

Medical Student Academic Progress Review

Effective Date: July 11, 2018

Responsible Party: University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

Contacts: [Craig Hoesley, MD](#), Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

POLICY ABSTRACT

The Medical Student Academic Progress Review Policy details the authority of the Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC) to review and make decisions regarding medical student academic remediation, progression, academic status, and dismissal.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy sets the standards for academic remediation, progress, status, and dismissal for medical students. It also meets the requirements set forth by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) accreditation requirements as follows:

Standard 10: Medical Student Selection, Assignment, and Progress

“A medical school establishes and publishes admission requirements for potential applicants to the medical education program and uses effective policies and procedures for medical student selection, enrollment, and assignment.”

SCOPE

This policy outlines the procedures by which the SASC reviews student performance and makes decisions regarding medical student remediation, progression, academic status and dismissal. The procedure outlines the appeals process and provides a summary of actions the SASC may take. The policy applies to the academic and professional performance of all students participating in medical school coursework. Grade appeals fall outside the scope of this policy. Grade appeals are handled by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education in accordance with the Medical Student Grading Policy.

POLICY

To uphold uniform standards, the School of Medicine utilizes the Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC). This committee reviews student academic and professional performance throughout their academic years at The University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine and makes decisions about academic status, remediation, progression, and dismissal. Professional ethics and conduct are as essential to the practice of medicine as academic excellence and may be considered by the Committee.

PROCEDURE

The SASC is composed of faculty members from Joint Health Sciences and Clinical Departments with representatives from all four UAB Heersink School of Medicine campuses, as well as two medical students who have completed preclinical coursework. The committee meets monthly. Matters that require attention between regular meetings may be considered by a Faculty Review Panel (FRP) appointed by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. The Committee reviews pertinent information, approves grades, and makes decisions about student academic status, remediation, and progression. SASC actions are final, subject to appeal as described below. The SASC does not adjudicate grade appeals. Grade appeals are addressed by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education in accordance with the Medical Student Grading Policy.

The Associate Dean for Students or designee represents the students at the SASC and FRP meetings. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean prior to these meetings to discuss factors that may have contributed to their academic difficulty. The SASC does not meet with or interview students before or during deliberations. The Committee will take into consideration extenuating circumstances (such as personal events, financial problems, health concerns) that may interfere with a student's optimal performance. In cases where the extenuating circumstances are determined to be confidential and sensitive, then only information approved by the student will be included in the committee's deliberative process. If the student chooses to share personal health information, they must give written permission. While the Committee may consider known extenuating circumstances as presented by the Associate Dean for Students, it is not the responsibility of the Committee to investigate whether such circumstances exist.

Non-academic matters affecting progression through medical school, such as possible disciplinary action for academic or non-academic misconduct, will be referred to the appropriate parties (UAB Office of Conduct, Title IX office, Honor Council) for further investigation and action. Results of such disciplinary action may be shared with the SASC when deemed appropriate by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. The Committee may consider unethical and/or inappropriate professional behavior by medical students in its deliberations and decisions.

SASC actions may include decisions related to changes to student academic status (i.e., active with deficiency, academic probation), academic and/or professionalism remediation, repeating an academic year in its entirety (“recycling”), promotion, and dismissal from the School of Medicine.

The Associate Dean for Students or designee will notify students of the SASC decisions, typically by phone or email shortly after the meeting. The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education also notifies the students by letter on behalf of the Committee.

APPEALS PROCESS

Students may appeal SASC decisions that change academic status (e.g. academic probation) or impact academic progression (e.g. recycle academic terms, dismissal from school) in the Heersink School of Medicine. Immediately following SASC meetings, the committee's decision is communicated to the student by the Associate Dean for Students. The Associate Dean for Students will discuss the student's right to appeal SASC decisions and will explain the process for appeal. The student is given instructions in writing to request an appeal. These include:

- Written notification of the student's intent to appeal submitted to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (email is acceptable).
- Deadline for notification specified by date and time
- Consequences of missing the deadline (SASC decision becomes final with no further possible appeal).

The SASC Faculty Appeal Panel (FAP) considers appeal requests. This subcommittee of the SASC is composed of three experienced faculty SASC members who do not attend the regular SASC meetings. The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education charges the FAP and provides instruction and guidance regarding the deliberation process. The panel selects a chair from the group who presides at the meeting. Students may submit written documents and may meet with the FAP to review extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their academic performance or support their appeal. The panel may vote to uphold the original decision of the SASC, modify it, or grant the student's appeal. The outcome is communicated to the student via email and a letter from the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education on behalf of the chair of the appeal panel.

If the original adverse decision is upheld, the student will be informed that a final appeal may be made to the Dean of the School of Medicine. Specific instructions for the student to appeal to the Dean include:

- Written notification of intent to appeal submitted to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (email is acceptable)
- Deadline for notification specified by date and time
- Consequences of missing the deadline (the adverse event becomes final with no further possible appeal).

The Dean will not reconsider the facts and statements on which the original decision was based. The Dean will consider appeals only where there is evidence that the committee acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner, evidence of discrimination, a material procedural error in SASC's review that prejudiced the student's ability to receive a fair hearing/decision, or where new information that was unavailable has been discovered.

The outcome will be communicated to the student via email and letter from the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education on behalf of the Dean. The Dean's decision is

final.

SUMMARY OF SASC DECISIONS, REPORTING OF ACTIONS ON TRANSCRIPTS AND THE MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR APPEAL

Decision	Adverse Action*	Academic Record	MSPE	Appeal Option
Letter of professionalism concern	Possible	Possible	Possible	Yes
Active with Deficiency	No	No	No	No**
Academic probation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Remediation	No	Yes	Yes	No**
Recycle (repeat year)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dismissal	Possible	Yes	Yes, if decision overturned on appeal, otherwise N/A	Yes

*Adverse actions are defined as formal reprimands for unprofessional behavior and suspension for egregious unprofessional behavior.

**Students with concern for a grade may appeal to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education. See Policy, Medical Student Grading. Students with a failing grade in any course must successfully remediate to the satisfaction of the Course Director and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.

HISTORY

Created: July 11, 2018

Approved: October 06, 2022 by UA System Office

Revised: September 12, 2022

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the medical school community.