presented to all students at the beginning of each block, clerkship, or elective. Medical students are expected to satisfactorily complete the required number of credits of medical education within four years. The medical student grading policy is based on the premise that the curriculum will be criterion-referenced and evaluations will be based on stated learning objectives. The faculty will evaluate and document each student's general performance characteristics including self-directed learning, knowledge of the sciences basic to medicine, clinical skills competency, and professional attitudes and behaviors. The grading system is intended to reflect the needs of the students, the faculty, and external agencies (e.g., residency programs).

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. Included within the "Behavioral Performance Standards" category is the obvious issue of academic honesty. Also included, however, are issues of professional integrity and ethical behavior, which are viewed as equally important aspects of academic performance.

SCOPE of POLICY

This policy applies to:

√Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

√Managers and supervisors

√Students

√Faculty

√Staff

Others: _____

WEB SITE REFERENCES

This policy: http://www.med.und.edu/policies/_files/docs/academic-expectations.pdf

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DEFINITIONS

Case-Based Examination (CBE)	The examination taken during assessment week in Blocks I-VIII in Years 1 and 2 of the medical curriculum that contains multiple clinical vignettes from which essay questions are derived.
Course	Throughout the document 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).
Clinical Skills Examination (CSE)	The examination taken during assessment week in Blocks I-VIII in Years 1 and 2 of the medical curriculum in which students must display mastery of clinical skills taught during the block.
“Honors” (H)	The notation assigned to a student who demonstrates outstanding performance in a course.

“Incomplete” (I)	The notation will be assigned to a student who has been doing satisfactory work in a course, but who has not completed in a timely manner all the requirements due to extenuating medical and/or personal circumstances. The Incomplete must be removed within a specific time frame and according to criteria established by the appropriate faculty member or University policy. Failure to do so will result in conversion to a grade of “Unsatisfactory”. The Incomplete grade is a non-prejudicial entry on a student’s record.
Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ)	The examination taken during assessment week in Blocks I-VIII in Years 1 and 2 of the medical curriculum that contains questions with several possible answers from which the correct one must be selected.
PCL	Patient Centered Learning
“Satisfactory” (S)	The notation assigned to a student who meets or exceeds the criteria for performance in a block, clerkship, course or elective.
“Successful Remediation” (S/U)	The notation assigned to a student who fails to successfully complete a re-examination of a single component of a block during Special Studies week, fails two components of a block, fails a clerkship, acting internship, course or elective, but successfully remediates the block, clerkship, or elective at a later date.
“Unsatisfactory” (U)	The notation assigned to a student who fails to meet the criteria for performance in any single component of a block, clerkship, course or elective.
“Withdrawal” (W)	The notation assigned to a student who has, with the permission of the instructor withdrawn from a course, and/or has been granted a Leave of Absence.

RELATED INFORMATION

MSAPC	http://www.med.und.edu/policies/ files/docs/academic-performance-committee.pdf
Consequences of “Unsatisfactory” Academic Performance	http://www.med.und.edu/policies/ files/docs/unsatisfactory-academic-performance.pdf
Promotion and Graduation	http://www.med.und.edu/policies/ files/docs/promotion-graduation.pdf
Expectations Outside of School	http://www.med.und.edu/policies/ files/docs/expectations-outside-school.pdf
Grading and Academic Performance	http://www.med.und.edu/policies/ files/docs/grading-academic-performance.pdf

CONTACTS

Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone/FAX	Office/Dept Email/Web
Policy clarification	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	judy.solberg@med.und.edu
Policy format	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	judy.solberg@med.und.edu

PRINCIPLES

OVERVIEW— Each student in the SMHS has the responsibility of meeting the standards of academic performance.

PROCEDURES

1. Academic Performance Standards:

- A. Student academic performance is determined on the basis of achievement in a block, clerkship, or an elective. Students must achieve the satisfactory criterion level established by the faculty and presented to all students at the beginning of each block, clerkship, or elective.
- B. Medical students are expected to satisfactorily complete the required number of credits of medical education within four years.
- C. Medical Student Grading Policy: The policy is based on the premise that the curriculum will be criterion-referenced and evaluations will be based on stated learning objectives. The faculty will evaluate and document each student's general performance characteristics including self-directed learning, knowledge of the sciences basic to medicine, clinical skills competency, and professional attitudes and behaviors. The grading system is intended to reflect the needs of the students, the faculty, and external agencies (e.g., residency programs). (Grading policy adopted by the FAC June, 2002; amended June, 2006)
 - i. Definition of Grades:
 - a. "Satisfactory" (S) – The notation assigned to a student who meets or exceeds the criteria for performance in a block, clerkship, course or elective.
 - b. "Honors" (H) – The notation assigned to a student who demonstrates outstanding performance in a block, clerkship, or elective.
 - c. "Unsatisfactory" (U) - The notation assigned to a student who fails to meet the criteria for performance in any single component of a block, clerkship, course or elective.
 - d. "Successful Remediation" (S/U) – The notation assigned to a student who fails to successfully complete a re-examination of a single component of a block during

Special Studies week, or fails two components of a block, or fails a clerkship, acting internship, course or elective, but successfully remediates the block, course, clerkship, or elective at a later date.

- e. “Incomplete” (I) - An Incomplete grade will be assigned only to a student who has been doing satisfactory work in a block, course, clerkship, acting internship, or elective, but who has not completed all the requirements due to extenuating medical and/or personal circumstances. The Incomplete must be removed within a specific time frame and according to criteria established by the appropriate faculty member or University policy. Failure to do so will result in conversion to a grade of “Unsatisfactory”. The Incomplete grade is a non-prejudicial entry on a student’s record.
- f. “Withdrawal” (W) - The notation assigned to a student who has, with the permission of the instructor withdrawn from a block, course, clerkship, acting-internship, or elective, and/or has been granted a Leave of Absence.

ii. Year 1

- a. Students are graded “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.”
- b. All of the following specific student academic performance criteria must be met for a student to receive a grade of “Satisfactory” in a Year 1 block:
 - i) A score of 75% or better on the knowledge-based multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination.
 - ii) A score of 75% or better on the case-based examination (CBE).
 - iii) A grade of “Satisfactory” from the student’s Patient Centered Learning (PCL) facilitator on the end-of-block evaluation.
 - iv) A score of 80% or better on the clinical skills examination (CSE).
 - v) Examination scores that are within 0.5% of a grade of “Satisfactory” are rounded up (e.g., a score of 74.5% on the MCQ examination will be rounded up to 75%).
 - vi) Failure of any component of assessment in an individual block will result in a grade of “Unsatisfactory” for the block and Remediation or Re-Examination will be required (see Section 3, “Consequences of Unsatisfactory Academic Performance”).

iii. Year 2

- a. Students are graded “Honors”, “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.”

- b. All of the following specific student academic performance criteria must be met for a student to receive a grade of “Satisfactory” in a Year 2 block:
 - i) A score of 75% or better on the knowledge-based MCQ examination.
 - ii) A score of 75% or better on the CBE.
 - iii) A grade of “Satisfactory” from the student’s PCL facilitator on the end-of-block evaluation.
 - iv) A score of 80% or better on the CSE.
 - v) Examination scores that are within 0.5% of a grade of “Satisfactory” are rounded up (e.g., a score of 74.5% on the MCQ examination will be rounded up to 75%).
- c. In addition to “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” grading, outstanding student performance can be recognized with the award of “Honors” in any Year 2 block. All of the following specific student performance criteria must be met before a student can be considered for the award of “Honors”:
 - i) A score of 90% or better on the knowledge-based multiple-choice examination.
 - ii) A score of 90% or better on the case-based examination.
 - iii) A grade of “Satisfactory” from the student’s PCL facilitator on the end-of-block evaluation.
 - iv) A score of 90% or better on the clinical skills assessment (if applicable).
 - v) Examination scores that do not meet the criteria for “Honors” will not be rounded upwards (e.g., a score of 89.99% does not qualify for honors).
 - vi). Behavior during the block that exemplifies the standards of professional behavior and academic honesty
- d. An Honors Committee will be responsible for making a final determination regarding the award of “Honors” in each block. The Honors Committee will be comprised of the following individuals:
 - i) Basic Science Block Director
 - ii) Clinical Science Block Director
 - iii) Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions

- iv) Director of Education Resources
 - v) Director of Assessment
 - e. When a student meets the academic criteria for consideration for the award of “Honors,” the student’s entire performance record for the block will be reviewed by the Honors Committee. Essential elements of the review will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - i) Results of end-of-block assessments.
 - ii) Written mid-block and end-of-block facilitator evaluations.
 - iii) Other direct observations of student academic performance and behavior by administration, faculty, or peers that would assist the Honors Committee in determining, in their judgment, a student’s exemplary professional behavior and academic honesty.
 - f. Failure of any component of assessment in an individual block will result in a grade of “Unsatisfactory” for the block and Remediation or Re-Examination will be required.
- iv. Year 3
- a. Students are graded “Honors,” “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.”
 - b. The passing criteria for clerkships and courses must be defined in writing and presented to all students at the beginning of each clerkship or course. Criteria for performance or objective testing, clinical skills, problem solving, behavioral characteristics, and professionalism should be included as well as any other required area of performance.
 - c. Specific criteria for achieving a grade of “Honors” must be established by each discipline and made available to the student at the beginning of each clerkship or course.
 - d. A grade of “Satisfactory” will be assigned to a student whose performance in a clerkship or course meets or exceeds the criterion level for passing, which has been established by a department.
 - e. A grade of “Honors” can be awarded to a maximum of the top 20 percent in each clerkship or course; however, disciplines may elect to award Honors to less than 20 percent of the class. Students must meet the defined criteria for the award of “Honors”.

- f. A grade of “Unsatisfactory” will be assigned to a student whose performance in a clerkship or course failed to meet the criterion level for passing, which has been established by a department.
- v. Year 4
- a. Students are graded “Honors,” “Satisfactory,” or “Unsatisfactory”.
 - b. The passing criteria for acting internships and electives must be defined in writing and made available to students at the beginning of each acting internship or elective.
 - c. Specific criteria for achieving Honors must be established for each acting internship or elective and announced at the beginning of each acting internship or elective.
 - d. A grade of “Satisfactory” will be assigned to a student whose performance in an acting internship or elective meets or exceeds the defined criterion level for passing.
 - e. In Year 4, the preceptors on the acting internships and electives may award a grade of “Honors” to as many students as have met the defined criteria. A final grade for rotations at another institution is assigned by the Campus Dean.
 - f. A grade of “Unsatisfactory” will be assigned to a student whose performance in a clerkship or course failed to meet the established criterion level for passing.
- vi. USMLE Step Examinations
- a. Satisfactory completion of 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. A student is required to take USMLE Step 1 before beginning Year 3 clinical experiences provided that Blocks I-VIII of Years 1 and 2 have been satisfactorily completed. Students must pass USMLE Step 1 before beginning the second half of the third year.
 - b. Should a student fail Step 1 on the first attempt, the student would be allowed to continue in the first half of the Year 3 clinical experiences or, with the counsel of the campus dean, MSAPC Chairperson and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, petition for a Leave of Absence to adequately prepare to repeat the exam.

- c. Should a student fail Step 2 on the first attempt, the student may complete the current rotation but must consult with campus dean and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions before starting the next clinical experience. After consulting with these individuals, the student may petition for a Leave of Absence to adequately prepare to repeat the exam.

2. Behavioral Performance Standards

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. Included within the “Behavioral Performance Standards” category is the obvious issue of academic honesty. Also included, however, are issues of professional integrity and ethical behavior, which are viewed as equally important aspects of academic performance.

Accordingly, the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, through its faculty, hereby defines the standards of professional behavior and academic honesty.

- A. The faculty of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences recognizes seven basic professional traits that are critical components of professional performance. The Canons of Professional Behavior are listed below with some examples of behavior that illustrate the trait:
 - i. Commitment to Excellence
 - a. Strives to exceed expectations
 - b. Is committed to life-long learning
 - c. Accepts criticism and reacts positively to it, looks at self objectively, and takes steps to correct shortcomings
 - ii. Honesty and integrity
 - a. Communicates in an honest and timely manner
 - b. Admits mistakes
 - c. Accurately represents actions and events
 - d. Avoids cheating, plagiarism and misrepresentation of the truth
 - iii. Compassion
 - a. Recognizes and responds to the fears, suffering and hopes of patients and their families

- b. Assists colleagues in dealing with the challenges of professional work
 - iv. Respect for others
 - a. Maintains patient confidentiality
 - b. Is sensitive to patients' immediate physical and/or emotional needs
 - c. Articulates and embraces the many positive aspects of difference among people and demonstrates awareness of how such differences affect personal interactions. Is not racist or sexist
 - d. Is not abusive and critical during times of stress
 - e. Uses appropriate language; addresses patient's appropriately
 - f. Recognizes that appropriate dress and appearance demonstrate respect for others and for the profession
 - v. Professional responsibility
 - a. Adheres to professional and/or ethical standards
 - b. Can be depended upon to do his or her duty
 - c. Follows through on tasks he or she agreed to perform
 - d. Arrives on time for class, clinic, rounds, etc.
 - e. Identifies ethical issues in professional situations and acts in an ethical manner
 - vi. Social responsibility -- understands and actively addresses the multiple social factors that threaten the health of patients
 - vii. Altruism
 - a. Places the interests of others above self-interest
 - b. Is able to give up some personal needs to meet the needs of patients
- B. The following shall be considered violations of the standards of academic honesty:
- i. Cheating on a test, including but not limited to:
 - a. Copying from another student's test.
 - b. Using materials during a test not authorized by the person giving the test.

- c. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without authority.
 - d. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of an unadministered test.
 - e. Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test.
 - f. Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.
- ii. Plagiarism, or the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another person's work, in any form or format, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own work. Self-plagiarism means the repeated submission of the same work as an original work.
 - iii. Collusion, or the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.
 - iv. Falsifying or manufacturing scientific or educational data and representing the same to be the result of scientific or scholarly experiment or research.
 - v. Falsifying by omission or commission any information pertinent to patient care.
 - vi. Furnishing false information to academic officers relative to academic matters.
 - vii. Restricting the use or availability of material used in study in a manner prejudicial to other students.
 - viii. Unauthorized use of curricular and examination materials, restricted in access by curricular policy within the School of Medicine and Health Sciences.
 - ix. Falsifying by omission or commission any information in written, electronic or verbal form, pertinent to application for admission to medical school.
- C. Medical students are members of the medical community. While trainee status dictates restriction of their privileges within the community, the ethical standards of a student in medicine should be consistent with the stated standards of the medical profession. Therefore, the Principles of Medical Ethics adopted by the American Medical Association in 2001 (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/principles-medical-ethics.page>) will serve as a model for student conduct. As a new member of this profession, the student must recognize responsibility not only to patients but also to society, to other health professionals, and to self. The following principles of the American Medical Association are not laws, but standards of conduct that

define the essentials of honorable behavior for the medical student and under which the student will be held accountable.

- i. A medical student shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care with compassion and respect for human dignity.
 - ii. A medical student shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, and strive to report those students/ physicians deficient in character or competence, or who engage in fraud or deception, to the appropriate entities.
 - iii. A medical student shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements that are contrary to the best interests of the patient.
 - iv. A medical student shall respect the rights of patients, of colleagues and of other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.
 - v. A medical student shall continue to study, apply and advance scientific knowledge, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues and the public, obtain consultation, and use the talents of other health professionals when indicated.
 - vi. A medical student shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to an improved community and the betterment of public health.
 - vii. A medical student shall, while caring for a patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount.
 - viii. A medical student shall support access to medical care for all people.
- D. A medical student shall have the continuing responsibility to comply with federal and state laws; the rules and regulations of the University of North Dakota, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and its individual departments, affiliated hospitals and other medical institutions; and other applicable guidelines.
- E. A medical student shall at all times maintain the highest standard of academic honesty and professional behavior. To this end, it is expected that each class will function as an effective, professional peer review group responsible for fostering integrity, honesty, and professional behavior within its membership. It is also expected that violations of the standards of academic honesty and professional behavior will be reported to the faculty or the administration of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Students will be asked to sign a statement that they have read, understood, and will abide by the standards of academic honesty and professional behavior described herein.

- F. After a hearing before the MSAPC, students may be placed on Probation, Suspended, or Dismissed from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences for proven violations of the standards of professional behavior and academic honesty.

All approved policies will be posted on the policy website.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student	Meet standards of academic performance
Director of Education Resources	Contribute to final determination regarding the award of "Honors" in Blocks V-VIII.
Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions	Contribute to final determination regarding the award of "Honors" in Blocks V-VIII. Provide counsel to year 2 students regarding a petition for a Leave of Absence to adequately prepare to repeat the Step 1 exam. Should a student fail Step 2 on the first attempt, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions will provide consultation prior to the student starting the next clinical experience. After consulting with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, the student may petition for a Leave of Absence to adequately prepare to repeat the exam
Teachers/Faculty/Staff/Residents, GTA	Evaluate and document each student's general performance characteristics including self-directed learning, knowledge of the sciences basic to medicine, clinical skills competency, and professional attitudes and behaviors

FORMS

None	
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REVISION RECORD