

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

SUBJECT: Student Advancement Policy and Appeal Process – Pre-clerkship

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. To inform the UH College of Medicine students, staff, and faculty of the guidelines for student advancement and appeal in the pre-clerkship medical education program.
- B. To ensure the UH College of Medicine complies with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) standards for the medical education program, including LCME Standard 9.9.

II. BACKGROUND

The responsibility for evaluation of students rests with the faculty of the University of Houston College of Medicine. The UH College of Medicine faculty award passing grades only to those students who have demonstrated mastery of the course material and shown behavior and conduct consistent with professional standards and suitable for the practice of medicine. These practices further ensure the academic integrity of the medical education program. As such, faculty shall be clear as to the expectations for each course and how passing grades will be earned. Course requirements specific to each course will be clearly displayed in the course syllabus.

The faculty of the UH College of Medicine has the responsibility to determine whether to recommend students for promotion to the clerkship curriculum. This responsibility is administered through the Student Performance and Advancement Committee (SPAC) that represents the faculty at large. Principles of fairness and due process apply when considering actions of the faculty or administration that might adversely affect the students. Comments, questions, and concerns should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs.

III. POLICY

A. Promotion

- 1. Normal progression through the UH College of Medicine pre-clerkship curriculum requires that a student demonstrate a consistently satisfactory level of performance and professional behavior.
- 2. Students will be expected to complete the medical education program curriculum within four (4) years of the initial date of matriculation. Although the curriculum may be extended due to 1) a leave of absence, 2) academic difficulty requiring repetition of an academic year as per this policy, Years 1 and 2 of the curriculum **MUST BE** completed within three (3) years and/or the entire curriculum **MUST BE** completed within six (6) years inclusive of leaves of absence; otherwise, students will be dismissed from the medical education program.
- 3. Progress of students through the pre-clerkship curriculum will be reviewed by the SPAC at the end of each course and at the end of the academic year in the context of course work, student's professionalism, evidence of progressive improvement, and personal circumstances.
- 4. Students are expected to proceed through the curriculum with satisfactory progress; therefore, no formal notice of promotion is sent to students who show satisfactory performance.

B. Unsatisfactory Performance

- 1. Students with unsatisfactory progress will be notified by the Office of Student Affairs in writing to meet with the SPAC.

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2. The SPAC may place a student on a remedial course, repetition of a year, or dismissal if there are concerns regarding academic performance.
 - a) Remediation exams will be given on a scheduled date by the Office of Medical Education and students MUST be available for scheduled remediation.
 - b) Failure of a remediation exam requires that the student return to SPAC for consideration of repeat of the year or dismissal.
 - c) All grades (original and remediated) will be reflected on transcripts.
3. The SPAC may place a student on a remedial course of activities, repetition of a year, or dismissal if there are concerns regarding professionalism.
 - a) If a student exhibits conduct or behavior inconsistent with or in violation of the UH College of Medicine Code of Conduct in connection with a course/clerkship, a course or clerkship grade of Fail may be given.
 - b) If a student exhibits conduct or behavior inconsistent with or in violation of the UH College of Medicine Code of Conduct outside of a course or clerkship may also be considered by the SPAC.
 - c) Students with recurrent professionalism issues that remain in the program may have this information included in the MSPE (Medical Student Performance Evaluation) as narrative of professional performance or a notation of a “Sanction.”
4. Students reviewed by the SPAC will be notified in writing of the SPAC decision with any stipulations for continuation in the curriculum.

Unsatisfactory Academic Results and Subsequent Possible SPAC Actions

Pre-clerkship phases	Recommended action by SPAC	Standing*
First Semester		
Fail Clinical Anatomy and Human Development <u>OR</u> Scientific Foundations of Medicine <u>OR</u> Physicians, Patients, and Populations (PPP)	May remediate at end of fall semester	Academic watch
Fail Clinical Anatomy and Human Development AND Scientific Foundations of Medicine	Restart the year or dismissal	Academic warning
Fail PPP & Clinical Anatomy OR Fail PPP & Scientific Foundations of Medicine	Remediation, restart of the year, or dismissal	Academic warning
Beyond first semester:		
Fail one (1) or two (2) courses within a semester	Remediation (only able to remediate 2 courses in a year)	Academic watch
Fail three (3) courses within semester	Repeat of year or dismissal	Academic warning
Year		
Fail two (2) semester courses across the year	Remediation, repeat of year or dismissal	Academic warning
Fail three (3) semester course across year	Repeat of year or dismissal	Academic warning
Fail CBSE	Delay of clinical phase until passed	Academic watch

*Once on academic watch (after a successful remediation of a course), another course failure will result in academic warning, which will result in another remediation attempt, repeating a year, or dismissal. Once on academic warning, another failure will result in either repeating a year or dismissal.

C. Transcript Notation

1. All grades will be retained on the student's transcript.
2. When a student receives a failing grade in a semester course that does not require a repeat of the year, a grade of "F" (Fail) will be entered in the transcript. A second course listing will be added when the remediation is complete with a notation of "Successfully Remediated".
3. If a student repeats a year, the transcript will list both attempts at the course.
4. If a student repeats an entire academic year, the new grades are recorded on the transcript in addition to the original ones.

D. Deliberations of SPAC

1. The proceedings of all SPAC meetings are held confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.
2. At a meeting with the SPAC, the student will be expected to discuss their academic performance and to propose a course of action to address the academic deficiencies. Following the meeting with the student, the SPAC may then vote for a course of action. With a quorum present, the committee action will be determined by a majority vote.
3. When meeting with a student on an issue related to academic performance, the SPAC may also consider a prior history of sanctions for misconduct in deciding.
4. The determination and stipulations arising from the actions of the SPAC will be communicated in writing by the Chair of the SPAC to the student and the Dean or their designee.
5. Following a final decision of dismissal of a student or repetition of a year by a student, the Office of Student Affairs shall send written notice to the Offices of Accounting Services, Financial Aid, Registrar and other pertinent UH offices. Such notice shall not be made until any appeal is complete.

E. Appeal Process

1. A student may appeal the decision of the SPAC. This appeal must be made to the Dean or their designee of the UH College of Medicine within five (5) business days, must be in writing, and must cite the specific reasons for the appeal. Grounds for an appeal may only be based on a claim that SPAC policies and procedures were not followed.
2. The Dean or their designee may issue the decision alone or may appoint an Appeals Committee
3. If there is an Appeals Committee, the Appeals Committee will be convened by the ADSAAO within five (5) business days after appointment to consider determining whether a basis for appeal exists.
 - a) It will be comprised of three (3) members of the faculty The ADSAAO and the Chair of the SPAC (or designee) will serve as ex officio members.
 - b) The student shall notify the ADSAAO three (3) days in advance of the hearing if they are to be accompanied by an attorney or other representative. An attorney or representative may appear only in an advisory capacity and may not address the Appeals Committee.
 - c) Should the student be accompanied by an attorney, the UH College of Medicine shall be represented by the Office of General Counsel. If necessary, the appeal hearing may be delayed up to five (5) business days of the scheduled date if needed to allow personnel from the Office of General Counsel to attend.
 - d) The student may present a statement to the Appeals Committee relative to the appeal. The Appeals Committee may request additional information.

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- e) Both the Appeals Committee and student may call witnesses relevant to resolution of the appeal. Should information or witnesses be either repetitious or not relevant, the Appeals Committee shall act to expedite the proceedings.
 - f) The Appeals Committee shall meet in private to decide upon the recommendation to make to the Dean or designee. Deliberations of the Appeals Committee are strictly confidential.
 - g) After the hearing, the Appeals Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Dean or their designee. If the recommendation is not unanimous, any minority view will be appended.
 - h) After reviewing the Appeals Committee recommendation (if applicable) the Dean or their designee will make a final decision.
4. The decision of the Dean or their designee is final. The student and the Chair of the SPAC Committee will be notified in writing by the Dean or their designee. If required, written notice shall be sent in accord with section III.D.5 in this policy.
 5. Unless suspended for some justifiable reason, the student shall remain on the class roll and may pursue appropriate course work until the appeal is resolved.

IV. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

- A. The SPAC shall be responsible for reviewing the progress of all students and determining the status of each student’s academic progress through the pre-clerkship curriculum. The committee shall also be responsible for the review of student conduct.

Approval History		
<i>Approver</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Date</i>
Transitional Curriculum Committee	Approved	August 7, 2019
Curriculum Committee	Approved	April 8, 2020
UH Office of General Council	Approved	September 18, 2020

Document History	
Date Created	August 7, 2019
Date Last Modified	September 18, 2020
Responsible Office	Medical Education
Next Scheduled Review Date	May 2022
Stakeholder Communication Method and Date	
Revision History/Purpose	September 18, 2020 GC final review