

Academic Expectations of Medical Students

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Medical students shall meet all academic performance standards (both cognitive and behavioral) for promotion and graduation within the allotted time. Additionally, students will pass all evaluations required for promotion and graduation.

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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- ✓ Deans, Directors, and Department Heads
- ✓ Managers and Supervisors
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Faculty
- ✓ Staff
- ✓ Others: _____

WEBSITE REFERENCES

Policy Office	https://med.und.edu/about/deans-office/index.html
Responsible Office	https://med.und.edu/student-affairs-admissions/

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DEFINITIONS

Course	A unit of education, completion of which results in an official grade that is recorded in the student's transcripts. Courses include, but are not limited to units, clerkships, acting internships and electives.
Course Reexamination	The process of correcting an unsatisfactory completion of a course without repeating the course.
Course Remediation	The process of repeating an unsatisfactory completion of a course.
Dismissal	The status of a student who has been dismissed from the SMHS (see Policy 4.8).
External Rotation Grading Scale	The grading scale of external rotations are defined by the external institution and include the grades Honors with Distinction, High Honors, Honors, Near Honors, High Pass, Pass, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory
Gateway examination	Standardized examination given at specific intervals to assess the acquisition and comprehension of knowledge of Phase 1 students.
H	Honors. A grade of H is granted to a student who has demonstrated exceptional completion of a course.
I	Incomplete. A grade of I is granted to a student who has not completed all requirements during the timeframe of the course.
Infraction	Any arrest, charge or conviction of an infringement of the law, rules, or regulations of society, the institution, the school or the program.
MSAPC	Medical Student Academic Performance Committee
NBME	National Board of Medical Examiners
Phase 1	The period of undergraduate medical education that includes, but is not limited to, successful completion of required and elective preclinical courses and the Gateway Examination.
Phase 2	The period of undergraduate medical education that includes, but is not limited to, successful completion of required clerkships, electives, an epidemiology project, and the USMLE Step 1 examination.
Phase 3	The period of undergraduate medical education that includes, but is not limited to, successful completion of electives, Acting Internships, and the USMLE Step 2 CK examination.
Probation	A condition in which a student is other than "in good standing or progressing satisfactorily with the class." (see Policy 4.8)
S/U	Unsatisfactory converted to Satisfactory. A grade of S/U replaces a grade of U upon successful remediation of a course. A grade of S/U grants credit toward graduation.
S	Satisfactory. A grade of S grants credit toward graduation.
Standardized examination	A comprehensive or subject examination offered by the NBME which reflects the content of the USMLE Step 1 or USMLE Step 2CK. These exams are typically used to identify areas of strength and weakness prior to taking the USMLE or may serve as a summative assessment for a course.
Standardized exam passing status	The status given for successful completion of a standardized exam.
Standardized exam reexamination	The process of repeating a standardized examination until proficiency is demonstrated.
Suspension	The status of a student who has been suspended by the SMHS (see Policy 4.8).

Syllabus	An academic document that communicates information about all aspects of a specific course, including rules, responsibilities and expectations. The term “Course Description” is an alternate expression for syllabus.
U	Unsatisfactory. A grade of U does not grant credit toward graduation.
UMEC	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee
USMLE Step Examinations	NBME United States Medical Licensing Examinations, including Step 1, and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (Step 2CK).

RELATED INFORMATION

MSAPC	https://med.und.edu/policies/_files/docs/4.8-medical-student-academic-performance-committee.pdf
Student Grievance Policy	https://med.und.edu/policies/_files/docs/3.9-student-grievance.pdf
AMA Code of Medical Ethics	https://www.ama-assn.org/about/publications-newsletters/ama-principles-medical-ethics
UND Code of Student Life	https://und.policystat.com/policy/6747183/latest/

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	Office/Dept Email/Web
Policy clarification	Student Affairs	777.4221/777.4942	
Policy format	Dean’s Office	777.2514/777.3527	judy.solberg@med.und.edu

PRINCIPLES

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, student academic performance is determined on the basis of achievement in a course and student behavior in all settings. Students must achieve the satisfactory academic criterion level established by the faculty and meet behavioral expectations at all times. 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. Satisfactory performance in individual courses or clerkships does not guarantee that the student’s performance, when viewed as a whole, meets the expectations necessary for awarding the M.D. degree.

Charge to Medical students

Medical students shall meet all academic performance standards (both cognitive and behavioral) for promotion and graduation within the allotted time. Additionally, students will pass all evaluations required for promotion and graduation.

Charge to the Faculty

The faculty of the SMHS shall identify the academic criteria required of all students for promotion and graduation. Included in the academic criteria are both cognitive and behavioral components.

PROCEDURES

I. General expectations

- A. Promotion and graduation: Promotion from one education level to the next and graduation from the program with the granting of the M.D. degree are based on the student satisfactorily meeting or exceeding the academic performance standards established by the SMHS faculty. It is expected that the requirements leading to M.D. degree shall be completed in four years. A student who fails to meet these academic standards in the specified time shall be subject to intervention and/or sanctions by the MSAPC.
- B. Completion of requirements before promotion: Objectives and responsibilities progressively build as the student advances through each phase of the curriculum. Therefore, students must satisfactorily complete one phase of the curriculum before promotion to the next phase of the curriculum.
 - 1. A Phase 1 medical student must pass all required Phase 1 curricular requirements and have passed the Gateway Examination in order to be promoted to Phase 2.
 - a. Phase 1 elective courses not successfully completed during phase 1 must be completed in phase 3. These requirements are in addition to any phase 3 elective or acting internship requirements the student must meet.
 - 2. A Phase 2 medical student must pass all Phase 2 curricular requirements and have passed USMLE Step 1 in order to be promoted to Phase 3.
 - 3. A Phase 3 medical student must pass all Phase 3 curricular requirements and have passed USMLE Step 2 CK in order to be promoted to graduation.
- C. Non-completion in four years: In the rare occasion where a student requires more than 4 years to complete the curriculum the following stipulations shall apply:
 - 1. The student must successfully complete Phase 1 in no more than 34 months (or 2.75 academic years).
 - 2. The student must successfully complete Phase 2 and Phase 3 in no more than 38 months (or 3.25 academic years).
 - 3. The entire four-year curriculum and all required components (such as USMLE Step Examinations) must be completed in no more than six academic years.
 - 4. A student wishing to pursue an additional degree while in medical school must obtain approval from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions in consultation with the MSAPC chair.
 - a. If the dual degree program requires more than six years to complete, the student must obtain MSAPC approval for an exception to the six-year rule.
 - b. Deviation from the standard entry into Phase 2 or Phase 3 is contingent

upon availability of resources to accommodate the change.

5. Failure to meet the above criteria (1-4) shall be subject to dismissal by MSAPC.

6. A student who is unlikely to meet the criteria for graduation in the specified time may have a hearing of the MSAPC (Policy 4.8) prior to the time limit being reached.

D. Oversight: Rules and expectations for academic performance for each course, standardized examination, or other curricular requirement shall undergo regular review and approval by UMEC or its designated subcommittee. Rules and expectations include, but are not limited to, grading criteria and reexamination and remediation procedures.

II. Cognitive expectations

A. Grades: The rules and expectation for academic performance and the designation of grades of H, S, S/U, and U are course-specific and therefore will be clearly defined in the syllabus for each course.

1. The grading scale used for away rotations will reflect the grading scale of the external institution and may include Honors with Distinction, High Honors, Honors, Near Honors, High Pass, Pass, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. If no grade is assigned by the external institution or the grade designated is not on this list, then the SMHS clinical department chair will assign the grade.

B. Mid-Course Evaluation: If by student self-assessment, mid-course examination, or observation by a faculty facilitator or preceptor, a determination is made that a student is performing unsatisfactorily, faculty may prescribe measures to help correct the deficiencies. The availability and type of intervention is developed between the student and faculty and may include, but is not limited to, designated tutorials, academic exercises, and/or supplemental instruction.

C. Course Reexamination: A student in Phase 2 will be allowed a single re-examination of a failed standardized clinical science subject examination before receiving a grade of S or U for the course.

1. The student will be assigned a grade of I while awaiting their re-examination.
2. The re-examination timing will follow Procedure 5.18 Clerkship Shelf Re-examination

D. Course Remediation

1. Remediation for a single required course.

- a. The course syllabus will clearly state the terms of remediation.
- b. A student who receives a grade of U will be placed on Probation and a remediation plan will be determined according to Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.C.
- c. Satisfactory remediation will result in the amending of the original grade of U to a grade of S/U.
- d. Failure to remediate the course will result in a hearing before the MSAPC according to Policy 4.8 Section 2.3.

2. Remediation for single elective course.

- a. Remediation is at the discretion of the course director.
- b. The course syllabus will clearly state if it has a remediation policy. If so, it will clearly state the terms of remediation.
- c. A student who receives a grade of U in an elective with a remediation option will be subject to the procedure outlined in Policy 4.8 Section III.E.1.

- d. A Student who receives a grade of U in an elective without a remediation option will finish the course with a grade of U. The student's remediation plan may include the option to take a different course to make up the credit deficit.
 - 3. Remediation for a student who receives a U for more than one course.
 - a. Failure to satisfactorily complete two or more courses during a single Phase of the curriculum will result in MSAPC action as described in Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.D.
 - 4. A grade of U in a single required course may not prevent the student from continuing in the curriculum; however, before the student is promoted to the next Phase or to graduation, the deficiency must be corrected.
- E. Gateway Examination
 - 1. Procedures for administering the Gateway Examination shall be determined by the Assistant Dean for Medical Curriculum. The procedures shall include the mode and frequency of examinations, the definition of passing status, and a reexamination plan.
 - a. Gateway exam procedures shall be regularly reviewed and approved by the UMEC or its designee.
 - b. Gateway exam procedures shall be made available to matriculating medical students.
 - 2. Students must receive Gateway Examination passing status to become eligible to take the USMLE Step 1.
 - 3. Reexamination
 - a. A student who does not achieve passing status on or before the final regularly scheduled Phase 1 administration of the Gateway Examination will be immediately placed on Probation and a reexamination plan will be determined according to Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.C.
 - b. Failure to successfully reexamine will result in MSAPC action as described in Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.D.
 - c. A student who successfully remediates the Gateway Examination and fails the USMLE Step 1 shall be subject to MSAPC action as described in Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.D.
- F. USMLE Examinations
 - 1. A student must pass USMLE Step 1, and USMLE Step 2CK within an allowable number of attempts as stated in the rules promulgated by the North Dakota Board of Medical Practice to be eligible for graduation and granting of the M.D. degree at the SMHS.
 - 2. A student is required to take USMLE Step 1 during Phase 2. A passing USMLE Step 1 score must be achieved and reported during Phase 2 of the curriculum. Students in the Class of 2023 are exempt from this reporting requirement.
 - 3. A student is expected to take USMLE Step 2CK during Phase 3. Under exceptional circumstances a student may request to take this examination during Phase 2. Doing so requires permission from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions.
 - 4. Remediation

- a. A student who fails a USMLE Step examination will be placed on Probation and a remediation plan will be determined according to Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.C.
- b. Failure to pass a USMLE Step examination after the second attempt will result in a hearing before the MSAPC according to Policy 4.8 Section 2.3.

G. Grade of Incomplete

- 1. A student who receives the grade of I must complete the course requirements in a time specified by the course director. The grade of I shall be replaced by another grade when the work is complete.
- 2. If the work is not completed in the allotted time, the grade shall be changed to a grade of U.
- 3. A student with two I grades shall be placed on probation and shall be subject to MSAPC action as described in Policy 4.8 Section 1.2.D.

H. Grade of Honors: The grade of H is reserved for those students who have distinguished themselves academically (cognitively and behaviorally) as defined in the course syllabus.

I. Repeating courses

- 1. The decision to allow a student to repeat a portion of the curriculum is conditional. The ultimate decision lies with the Dean of SMHS and is dependent of the availability of resources.
- 2. Students who are repeating or remediating a clinical course may be assigned to any campus to accommodate this activity.

III. Behavioral expectations

A. Expectations of Ethical Behavior: 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 shall be consistent with the stated standards of the medical profession. Therefore, the American Medical Association Principles of Medical Ethics and the canons of professional behavior shall serve as models for student conduct. As new members of this profession, the student must recognize their responsibility not only to patients but also to society, to other health professionals, peers and to self.

- 1. Students shall have the continuing responsibility to comply with the principles governing ethical and professional behavior of the SMHS, and its affiliated institutions. Failure to do so, shall result in a hearing of MSAPC and/or those bodies governing ethical and professional behavior at affiliated institutions.
- 2. Violations of University, SMHS, or affiliated institution rules and regulations will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary hearing process established by the appropriate institution(s). These processes may occur simultaneously.

B. Compliance with laws, rules and regulations: Students shall have the continuing responsibility to comply with all local, state and federal laws (civil or criminal); rules and regulations of the University of North Dakota, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, its departments, affiliated hospitals and other medical institutions and other applicable guidelines. Failure to do so shall result in a hearing of MSAPC.

- 1. The presence or absence of a legal charge/conviction, a change in the level of the charges, or the decision of the courts, shall have no bearing on the outcome of MSAPC deliberations. A student who is arrested, charged with or convicted of a

crime or charged with an institutional infraction must report this to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions within two business days. The Associate Dean must report the student/situation to MSAPC and/or the appropriate authorities, including but not limited to law enforcement agencies, the UND Dean of Students, and/or the affiliated institution.

2. Failure to report an infraction (arrest, charge or conviction) of laws, rules or regulations to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions within 2 business days of the infraction shall result in a hearing of MSAPC for "Failure to report infraction."
3. In cases where state and regional laws are inconsistent with federal law, the federal law shall prevail.
4. Students aware of another student who is not behaving according the policies and procedures shall report the behavior to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions.
 - a. Reporting in good faith: Students who report a fellow student in good faith shall be protected from retaliation by other students. Acts of retaliation shall be viewed as an additional breach in professionalism and shall be reported to MSAPC.
 - b. Malicious Accusation: a complainant or witness found to have been dishonest or malicious in making an allegation may be subject to disciplinary action. A charge of unprofessional behavior will be filed and appropriate action taken according to disciplinary procedures.
5. These rules for reporting infractions apply to students who are enrolled, between semesters, on vacation, suspended or on leave of absence. Any medical student who has been admitted to the program leading to the M.D. degree who has not completed, withdrawn from or been dismissed from the program is subject to the rules regarding compliance with laws, rules and regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions if charged, arrested, or convicted of a crime. • Notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions of classmates who are not performing according to policy. • Complete academic requirements in the required span of time.
Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take notification from students and inform MSAPC as appropriate. • Approve Reexamination plans along with Campus Dean and student. Seek the input of Campus Dean as appropriate. • Work with students to develop and approve study plans for failed gateway and step examinations.
MSAPC chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue letters of probation or suspension between MSPAC meetings; report probations, LOAs and suspensions to the committee.

MSAPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjudicate student issues. • Issue probations and suspensions according to policy. • Remove probations and suspensions according to policy.
Assistant Dean for Medical Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine procedures for the Gateway examination. • Administer the Gateway Examination.
Course Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align course syllabus with policy.
Campus Dean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions to develop remediation plans for Step examination failures.
UMEC and its subcommittees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review and approve course rules for grading, reexamination and remediation. • Regularly review and approve Gateway examination procedures.

FORMS

None

REVISION RECORD

05.06.19—FAC Approved

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