

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICY FOR CNUCOM STUDENTS

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 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. Policy

IV.I ACADEMIC STANDING CATEGORIES: DEFINITIONS, INDICATIONS AND ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

The following are the definitions, indications, and associated actions with the various academic standing categories. Sanctions are adverse academic actions that include probation, suspension, withdrawal, dismissal, repeating a course, and repeating an academic year. For details of the appeals process, afforded to the student with reference to these sanctions, please refer to Policy 4110. Students will be notified in writing when placed on or removed from sanctions.

A. Good Academic/Professional Standing

1. Successfully passed all courses or clerkships with no notices of poor course or clerkship related performance.
2. Satisfactorily achieved clerkship or course evaluations without any notations of 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 a 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.

B. Academic Alert

1. This is an academic status which is not considered a disciplinary action.
2. Not mentioned in the student's Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) letter
3. Not mentioned in outside requests for documentation (e.g., VSAS elective applications, license requests)
4. Indicates that there will be close follow up by the student's designated academic advisor
5. Students will receive academic caution status if any of the following occur:
 - a. One (1) *Professionalism Concern Report (PCR)*
 - b. A rating of "1,2 – Below expectations" in the in any of the six (6) competency sections of clerkship evaluations from two clerkships, OR
 - c. A rating of "1,2 – Below expectations" in the in any of the six (6) competency sections of evaluations from two electives

C. Academic Warning

1. This is an academic status which is not considered a disciplinary action.
2. Not mentioned in the student's MSPE.
3. Indicates that there will be close follow up by the student's advisor and the Office of Academic and Career Advising (OACA).
4. Course directors are notified of this status and interim evaluations are sought by Student Promotion Committee (SPC) and reported to Office of Medical Education (OME).
5. Clerkship directors have the right to determine student's clinical rotation site assignments
6. Students will receive this designation by the SPC if any of the following occur:
 - a. One or two courses or clerkships with a non-passing transitional (Y) grade, OR
 - b. Failure to pass the CBSE examination or its equivalent prior to beginning of M3 year OR not passing Step 1 by end of Block 3 of the M3 year, OR
 - c. One or two failures of USMLE (Step 1, Step 2CK) exam, OR
 - d. A Cumulative of two (2) *Professionalism Concern Report (PCR)*, OR
 - e. A violation of the CNUCOM Honor Code OR Professional conduct deemed by SPC to warrant this designation

D. Probation

1. This is an academic status which is considered a severe disciplinary action and during which the student is not in good standing and by which the student is in danger of being suspended or dismissed
2. Mentioned in the student's Medical Student Performance Evaluation letter

3. Mentioned in outside requests for documentation (e.g., VSAS elective applications, license requests)
4. Precludes participation in away rotations, or engaging in extra educational activities, such as research, community voluntary activities.
5. Course directors are notified of this status and interim evaluations will be sought by SPC and reported to OME.
6. Clerkship directors will determine the student's clinical site assignments
7. Students will be placed on probation by SPC if any of the following occur:
 - a. Cumulative of three (3) courses or clerkships with non-passing transitional (Y) grades, OR
 - b. One Course or Clerkship F grade, OR
 - c. Three (3) failures of USMLE (Step 1, 2CK) exam, OR
 - d. Two or more violations of the CNUCOM Honor Code, Student Conduct Code, OR
 - e. Professional conduct deemed by SPC to warrant this designation, OR
 - f. A cumulative of Three (3) *Professionalism Concern Reports (PCR)*
8. There are three (3) components of Academic Probation process:
 - a. This is an official documentation of severe academic deficiency with an associated warning that the student is in danger of suspension or dismissal.
 - b. Development of a well-defined academic plan approved by SPC and OME. SPC will issue a 12-month probation. Activities during the probation period may include academic remediation, maintaining appropriate performance standards and/or adhering to professional expectations
 - c. SPC outlines the consequences if a student fails to meet stated expectations during the academic probation period of 12 months.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Students on probation must appear in front of the SPC. At this meeting, the student must submit a written Probationary Action Plan to the SPC to address the probationary status. This must include specific timelines in accordance with the requirements to meet graduation deadlines.
12. Probationary Action Plan submitted by the students is reviewed by SPC and their recommendation may include options of repeating the failed course(s) (see section IV.I.H), repeating an academic year (see section IV.I.G), or taking leave of absence (LOA) for one (1) semester (see 4120 LOA Policy). Initial academic LOA is for one (1) semester or less with an option to extend to one additional semester pending approval by SPC. This flexibility ensures that the committee can address each student differently, given the individual issues that arise. LOA beyond one (1) year is not permitted. Alternatively,

- if deemed appropriate, the committee may recommend withdrawal or dismissal; in case of the latter, Dismissal Process is followed (see Section IV.I.J3).
13. 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 remediation plan must be in writing. The plan and accompanying documentation must be forwarded for approval to the Office of Medical Education.
 14. Students must successfully remediate all failed courses during the probationary period.
 15. Notation of probation status will remain permanently in the student transcript.
 16. After the academic deficiency is remediated, professionalism issue is corrected and the student has successfully demonstrated maintenance of improvement, he/she will be redesignated to be in Good Standing based on recommendation by SPC.

E. Exam Failures and Academic Standing

1. Retake Exams
 - a. Phase A:
 1. In Foundation Course, one (1) retake is allowed after failure of final summative examination. Thereafter, no retakes are allowed after failure of final summative exam in Phase A.
 2. Student who fails a course final summative or achieves a final course score of < 70% will be assigned a Y grade and needs to develop a remediation plan with both the advisor and the course director and then meet with SPC. This ensures that the student receives both general academic advice from the advisor and content-specific instructions from the course director.
 - b. Phase B:
 1. Student who fails the SHELF (final summative clerkship exam) exam will be Permitted the opportunity for one exam retake. Failure to pass the retake exam will result in a Y grade and the Clerkship Director will determine if the remediation plan includes repeating the entire clinical rotation or portion thereof, before the remediation exam may be taken.
 2. Clerkship Directors recommendation will be reviewed and final decision for Retake SHELF exam will be at the discretion of the SPC.
2. No retakes are allowed after a failed remediation exam and as such will result in a F grade.

Table 1: Failed Summative Exams-and Actions

CUMULATIVE SUMMATIVE EXAMS FAILED	ACTION
1	Meet with Advisor
2	Meet with OACA
3	Meet OACA
4	Meet SPC
5	Meet OME and SPC

* If a failed summative examination leads to a Y grade, then the academic standing associated with Y grades is applicable (Section IV.II Table 2)

F. Academic Suspension

1. A student may be placed on academic suspension status if any of the following occur:
 - a. If the terms required to resolve academic probation are not successfully met.
 - b. Failure of any summative exams and/or courses during the period of probation
 - c. Any egregious, significant breach, or pattern of lapses in professionalism. This includes but is not limited to sexual harassment, intimidation, plagiarism, cheating, falsifying official records, data fabrication, data falsification, privacy and confidentiality violations, fraud, disruptive behavior, and aggressive, violent, or threatening behavior, and documented substance abuse.
2. In these cases, the student must meet with the Student Promotions Committee where several options will be addressed, including the possibility of repeating the academic year, withdrawal, or dismissal from the College of Medicine.
3. A suspended student is not allowed to participate in non-remediative academic course work.

G. Repetition of 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 includes:
 - a. Receiving three (3) non-passing transitional (Y grades) in an academic year
 - b. Two (2) F grades in an academic year.
2. During repetition of the Academic year, if student receives another Y grade, SPC will initiate withdrawal/dismissal process.
3. If a student has failed only one course, then achievement has to be strong in other courses and there should be no other associated adverse academic factors for SPC to consider the option of an abbreviated structured summer course. If the performance in other courses is borderline (final score is near the pass-fail cut off), then SPC is likely to recommend repeating the entire academic year. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis.

H. Repetition of a Course

1. Only one (1) repetition of a failed course is allowed. If a student fails the final summative exam of the repeated course, no remediation is allowed, and a F grade is entered. Student will meet with SPC where several options will be addressed, including withdrawal or dismissal from the College of Medicine.
2. When repeating a failed course, student require mandatory attendance of all course sessions and components including associated medical skills and master's colloquium courses.

I. Withdrawal

1. College of Medicine policy dictates that a grade of W will be entered for each course or clerkship in progress at the time of the withdrawal. The grade of W will remain on the transcript. For additional information refer to the Student Handbook and the University Catalog.
2. Academic Withdrawal is an action recommended by the SPC and OME in accordance with stipulation for progression and graduation requirements in the Academic Progression Policy. These withdrawals may be for academic or professionalism deficiencies.
3. Voluntary Withdrawal is an action taken when a student voluntarily leaves the College of Medicine. Requests for withdrawal must be made to the Office of Student Affairs and must be approved by the Associate Dean for Medical Education.
4. Administrative Withdrawal may be utilized by CNU if student's conduct shows intent to withdraw, including but not necessarily limited to the student's continuing and unexcused failure to attend all classes, failure to return from leave of absence, non-payment, or violation of college/university policy. A student who is withdrawn is no longer considered an enrolled student. The effective date of withdrawal is the last date of attendance.

Student will be notified of the administrative withdrawal action by the Office of Medical Education. A student who is withdrawn is eligible to reapply for admission, but there is no guarantee of re-admission.

J. Dismissal

1. If a student is unable to remediate the performance deficiencies which led to Probation, dismissal may be considered by SPC.
2. Students are recommended for dismissal if any of the following occur:
 - a. Receiving two (2) F grades in an academic year
 - b. Failure to meet terms of remediation for a failed course or clerkship
 - c. Failure to follow United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) policy
 - d. Violation of the CNUCOM Honor Code or Student Conduct Code, and/or unprofessional conduct deemed severe and egregious in nature as deemed by SPC
 - e. Failure to successfully complete the M.D. program within the 7-year time-to-degree requirement
3. 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. For the due process of dismissal, refer to policy "Appeals Process for Adverse Student Actions (4110)."

K. Professionalism Concern Report

1. 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 and course/clerkship director may be required. The PCR will be kept in the student's file.

2. If the student receives one (1) PCR, the student will receive an Academic Alert. If the student accumulates two or more PCRs, then the student will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC). Not all professionalism concerns are of same magnitude, so any egregious, significant breach, or pattern of lapses in professionalism (Please refer to IV.I.F1c for details) will require referral to the SPC immediately. SPC will review and provide a recommendation to the Office of Medical Education. 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.

L. Documentation and Disclosure of Disciplinary Actions

1. 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 had determined should result in official disciplinary actions.

IV.II PROVISIONAL GRADES AND REMEDIATION

1. 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.
2. The Y grade is a transcript grade which may be replaced by a passing (Y/P) according to the Grading Policy. A student who fails a pre-clerkship final summative in Phase A or clerkship final summative ("SHELF") exam retake in phase B is not allowed further retest and will be assigned a Y grade. If a student fails any of the required components of the course/clerkship, a grade of Y will be recorded on the transcript. Anatomy summative examinations are considered required component of a course and failure requires the system-based course director to enter a Y grade.
3. 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. For Phase B, Clerkship Director will determine if the remediation plan includes repeating the entire clinical rotation or portion thereof.
4. Remediation of a course must be completed prior to the start of the next academic year else a grade change will be filed for Y to F.
5. Students must obtain permission from the course director/clerkship director prior to scheduling the remediation exam. Due to logistical issues related to cadavers, the duration of anatomy remediation can potentially be brief.



6. Failure to remediate the Y grade before start of the next academic year will result in a grade change to a F grade. A grade change form will be submitted to the registrar by the course/clerkship director to replace the Y grade with an F grade.
7. Upon successful completion of the remediation plan and the remediation examination within 1 attempt, a passing grade will be recorded (Y/P) and reported to the SPC. 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. In Phase A, students are not permitted a Leave of Absence for remediation. SPC may also consider withdrawal or dismissal.
8. 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. Student receiving a third Y grade in the same academic year, will meet with SPC and required to repeat the academic year; this recommendation will be forwarded to the Office of Medical Education. SPC may also consider withdrawal or dismissal.
9. A student may repeat an individual course/clerkship only once. No remediation is allowed for a failed repeated courses/clerkship.

Table 2: Y grades, Academic Status and Outcomes

CUMULATIVE "Y" GRADES Per Year	ACADEMIC STATUS	OUTCOMES
1	First Academic Warning	Meet with Advisor, OACA, and SPC. Remediate before start of next academic year.
2	Second Academic Warning	Meet with SPC, and OACA. Remediate before start of next academic year.
3	Probation	Meet OME. No Remediation allowed. Repeat the academic year; When repeating the academic year if student receives another Y → Withdrawal/Dismissal

IV.III CBSE and STEP 1 REQUIREMENTS

1. Student will be required to pass the Step 1 qualifying CBSE(Comprehensive Basic Science Exam) by the beginning of their M3 year.
2. Student must document a passing Step 1 score by the end of Block 3 of their M3 year. Once the date of their Step examination is scheduled, the student must inform the Office of Assessment and Evaluation.
3. Failure to pass these examinations will require meeting with SPC and developing an academic plan with their advisor. If these deadlines are not met, the student will submit a request for an LOA which will be granted initially for one semester with an

- opportunity to renew only once for another one (1) semester. LOA cannot be extended beyond a total period of 12 months.
- If CBSE and Step 1 are not passed within the 12 months from start of LOA, the student has the option to voluntarily withdraw as dismissal will be considered by SPC. The dismissal process outlined in section IV.I.K3 will be applicable.

Table 3: Failed Step 1 Exam, Academic Status and Actions

STEP 1 EXAM	ACADEMIC STATUS
First fail or failure to take Step 1 before deadline (section IV.III.2)	First Academic Warning. Meet with Advisor and SPC
Second fail	Second Academic Warning. Meet with OACA
Third fail	Probation. Meet with OME Dean
Fourth fail	Withdrawal/Dismissal

IV.III MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (MSPE)

The MSPE is equivalent to the Dean’s letter. 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:

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

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 result in referral and meeting with the Student Promotions Committee (SPC).

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

- Students must pass all M1 courses.
- Students on behavioral/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 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 and achieve** the minimum qualifying score as established by the Office of Medical Education, on at least one NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) or its equivalent, approved by CNUCOM prior to beginning of M3 year.
4. Additional qualifying exams specified by the 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.
5. Students will be allowed to begin Phase B clerkships but must have a passing Step 1 score by end of Block 3 of the M3 year. Students who do not achieve a qualifying USMLE Step 1 equivalent score before this deadline, cannot progress further for M3 year and will be required to submit request for one semester LOA to SPC. Student will receive an Academic status for not passing the CBSE prior to beginning of M3 year or not passing Step 1 by end of Block 3 of the M3 year. (section IV.IC). Student will be required to submit a detailed remediation plan developed with their advisor for review and approval by SPC and OME. Progress during LOA will be monitored by SPC and OME. During the academic LOA, student is required to meet with their advisor at least once per month. Students will need to develop a progress report and remediation plan if they plan to request for an additional one (1) semester LOA extension. Extension beyond a total of 12-months academic LOA is not permitted. If the student has not met the requirements stipulated in the Academic Plan associated with the LOA, SPC will consider suspension, withdrawal, or dismissal.

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

1. Students must have passed Step 1 and remediated any clerkship Y-grades to progress to Phase C.
2. Students must pass all the core clerkships (family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and general surgery). Neurology and/or Emergency Medicine clerkships may be completed in M4 year but will require approval from M3, M4 Director and OME.
3. Students **must** take the NBME Comprehensive Clinical Science (CCSE) Exam or equivalent USMLE Step 2 CK (Clinical Knowledge) qualifying examination **and achieve** the qualifying score as established by the Office of Medical Education in order to qualify to sit for USMLE Step 2 CK exam.

D. Completion of Phase C (M4 Year)

1. Students must complete and pass 31 weeks of 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.
2. Student **must** pass Step 2 CK.

VI. Graduation Requirements

Failure to meet the following requirements will necessitate meeting with the SPC and may adversely impact participation in the NRMP Residency 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. Phases B and C must be completed in a maximum of three (3) 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)
7. It is strongly recommended but not required that Step 2 CK are passed by end of the 1st semester of Phase C.
8. Failure to meet these requirements will result in review by the Student Promotions Committee.
9. Students must attain the knowledge and skills, and develop capacity and behaviors required of a physician.
10. 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.
11. Students must demonstrate a sense of responsibility and social accountability to patients and the community.
12. Students must comply with standards of conduct, professionalism, and academic integrity as outlined in the university catalog, student handbook, and related policies.
13. 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.
14. All academic requirements must be completed at least 10 days before the date of graduation. Failure to comply may lead to delayed graduation.
15. Only students in good academic standing are eligible for graduation.

VII. Exceptions

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



Policy Number: 4100
Approved: 10.27.22
Department/Office: Office of Medical Education

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY: California Northstate University Office of Administration
REVIEW/REVISION: This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if required

Approval record:

APPROVED by the President's Office on September 10, 2015
APPROVED: Student Promotions Committee (Electronic) 10-31-16
APPROVED: PEC 3/2/17
APPROVED: Student Promotions Committee February 2019
APPROVED: CURRICULUM COMMITTEE 4/19/19
APPROVED: Faculty Executive Committee 5/28/19
APPROVED: DAC 6/7/2019
APPROVED: PEC 7/15/2019
APPROVED: PEC Electronically 6/29/2020
APPROVED: SPC 4/1/2022
APPROVED: FEC Electronically 4/5/2022
APPROVED: SPC 7/7/2022
AAPPROVED: FEC Electronically 7/8/2022
APPROVED: PEC 7/11/2022
APPROVED: BOT 7/22/2022
APPROVED: SPC 9/08/2022
APPROVED: FEC 10/27/2022