

## ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICY

### I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes California Northstate University's College of Medicine's (CNUCOM) standards of academic progression. They are defined to ensure students advance through the curriculum in a timely manner, while maintaining high standards of academic performance and professional conduct.

### II. PURPOSE

This policy is designed to ensure students reach specific bench marks, maintain a high standard of learning and reach recommended competency levels. Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the CNUCOM program learning objectives related to patient care, medical and scientific knowledge, communication and interpersonal skills, professionalism, health care systems, and reflective practice and personal development. Students are required to pass all courses for the Medical Doctor (MD) degree.

### III. SCOPE/COVERAGE

This progression policy applies to all medical students. This policy will be reviewed at least every three (3) years.

### IV. PROCEDURE

#### A. Academic Status and Notification

A student who is advancing in the program as planned, is considered in Good Academic Standing. For students in good academic standing, a standard (template) letter may be issued for verification purposes (academic and nonacademic needs). A student who is on suspension or probation is not in good academic standing. Please reference the CNU Catalog for the complete definition of good academic standing.

#### B. Serving in Elected or Appointed Positions

A student must be in a good academic standing to hold elected office at the class or the college level, to serve on college or university committees, or to represent the college to outside organizations, either on or off campus. Before a student can assume an elected or appointed position, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs must determine student suitability, based on the student's documented history of academic performance and professional behavior. If assuming such responsibilities would be in the best interest of both the student and

the college, The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs may approve the student's appointment. If probationary or dismissal procedures begin or occur during a term when the individual is active in service, the student will be dismissed from committee service; voluntary resignation will be accepted.

### **C. Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)**

MSPE is the student's academic identity card. It is completed before September 15th and transmitted to ERAS on October 1st of Phase C (Year 4). Its content includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A descriptive summary narrative with the use of specific adjectives to describe the student's performance over the length of the program until the date of MSPE issuance
2. Student's academic standing, past and present probationary status, gaps or Leave of Absence, and other disciplinary actions
3. Grades and, when appropriate, narratives for completed courses/clerkships in Phases A, B, and C at the time of issuance
4. Comments regarding professionalism
5. Notes about research projects and service learning activities
6. Any other information that might be considered important to residency programs (students will be notified about changes prior to release)

### **D. Academic and Professionalism Concern Processes**

#### **1. Academic Alert**

Academic Alert is issued by the Office of Medical Education and applies to students in good academic standing that may have failed one or more formative assignments or mid-course summative exams. Since the student is in good academic standing, this designation is not recorded in the MSPE or in outside requests for documentation (e.g.—visiting student elective applications, other degree program applications, license requests, etc.). Academic alerts are shared with the student, the course director and their college master. Academic alert is not considered an adverse action.

#### **2. Professionalism Concern Report**

If a student fails to maintain expected standards of professionalism, a Professionalism Concern Report (PCR) may be completed. This report is filed with the Office of Student Affairs and reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Further information, documentation, and a meeting with the student, course/clerkship director may be required. The PCR will be kept in the student's file. If there are no other PCRs filed during the student's



medical school career, the form is destroyed at graduation and there will not be a permanent record of the incident. If the student accumulates two or more PCRs, then the student will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC). Any egregious, significant breach, or pattern of lapses in professionalism will require referral to the SPC immediately. The Student Promotions Committee will review and provide a recommendation to the Office of Medical Education. The recommendations may include, but are not limited to referral for counseling, remediation, academic probation, inclusion of the concern in the professionalism section of the MSPE, suspension, or withdrawal/dismissal.

Breaches in Professionalism or violations of the Honor Code may also be directly reported to the Honor Council for adjudication after investigation. If a student fails to maintain expected standards of professionalism, a Professionalism Concern Report should be submitted.

#### **E. Provisional Grades and Remediation**

The incomplete (I) grade is a transcript grade which may be replaced by a passing (P) grade. Please see the Grading Policy for all grading definitions.

The Y grade is a transcript grade which may be replaced by a passing (P) according to the Grading Policy. A student who fails a pre-clerkship final summative or clerkship Shelf exam will be allowed one retest. The course director may determine that remediation is required prior to any retesting. A retest must occur within three weeks from the end-date of the course. A passing grade (P) will be recorded on the transcript upon completion of all elements of the course requirements. If a student fails the retest or any of the required elements of the course/clerkship, a grade of Y will be recorded on the transcript.

Upon the recording of a grade of Y, the student will be required to appear before the Student Promotions Committee (SPC). The student's academic record and proposed remediation plan will be reviewed by the SPC, and then submitted to the Office of Medical Education. The final remediation plan is devised by the student and course/clerkship director and will be submitted to the Office of Medical Education. Remediation of a course must be completed prior to the start of the next academic year.

Upon successful completion of the remediation plan and remediation examination within two attempts, a passing grade will be recorded and reported to the SPC. Please refer to the Grading Policy for details regarding the recording of grades. If the remediation is not successful, the grade will be recorded as a Fail



(F). The student will be required to repeat the course in its entirety when it is next offered.

Students will be permitted only two (2) Y Grades per academic year. Course and clerkship directors will be required to submit a list of students retaking exam(s) to the SPC at the end of each course. If a student receives a third Y grade in the same academic year, the student will be required to meet with the SPC and may be required to take a leave of absence or repeat the academic year; this recommendation will be forwarded to the Office of Medical Education.

A student may repeat an individual course/clerkship (not as a part of a repeated year) only once.

#### **F. Probationary Academic Status (Probation)**

A student may be placed on probation due to academic and/or non-academic conditions such as but not limited to:

1. Receiving a failing grade following a course/clerkship remediation.
2. Failing a previously attempted course/clerkship.
3. Documented unprofessional behavior that has not been corrected with remediation (i.e. during non-academic probation).

Probationary status is reported to the student and the Office of Medical Education by the Office of Student Affairs.

Probationary status is recorded in the MSPE and in outside requests for documentation (e.g. visiting student elective applications, other degree program applications, licensure requests, etc.). Students, who are on probation are not eligible to assume new class, college or university- related positions, such as running for executive board positions in student organizations, and applying for other elected or appointed positions. If a student is on probation, they may not continue serve on COM or University Committees (see Section IV.B. above).

Students on probation must appear in front of the SPC. The student must submit a written probationary action plan to resolve the probationary status to the SPC. This must include specific timelines in accordance with the requirements to meet graduation deadlines. The probationary action plan may include but is not limited to repeating the failed course(s), repeating an academic year or designing a study plan to extend the content of one academic year over two academic years, should the timing for graduation permit. Corrective options, that may include a 1-year leave of absence, will be recommended by the committee. This ensures that the committee has the ability to address each student differently, given the individual issues that arise. Alternatively, if deemed appropriate, the



committee may recommend dismissal in which case the Dismissal Process is strictly followed (See Section IV.H below).

Other options may be considered at the discretion of the Office of Medical Education. The probationary action plan may not extend the maximum time allowed for graduation from the program; i.e. students must graduate within seven (7) years from matriculation (including all remediation). The plan, additional recommendations made by the SPC, and accompanying documentation must be forwarded for approval to the Office of Medical Education.

### **G. Academic Suspension**

A student may be placed on academic suspension if the terms required to resolve Academic Probation are not successfully met. In these cases, the student must meet with the Student Promotion Committee where several options will be addressed, including the possibility of dismissal from the College of Medicine.

### **H. Dismissal**

If a student is unable to remediate the performance deficiencies which led to academic or non-academic probation, dismissal may be considered by the SPC. The due process for dismissal shall include:

1. SPC will submit a comprehensive report containing all the relevant documentation to support the recommendation for dismissal. Information may include grades, narratives, results of the remediation process, and minutes of the SPC meetings
2. Proposal for dismissal shall be sent to the Faculty Council Executive Committee (FEC) and the Associate Dean of Medical Education. The SPC will also notify the student of their dismissal recommendation.
3. After receiving a recommendation for dismissal from the SPC the Faculty Council Executive Committee shall meet within 10 business days to determine whether or not the student should be dismissed.
4. The Faculty Council Executive Committee shall permit the student the opportunity to provide explanations for their academic deficiencies or alleged unprofessional behavior and to place it in what the student deems to be the proper context.
5. The Faculty Council Executive Committee shall submit their recommendation to the Office of Medical Education (attention of Associate Dean of Medical Education) and the SPC within 5 business days of their meeting.



6. The Office of Medical Education will evaluate the FEC's recommendation and the supporting documents. The Associate Dean of Medical Education will relay the Office of Medical Education decision to the Dean.
7. The Office of Medical Education will notify the student of the FEC recommendations. The student will have ten (10) business days to appeal the decision through the Office of Student Affairs.
8. The Dean and the Associate Dean of Medical Education will, after ten (10) business days or after hearing the student's appeal, decide to implement the recommendation for dismissal or to reinstate the student into the academic program of the medical school.
9. The Dean will inform the FEC and the SPC the reasons for the decision of reinstatement and will describe any specific steps that the student will be expected to undertake as part of the reinstatement into the academic program.

#### I. **Withdrawal/Leave of Absence (LOA)**

For decisions involving withdrawal and LOA refer to the Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy and the sections under “**FORMS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**” in 2019-2020 CNUCOM Student Handbook and associated sections in the University Catalog.

#### V. **PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS**

The Student Promotions Committee makes recommendations regarding student progression from one phase of the curriculum to the next to the Office of Medical Education. Failure to meet any of the following requirements will necessitate referral and meeting with the Student Promotions Committee:

##### A. **Promotion within Phase A (from M1 to M2)**

1. Students must pass all M1 courses
2. Students on behavioral/non-academic probation are eligible for promotion within Phase A (from M1 to M2) assuming sufficient progress is being made on the student's behavioral/non-academic remediation plan.

##### B. **Promotion from Phase A to Phase B (from M2 to M3)**

1. Students **must** pass all Phase A courses.
2. Students **must** be in good academic standing and not on probation.
3. Students **must** take the NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) or equivalent formative USMLE Step 1 like exam approved by CNUCOM.
4. Students **must take and achieve** the minimum qualifying score as established by the Office of Medical Education, on at least one



NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam approved by CNUCOM prior to January 5<sup>th</sup> of the M3 year.

5. Additional qualifying exams specified by CNUCOM will be mandatory for students who have not yet achieved a qualifying USMLE Step 1 equivalent score established by the Office of Medical Education.
6. Students will be allowed to begin Phase B clerkships but must have a passing Step 1 score by January 5<sup>th</sup> of the M3 year. Students who do not achieve a qualifying USMLE Step 1 equivalent score by January 5<sup>th</sup> will be required to take a LOA. During this leave of absence, a plan will be developed, approved and monitored by the Office of Medical Education.
7. Promotion to Phase B (M3 year) must be accomplished prior to beginning clinical rotations/clerkships.

#### **C. Promotion from Phase B to Phase C (from M3 to M4)**

1. Students must take and achieve the minimum qualifying score as established by the Office of Medical Education, on at least one NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam approved by CNUCOM prior to January 5<sup>th</sup> of the M3 year. (Move to Section C).
2. Students who do not achieve a qualifying USMLE Step 1 equivalent score by January 5<sup>th</sup> will be required to take a Leave of Absence (LOA). During this leave of absence, a plan will be developed, monitored and approved by the Office of Medical Education.
3. Students **must** take the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science (CCSE) Exam or equivalent USMLE Step 2 CK qualifying examination **and achieve** the minimal scores as established by the Office of Medical Education in order to qualify to sit for USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK).
4. Students must take the mock Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) examination administered by CNUCOM in order to sit for USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS).
5. Students are required to provide documentation of passing USMLE Step 1 by March 1<sup>st</sup> of the M3 year.

#### **D. Completion of Phase C (M4 year)**

Students must complete and pass 31 weeks of clerkships or electives which must include a 4-week Sub-internship in one of the core specialties of family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry and general surgery.

## VI. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Failure to meet the following requirements will necessitate meeting with the Student Promotions Committee, and may adversely impact participation in the Match, and/or delay in conferral of the MD degree:

1. Students must complete a minimum of 150 credit hours in the medical program, including all Phase A courses, all required clerkships in Phase B, and sub-internships and electives in Phase C.
2. No more than 27 credit hours of electives can count towards the 150 credit hours for graduation.
3. Phase A, which includes passing USMLE Step 1, must be completed within a maximum of four (4) years.
4. Phase B and C must be completed within a maximum of four years.
5. Total time from matriculation to graduation cannot exceed 7 years.
6. Students must pass the following USMLE Exams to qualify for graduation:
  - a. USMLE Step 1
  - b. USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK)
  - c. USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS)

It is strongly recommended but not required that Step 2 CK and Step 2 CS are passed by the end of the 1st semester of Phase C.

7. Students must attain the knowledge and skills, and develop capacity and behaviors required of a physician.
8. Students must attain a level of clinical judgment which meets or exceeds the Entrustable Professional Activities set forth by the AAMC, and as required by the Faculty.
9. Students must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and social accountability to patients and the community.
10. Students must comply with standards of conduct, professionalism, and academic integrity as outlined in the university catalog, student handbook, and related policies.
11. Students must comply with the laws of the United States; the laws of the State of California; local city, county, and municipal ordinances; the policies, rules and regulations of the California Northstate University and the COM.
12. All academic requirements must be completed at least ten (10) business days before the date of graduation. Failure to comply may lead to delayed graduation.
13. Only students in good academic standing are eligible for graduation.



## VII. EXCEPTIONS

Deviation from the aforementioned policies will require a petition to and approval by the Office of Medical Education.

### **Associated forms:**

Grading Policy

### *Approval record:*

APPROVED by the President's Office on September 10, 2015

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY: California Northstate University Office of Administration

REVIEW/REVISION: This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if required

REVIEW 1: October 2015

REVIEW: Sept 20, 2016 RR/FC

REVIEW: Student Promotions Committee 10-13-16 REVIEW & edits: X. Feng & F. Culler 10-17-16

APPROVAL: Student Promotions Committee (Electronic) 10-31-16 APPROVED: 3/2/17:

PRESIDENTS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

REVISED 4-17-17: Student Promotions Committee approval (Electronic) 5-3-17 REVISED 7-2-18: Student Promotions Committee approval 7-2-18

REVISED AND APPROVED BY Student Promotions Committee February 2019 REVISED AND APPROVED BY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE 4/19/19

REVISED AND APPROVED BY Faculty Executive Committee 5/28/19 REVISED AND APPROVED BY DAC 6/7/2019

REVISED AND APPROVED BY PEC 7/15/2019

REVISED BY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE 6/11/2020

REVISED AND APPROVED BY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

REVIEW by Faculty Executive Committee:

REVIW by DAC

REVIEW by PEC

Approved by PEC Electronically 6/29/2020