



## **I. POLICY**

Student Progress Committee Structure and Function

## **II. PURPOSE**

This policy establishes the composition of the Student Progress Committee (SPC), its operations, and the standards for decision-making for the Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences Eastern Virginia Medical School at Old Dominion University (EVMS).

## **III. RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The Student Progress Committee will review this policy annually.

## **IV. ACCREDITATION REFERENCES**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| LCME 9.9     | Student Advancement and Appeal Process |
| SACSCOC 12.3 | Student Rights                         |
| SACSCOC 12.4 | Student Complaints                     |

## **V. DESCRIPTION**

### **Responsibilities and Make Up of the Student Progress Committee**

The SPC has overall responsibility for the assessment of student performance, professional development and behavior, and overall progress to ensure that students are meeting the academic and technical standards of the EVMS Doctor of Medicine (MD) program. The SPC also has responsibility for review and approval of appropriate remediation or other action when a student's performance, behavior, or progress is not satisfactory.

The SPC is an Institutional Standing Committee that includes voting and non-voting members, as described below:

#### **Voting Members:**

- Full-time faculty members from basic science and clinical departments recommended by the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and appointed by the Dean of the School of Medicine. No faculty member involved with student grading (i.e., module/course, clerkship, or elective director) is a member of the SPC.
- Vice Dean for Academic Affairs. The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs votes only in circumstances of a tie vote among voting committee members and only for votes not involving dismissal of a student.
- Two medical student representatives (i.e., one fourth-year student and one third-year student) in good academic standing appointed by the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs. The third-year medical student serves as the student in training and does not participate in Committee votes, except when the fourth-year student is not present.



**Non-voting members:**

- Assistant Vice Dean for Student Affairs, who serves as the advisor to the student. (NOTE: If the Assistant Vice Dean for Student Affairs is unable to serve as the advisor to the student, the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs will assign a new advisor.)
- Assistant Dean for Diversity in Educational Programs
- Director of Clinical Development
- Student Programs Coordinator

The SPC members receive annual training on their roles and the student progress decision-making process, including the requirement for confidentiality and to recuse themselves from any student hearing and vote in which they may have a conflict of interest.

**Procedures of the SPC**

Students may be required to appear in front of the SPC and will be notified, in advance, when their appearance is required. Students may request to call into the meeting if they are unable to attend in person. If a student declines to appear or does not respond to the notice, the SPC will meet as scheduled and proceed with its decision-making in the absence of the student.

Appearance is typically required for reasons including, but not limited to the following:

1. Failure(s) of module/course, clerkship, or elective.
2. Two or more failures on USMLE Step 1 and/or Step 2 examinations or failure of a module/course, clerkship, or elective and a USMLE examination.
3. Recurrent or singly egregious unprofessional behavior, including behaviors that violate the Code of Student Conduct, the School of Medicine and School of Health Professions Expectations for Student Conduct Policy, or the Student Honor Code regardless of whether adjudicated by another campus entity.
4. A student who will be taking, or has taken, a Leave of Absence (LOA) while experiencing academic or technical standard failures.
5. A student who will require more than five academic years to satisfy all of the requirements for the MD degree.
6. The Student Honor Council rendered a guilty verdict for an Honor Code Violation.
7. Failure to comply with an Academic Plan previously established by the SPC or the MD program.

In the event that a medical student will come before the SPC, Student Affairs meets with the student in advance to help prepare them for the meeting and to answer any questions. In the preparation meeting, Student Affairs provides the student with written documentation that includes logistics of the meeting, composition of the committee, student rights at the meeting, procedures for participating in the meeting, what to prepare for the meeting, and what to expect after the meeting, including the right to due process for dismissal.



In the event that the Chair is unable to attend the SPC meeting, the Vice Chair will chair the meeting.

A majority of the membership of the SPC will constitute a quorum. Either the Chair or Vice Chair, in the Chair's absence, must be included in this quorum. A simple majority vote of the quorum is required for any action of the SPC with the exception of votes for dismissal, which require at least four votes. In all voting matters other than dismissal, the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs provides the deciding vote if the voting members are split in their decision.

At the meeting, committee members will be presented with reports of the student's performance (academic and professional) and progress towards graduation forwarded from module/course, clerkship, and elective directors, Medical Education, and Student Affairs for their consideration. The SPC will have access to the student's entire academic record. Additional information regarding a student beyond that contained in the academic record (e.g., attitudinal, personal, or extenuating factors) may be obtained from other sources as the SPC may deem appropriate, and the SPC may interview the student. During the meeting, the student may elect to present any information or documentation deemed relevant. Attorneys retained by the student cannot attend the SPC meeting or meetings with medical school staff in preparation for an SPC meeting.

After the presentation of all relevant information, the SPC will convene in closed session to deliberate and discuss the student's future standing in the program. Throughout such consideration, the SPC shall use, but shall not be obligated to adhere solely, to the following guiding principles:

- A student who fails one module/course, clerkship, or elective will generally be required to pass an appropriate remediation plan developed by either the Assistant Vice Dean for Pre-clinical Education (for Pre-clerkship Phase students) or the Assistant Vice Dean for Clinical Education (for Clerkship or Elective Phase students), in consultation with the module/course, clerkship, or elective director and based on standardized remediation plans.
  - The specific components of the remediation plan are dependent upon the domains for which the student did not demonstrate minimum competency, the number of domains for which standardized benchmarks were not achieved, and a student's academic history in the program. A remediation plan may include repeating the module/course, clerkship, or elective if benchmarks are not met for two or more domains.
  - The proposed plan shall be provided to the SPC in advance of the meeting and should, whenever possible, also be discussed between the module/course, clerkship, or elective director and student prior to the SPC meeting.
- A student who fails two or more modules/courses, clerkships, or electives, or one module/course, clerkship, or elective and a USMLE examination (including any retake of



an USMLE examination) at any time will be subject to dismissal. The SPC may, at its sole discretion, allow the student, in lieu of dismissal, to continue in the program with or without conditions, to include repeating an academic year, based on otherwise high performance and/or relevant extenuating circumstances.

- A student who is permitted to repeat a year due to academic failure will be subject to dismissal if the student subsequently fails any one module/course, clerkship, or elective or fails a USMLE examination. This guiding principle includes students who withdrew, or took a leave of absence for an extended period when they were experiencing academic failure(s) at the time of withdrawal/leave.
- The decision to grant a request to complete the MD degree in more than five academic years will be based on the student's overall performance and relevant extenuating circumstances.
- A student who demonstrates recurrent or singly egregious unprofessional behavior will be subject to dismissal.
- Action by the SPC resulting from a guilty verdict rendered by the Honor Council will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on overall academic and professional performance.

Taking an LOA does not eliminate academic or technical standard failures. When a student will be taking, or has taken, an LOA while experiencing academic or technical standard failures, the student must appear before the SPC either before the student takes the LOA or upon the student's return. No student may return to academic duties unless return has been approved by the SPC. It is the student's responsibility to work with Student Affairs to come before the SPC in a timely manner so as to avoid further academic disruptions (e.g., missed exams, rotations, etc.).

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the SPC will vote to decide whether the student will be:

- Allowed to Continue without Conditions;
- Allowed to Continue with Conditions; or
- Dismissed from the MD Program.

The student will be notified, in writing, of the SPC's decision. This written notification will include a statement of the decision, any Academic Plan or other conditions (e.g., remediation, skills training, coaching, etc.), the consequences of failure to abide by the conditions, and the consequences of any subsequent academic or professional deficiencies. A copy of the notice will also be provided to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and relevant institutional officials (e.g., Registrar, Director of Financial Aid, Student Affairs, etc.).

In the event of academic or professionalism difficulties in the M4 year, the SPC may determine that an updated student transcript and/or Medical Student Performance Evaluation reflecting



such difficulties shall be submitted to the Electronic Residency Application Service, or to the internship and/or residency program director of any matched M4 student.

### **Appeal of a Student Progress Committee Decision of Dismissal**

The decision of dismissal by the SPC may be appealed or the student may withdraw from the MD program within the timeframe provided to submit an appeal. If no appeal is filed and the student does not withdraw, the dismissal decision of the SPC shall stand and be final effective as of the date of the SPC's written notification of dismissal to the student.

Students have the right to appeal decisions of dismissal made by the SPC, using the following steps:

1. The student submits a written appeal to the Dean of the School of Medicine within five (5) business days of the student's notification of the SPC's decision. If an appeal is not lodged within five (5) business days, the SPC's decision becomes final.
2. The appeal must state in detail the reasons for the appeal and the action the student requests.
3. The student may request assistance from the Assistant Vice Dean for Student Affairs in preparation of the appeal.
4. A student may not present information on appeal that was not made known to the SPC for its consideration unless such information was unavailable during the SPC's consideration.
5. Upon receipt of an appeal of the SPC's decision, the Dean of the School of Medicine or designee will initiate an investigation.
  - a. This investigation will include the following: review all pertinent material and meeting with the student.
  - b. This investigation may include the following: contact with department chair, course director(s), clerkship director(s), the SPC chair and/or members, and/or other persons as deemed necessary.
  - c. The Dean of the School of Medicine also has the prerogative to constitute an advisory group to assist in this review.
6. No later than 15 business days after receipt of the appeal, the Dean of the School of Medicine will render a decision either supporting or modifying the SPC's decision. This decision by the Dean of the School of Medicine is final.
7. A vote of dismissal by the Committee means that a student is administratively withdrawn, and is not permitted to attend classes, labs, clinical rotations, or other program activities from the date the dismissal letter is issued. The student will remain in the withdrawn status during the appeal process. If a student is granted an appeal and re-instated into the MD program, the date of withdrawal and date of re-entry will become part of the student's academic record.



## **VI. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy  
Clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
Code of Student Conduct  
Elective Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy  
MD Technical Standards  
Pre-clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
Professionalism and Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors Policy  
School of Medicine and School of Health Professions Expectations for Student Conduct Policy  
Standards for Advancement and Graduation Policy

## **VII. HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES**

The following list documents policy approvals and updates by oversight authority, date, and summary of changes. This policy is housed on the MD Student Handbook webpage.

- On July 20, 2022, the Student Progress Committee approved an update to revise the composition of the committee and to reflect voting options for two or more failures.
- On October 26, 2022, the Student Progress Committee approved an update to provide students with the option to withdraw from the MD program after a dismissal in lieu of an appeal of the dismissal.
- On February 21, 2024, the Student Progress Committee approved updates to describe the selection as an alternate advisor to students, to clarify who submits remediation plans to the committee, and to clarify the circumstances under which a student might be required to repeat a module/course, clerkship, or elective.
- On July 15, 2025, the policy was updated to transfer appeal procedures into this policy from the Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy.