



ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

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 benchmarks, maintain a high standard of learning, and reach recommended competency levels. Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the CNUCOM program learning objectives (patient care, medical and scientific knowledge, communication and interpersonal skills, professionalism, healthcare systems, and reflective practice and personal development). Students are required to pass all courses for the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

III. **Scope/Coverage**

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

IV. **Procedure**

a. Academic Status Categories

i. Good Academic/Professional Standing

1. Successfully passed all final summative exams, courses, and clerkships.
2. No identified unprofessional conduct and without any active *Professionalism Concern Reports*.
3. Upheld the CNUCOM Honor Code, Technical Standards, University policies, and Student Conduct Code.
4. A student must be in good academic standing to hold elective 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.

ii. Academic Warning

1. This academic status is considered a preemptive non-disciplinary status during which the student is in good standing and is in danger of being placed on probation.
2. Students will receive academic warning status in scenarios that can include but are not limited to:
 - a. *One or more courses or clerkships with a non-passing transitional (Y) grade.*
 - b. *Failure to pass the CBSE and CCSE examination after 3 attempts.*
 - c. *First failure of USMLE (Step 1, Step 2 CK) exam.*
 - d. *A violation of the CNUCOM Honor Code OR Professional conduct deemed to warrant this designation.*
3. The student will be referred to The Office of Medical Education (OME)
4. An academic warning is considered resolved after six (6) months if no further academic or professional concerns arise and if all courses, clerkships or exams have been successfully remediated.
5. This academic status is not considered a disciplinary action.
6. This status is not mentioned in the student's MSPE, transcript, nor external requests for documentation (e.g., VSLO elective applications, license requests, etc.).

b. Disciplinary Actions

Documentation and Disclosure of Disciplinary Actions: Students who receive disciplinary actions (such as probation, suspension, withdrawal, dismissal) while enrolled at CNUCOM should be aware that these decisions cannot be expunged from their record. These decisions will be disclosed when the student requests that evaluations or recommendations be sent during residency application process, or for support of future employment and licensure. The College in good conscience cannot conceal infractions of the behavioral standards or recurring academic difficulties that the SPC (Student Promotions Committee) had determined should result in official disciplinary actions.

i. Probation

1. This academic status is considered disciplinary during which the student is not in good standing and is in danger of being suspended or dismissed.
2. Students may be placed on probation in scenarios that can include but are not limited to:
 - a. *Cumulative of three (3) courses or clerkships with nonpassing (Y) grades per academic year.*
 - b. *One (1) Course or Clerkship F grade.*
 - c. *Two (2) failures of USMLE (Step 1, 2 CK) exam.*
 - d. *Not passing Step 1 before the beginning of the M3 year.*
 - e. *Two (2) or more violations of the CNUCOM Honor Code deemed to warrant this designation*
 - f. *Misconduct deemed by SPC to warrant this designation.*
3. Academic Probation Process:
 - a. *The OME will notify the SPC and the student when a student has met criteria for Probation. The student will be given the opportunity to appear before the SPC with a faculty advisor.*
 - b. *The SPC will meet to discuss the student's record and vote on probation.*
 - c. *The student, OSA (Office of Student Affairs) and OME are notified of the SPC's decision.*
 - d. *The SPC will then issue a twelve (12)-month probation with stipulations to include academic remediation, maintaining appropriate performance standards and/or adhering to professional expectations. The SPC will also outline the consequences if a student fails to meet stated expectations during the probation period of twelve (12) months.*
 - e. *Should the student be placed on probation, the student will work with an academic counselor to develop a probationary action plan which will be shared with SPC.*
4. 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).

5. After the academic or professional deficiency has been remediated and the student has successfully demonstrated maintenance of improvement, they will be redesignated to be in Good Standing by OME.
6. This status is mentioned in the student's MSPE, transcript, and external requests for documentation (e.g., VSLO elective applications, license requests, etc.).
7. Students on probation are not eligible to assume new class, college, or university-related positions such as running for executive board positions in student organizations, applying for other elected or appointed positions or community volunteering activity. If a student is on probation, they may not continue to serve on COM or University Committees. 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.
8. Students have the right to appeal the probation decision by SPC. Please refer to the CNUCOM Student Appeals Policy (4110) for details.

ii. Dismissal

1. This is an involuntary action taken by the SPC and OME against the student for academic or non-academic reasons. It is defined as administrative withdrawal by the University Registrar.
2. Types of Dismissal
 - a. *Academic: An Academic Dismissal is an action recommended by the SPC or OME due to academic deficiency.*
 - b. *Non-Academic: A Non-Academic Dismissal is an action recommended by the SPC or OME due to administrative or professional deficiency.*
3. Reasons for dismissal can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. *Receiving two (2) F grades in an academic year alongside other academic or professional deficiencies.*
 - b. *Failure to successfully pass a repeated course.*

- c. *Failure to follow United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) policy on attempt limits.*
 - d. *Violation of the CNUCOM Honor Code or Student Conduct Code, and/or unprofessional conduct deemed severe and egregious in nature by either the Honor Council or SPC.*
 - e. *Failure to successfully complete Phase A, including passing Step 1, within a four (4)-year period.*
 - f. *Failure to successfully complete the M.D. program within the 7-year time-to-degree requirement.*
 - g. *The student is unable to remediate performance deficiencies which led to probation.*
4. Dismissal Process
- a. *The OME will notify the SPC that a student has met criteria for Dismissal.*
 - b. *The SPC will meet to discuss the student's record and vote on Dismissal.*
 - c. *The student will be given the opportunity to appear before the SPC with a faculty advisor.*
 - d. *The student, OSA and OME are notified of the SPC's decision.*
 - e. *Students have the right to appeal the dismissal decision by SPC. Please refer to the Appeals Policy (Policy 4110) for details.*

iii. **Withdrawal**

- 1. This is a voluntary action taken by the student.
- 2. Requests for withdrawal must be made to OSA and signed by the OME. See ["Official College Withdrawal"](#) form on the Registrar's webpage.
- 3. The effective date of withdrawal is the last date of attendance.
- 4. College of Medicine policy dictates that a grade of 'W' will be entered for each course or clerkship in progress at the time of withdrawal. For additional information refer to the [Student Handbook](#) and the [University Catalog](#).
- 5. A student who is withdrawn is no longer considered an enrolled student.

6. A student who is withdrawn is eligible to reapply for admission but there is no guarantee of re-admission. Readmission will be at the discretion of an ad hoc committee, comprising of members of the SPC.

c. Academic Sanctions: Exam Failures, Remediation and Provisional Grades

i. Summative Exam Failures

1. Phase A

- a. *If a student fails a summative exam, they will receive a 'Y' grade for the course; The Foundations of Clinical Medicine course (COM 501) is an exception whereas the student is allowed to retake the summative exam once before receiving a 'Y' grade.*
- b. *The student is allowed to remediate a course or summative exam one (1) time*
- c. *If the student fails a remediation exam, they will receive a 'F' grade for the course.*
- d. *The student will be required to meet with an Academic Counselor and develop a remediation plan with the counselor and the course director. The student will need to complete a [Phase A Remediation Form](#) and meet with the SPC.*

2. Phase B

- a. *If a student fails the shelf exam (final summative clerkship exam), they will be given an opportunity to retake the exam within fifteen (15) business days.*
- b. *Failure to pass the shelf retake exam will result in a 'Y' grade for the clerkship.*
- c. *The student and Clerkship Director will meet to discuss a remediation plan. The student will need to complete a [M3 Remediation Form](#) and submit it to the SPC for review.*
- d. *If a student fails to pass the shelf remediation, they will receive an 'F' grade for the course.*

3. No summative exam retakes are allowed after a failed remediation exam.

ii. Repetition of a Course

1. Only one (1) repetition of a failed course is allowed.

2. If the student fails the final summative exam of the repeated course, the student will receive an 'F' grade for the course. The student will then meet with the SPC where withdrawal or dismissal will be recommended.
3. When repeating a failed course, the student is required to attend all course sessions and components including Medical Skills and The Colloquium.

iii. Repetition of an Academic Year

1. Repetition of the entire curricular year is recommended by the SPC when there is concern that the student has not mastered the academic skills of that phase. This may include the following:
 - a. *Receiving three (3) non-passing transitional grades ('Y' grade) in an academic year, regardless of successful remediation.*
 - b. *Receiving two (2) 'F' grades in an academic year.*
2. The student is given the opportunity to meet with the SPC and a faculty advisor to discuss the SPC's recommendation.
3. Students have the right to appeal the SPC decision to repeat an academic year. Refer to the CNUCOM Student Appeals Policy (4110) for details.
4. If a student fails one (1) summative exam during the repeated academic year, the SPC will recommend dismissal or withdrawal.
5. Students who are repeating an academic year are eligible to receive High Pass and Honors.

iv. Leave of Absence

1. Please refer to the CNUCOM Leave of Absence Policy (4120) for further details.

v. Provisional Grades

1. I Grade: The grade of Incomplete (I) is a temporary grade and is assigned only when the student's work is of passing quality, but is incomplete for good cause, as determined by the Course/Clerkship Director. The I grade may be replaced with a P, HP, H or F grade.
2. Y Grade:

- a. *A 'Y' grade is recorded if a student fails a final summative exam in Phase A or a shelf exam in Phase B. It can also be recorded if a student fails any of the required components of the course/clerkship.*
- b. *Upon the recording of a 'Y' grade, the student's academic record and proposed remediation plan will be reviewed by the SPC, and then submitted to the OME. The final remediation plan is written by the student and course/clerkship director. For Phase B, the Clerkship Director will determine if the remediation plan includes repeating the entire clinical rotation or portion thereof.*
- c. *Students must obtain permission from the course/clerkship director prior to scheduling the remediation exam.*
- d. *Upon completion of the remediation plan, a passing and a note regarding successful remediation will be recorded and reported to the SPC. If the remediation is not successful, the grade will be recorded as Fail (F), reported to the SPC and the student will be required to repeat the course.*
- e. *Remediation of a course must be completed prior to the start of the next academic year. If it is not, the 'Y' grade is changed to an 'F' grade. f. Any Y grade received during an academic year will still count towards adverse actions, even if later remediated.*

d. CBSE and Step 1 Requirements

- i. Students will be required to pass the Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) to sit for USMLE Step 1 and document a passing USMLE Step 1 score by the beginning of their M3 year. A Step 1 qualifying exam equivalent will not be accepted.
- ii. Failure to pass CBSE or Step 1 by the deadlines will require meeting with the SPC and developing an academic plan with their counselor. If these deadlines are not met, the SPC will recommend an LOA and the student will be placed on an LOA by OME. For further details, please refer to the LOA Policy (Policy 4120).
- iii. Failure to pass Step 1 after more than one attempt will result in disciplinary action by SPC and OME, which may include probation or dismissal.

e. CCSE and Step 2 Requirements

- i. Students must pass the Comprehensive Clinical Sciences Exam (CCSE) and USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) before graduation. A Step 2 qualifying exam equivalent will not be accepted.
- ii. Failure to pass Step 2 after more than one attempt will result in disciplinary action by SPC and OME, which may include probation or dismissal.

f. Promotion Requirements

The Student Promotions Committee (SPC) makes recommendations regarding student progression within phases and from one phase to the next to the Office of Medical Education (OME). Failure to meet any of the following requirements will result in referral to the SPC.

i. Promotion within Phase A (M1 to M2)

1. Students must pass all M1 courses.
2. Students who are on a non-academic probation are eligible for promotion within Phase A (from M1 to M2) assuming sufficient progress (as determined by the SPC) is being made on the student's remediation plan. Failure to pass Step 2 after more than one attempt will result in disciplinary action by SPC and OME, which may include probation or dismissal.

ii. Promotion from Phase A to Phase B (M2 to M3)

1. Students must pass all Phase A courses.
2. Students must be in good academic standing 3. Students must pass their Step 1 exam prior to the start of their M3 year.
 - a. *Students who fail Step 1 must meet with OME to formulate a remediation plan and present this plan to the SPC for approval.*
 - b. *Students who do not pass Step 1 before the beginning of the M3 year will not be allowed to start the M3 year. The SPC will recommend an LOA, and the student will be placed on an LOA by OME. Please refer to the Leave of Absence Policy (4120) for further details.*

iii. Promotion within Phase B (M3 to M4)

1. Students must have met criteria for promotion to Phase B and remediated any clerkship 'Y' grades to progress to M4.
2. Students must pass all eight (8) Phase B clerkships; an exception is made if a clerkship was deferred until the M4 year and approved by Phase B administration.

iv. Completion of Phase B (M4)

1. Students must pass the Comprehensive Clinical Sciences Exam (CCSE) and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK).
2. Students must complete all required selectives, sub-Internships and electives as defined in the General Catalog.

g. Graduation Requirements

Failure to meet the following requirements will necessitate meeting with the SPC and may adversely impact participation in any Residency Match and/or delay conferral of the MD degree.

- i. Students must complete a minimum of 150 credit hours in the medical program, including all Phase A courses, all required clerkships, subinternships, selectives, and electives in Phase B.
- ii. Phase A, which includes passing USMLE Step 1, must be completed in a maximum of four (4) years.
- iii. Phase B must be completed in a maximum of three (3) years.
- iv. Total time from matriculation to graduation cannot exceed seven (7) years.
- v. Students must pass the following USMLE Exams to qualify for graduation:
 1. USMLE Step 1
 2. USMLE Step 2 CK
- vi. Students must attain the knowledge and skills, and develop capacity and behaviors, required of a physician.
- vii. Student must attain a level of clinical judgement which meets or exceeds the Entrustable Professional Activities set forth by the AAMC, and as required by the Faculty.
- viii. Students must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and social accountability to patients and the community.
- ix. Students must comply with standards of conduct, professionalism and academic integrity as outlined in the [University Catalog](#), [Student Handbook](#) and related policies.
- x. Students must comply with the law of the United States; the law of the State of California; local city, county and municipal ordinances; the

policies, rules and regulations of the California Northstate University and the COM.

- xi.** All academic requirements must be completed before the date of graduation. Failure to comply may lead to delayed graduations.
- xii.** Only students in good academic standing are eligible for graduation.

h. Exceptions

Deviations from the aforementioned policies will require a petition to and approval by the College Dean.

Forms Mentioned: [Official College Withdrawal](#)
[Phase A Remediation Form](#)
[M3 Remediation Form](#)

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OME (owner) à SPC (Review) + FEC (Review) -- > Curriculum Committee (Approval)