



Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Title: Medical Student Promotion, Dismissal, and Graduation

Policy Number: SE.09.02.170808

Applies to: All medical students in the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine

Date: 01/24/2020

1.0 Policy Statement:

It is the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine policy to monitor appropriate student progress in meeting standards for promotion, the granting of the MD degree, and actions that might occur, including remediation, academic probation, leave of absence, repetition, dismissal and graduation.

2.0 Definitions

Academic Warning: A decision by SEPAC designed to bring a student considered at risk from ongoing academic lapses to the attention of those who might help the student overcome his or her difficulties.

Adverse Ruling: A SEPAC decision to impose academic probation, remediation, repetition, leave of absence, dismissal or to recommend that a student's performance does not meet criteria for promotion or granting of the MD degree (graduation).

Competence Panel: a panel of trained assessors that holistically reviews individual student assessment information and recommends course grades to Course Directors.

Dismissal: Permanent separation from the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Dean: The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Dean.

Honor Code: Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Medical Student Handbook Honor Code which a student must demonstrate in academic settings (courses/clerkships), co-curricular activities and public forums.

LMH: Leadership in Medicine & Healthcare is a certificate course in leadership that is combined with the MD program.

MSPE: Medical Student Performance Evaluation, also known as the "Dean's letter", is a comprehensive assessment of a student's performance in achieving the educational objectives of the medical school. It is not a student's "letter of recommendation."

OSCE: An objective structured clinical examination designed to test skills required to perform in clinical settings.

Leave of absence (Required): a mandated leave of absence. This may be required for extensive remediation, health and/or safety of the student and/or patients.

PEAC: The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine has established the Professionalism Excellence Advisory Committee (PEAC), which is responsible for investigating issues related to professional behavior of students.

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Probation: An action imposed on the basis of academic concerns, including professionalism concerns, resulting in restrictions and corrections needed in order to avert dismissal.

Professionalism: A set of attitudes, behaviors and expectations as defined in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Medical Student Handbook and Honor Code which a student must demonstrate in academic settings (courses/clerkships), co-curricular activities and public forums.

Readmission: The process whereby a former student who withdrew while in good standing seeks to re-enter the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Remediation: An activity to address a deficiency as determined by the SEPAC after consideration of a clerkship or course director recommendation, an assessment of a student's overall academic performance, a student's written request, or other factors deemed relevant.

Repetition: Retaking part or all of an academic year due to substandard performance, usually following unsuccessful deficiency remediation with SEPAC determining whether the process requires concurrent or sequential repetition of other courses or clerkships.

SEPAC: The Student Evaluation, Promotions and Awards Committee (SEPAC) which functions to monitor the progress of students throughout the medical education program. While the majority of SEPAC time is spent evaluating student progress, the committee also makes decisions regarding superior academic achievement and awards. SEPAC ensures consistency in grading, remediation and promotion decisions.

Grade of X: A grade that indicates a student did not meet the requirements of the course and will be undergoing remediation. When remediation has been successfully completed, the grade is changed from an X to a Satisfactory.

Targeted Skills Development: any activity to address a gap in skills development prior to the end of a course.

USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Exam): A national licensing exam divided into steps given at different stages of training. For medical students, the steps are:

- Step 1 assesses knowledge and understanding from the Foundational years
- Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) assesses fund of clinical knowledge and application
- Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) assesses skills garnered in clerkships and electives

3.0 Responsibilities

Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience

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I. General Principles

SEPAC Meetings

- SEPAC meets quarterly to review student academic progress.
- Ad hoc SEPAC meetings will be called by the Chair to address specific concerns regarding a student's academic progress and other urgent matters.

Actions Available to SEPAC

- Recommendations:
 - Graduation
 - Awards/honors
- Decisions:
 - Academic warning
 - Remediation
 - Academic Probation
 - Required leave of absence
 - Repetition
 - Dismissal

Determination of Course Grades

The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine has an established process for collecting academic and professional behavior performance information related to the six core physician competencies, including Medical and Scientific Knowledge, Patient Care and Health Promotion, Professionalism and Self-awareness, Practice-Based and Life-Long Learning, Systems-Based and Inter-Professional Practice, and Interpersonal and Communication Skills.

Assessment information used for grading decisions includes examinations, workplace-based assessments and course deliverables. The requirements to pass each course are outlined in the course-specific assessment package.

The profession requires consistent professional behavior in order to ensure the safety of patients. Therefore, observations by faculty and others of the student's behavior and conduct are monitored. Satisfactory professional attitudes and behavior are a course and program requirement. The SEPAC has the authority to review professionalism within courses and across courses and to take action based on professionalism concerns. A pattern of documented concerns about a student's professionalism as part of their performance may indicate unsatisfactory overall performance when the record

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is viewed as a whole, even though passing grades have been assigned and SEPAC has the authority to act accordingly within its procedural options

- The Competence Panel, a panel of trained evaluators, holistically reviews individual student's aggregated assessment information and recommends course grades to Course Directors; the Competence Panel's recommendation is also available to SEPAC.
- Course Directors review the Competence Panel's recommendations in light of overall class performance in the course and present recommended grades to SEPAC. If a Course Director wishes to challenge a grading recommendation made by the Competence Panel and/or has additional information that would affect a grade recommendation, the course director will present this information to the SEPAC.
- The SEPAC reviews the information submitted by Course Directors to ensure grading decisions are consistent and comparable across courses and clinical campuses. SEPAC has the final authority to approve and submit grades in all courses. SEPAC also ensures that decisions regarding remediation or other actions taken related to student progress are consistent and appropriate. Targeted remediation is recommended by the Associate Dean for Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation in consultation with the appropriate faculty members.

Student Appearance at SEPAC

- The SEPAC may mandate an in-person meeting with the student.
- Students may request to appear before the SEPAC. Requests to appear before the SEPAC must be submitted in writing.
- When appearing before SEPAC, a student may choose to be accompanied to the meeting by one of the following specific advocates: a faculty member, a staff member, or a fellow student. The advocate is not allowed to speak on behalf of the student or to the SEPAC at the meeting.

Students may review their academic record and/or professionalism concerns that have been submitted in writing. Students will have access to committee motions and official votes related to proceedings, directly affecting them, from official SEPAC meeting minutes per FERPA. Information about other students will be removed or redacted.

II. Promotions

Promotions Decisions

All promotions decisions are made by the SEPAC. In order to be promoted, students must:

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- Demonstrate appropriate progress towards achievement of Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine milestones and competencies.
- Successfully complete all requirements to be promoted to the next course, academic year or phase of the curriculum.
- Adhere to the professional standards of the college.

A quorum of the SEPAC must vote to approve all student promotions between year/phase levels and must vote to approve students for graduation.

Response to Reports of Violations of the Honor Code

Satisfactory performance throughout the medical education program requires adherence to professional standards, including Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine's Honor Code. If a student is reported to have violated professionalism standards, the SEPAC will hold a meeting to determine whether the student violated the College of Medicine professionalism standards, and if so, what actions are appropriate. The SEPAC Chair and/or the Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience may refer an alleged violation of the professional standards to the PEAC for investigation and recommendation. This group of faculty members, appointed by the Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience, are charged with the following:

- Investigate and review matters related to professional behavior of MD program students in order to offer advisory opinions to the SEPAC regarding the degree of severity of the professionalism concerns. The results of the investigation will then be shared with the SEPAC Chair as an advisory opinion. The SEPAC Chair may then share the opinion with the entire SEPAC.
- Recommend policy and practice regarding professionalism in the MD program to the SEPAC and the Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience.
- Review/recommend guidelines to help the students, faculty, staff and the Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience identify exemplary student professional behavior worthy of formal recognition.

Procedures Pertaining to Course Failures

Failures in Foundational Years: M1 or M2

- If a student does not meet the requirements of a course, the student will normally be allowed to undergo remediation. Generally, a student will be allowed to fail up to two written exams during a course, provided the student successfully remediates the failures. However, if it is determined that the amount of remediation exceeds what can be accomplished through targeted skills development (e.g. more than two written exams failures within a course or deficiencies that cross more than one competency domain), SEPAC may determine that the student has failed the course.
- If the student fails required remediation, the student may be asked to repeat the course and may be required to repeat the academic year.

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- If a student is in the process of remediating at the end of a term when grades are due to the registrar's office, the student will receive a grade of X for the course. If the student is successful in completing all required remediation, the grade of X will be changed to Satisfactory.
- If a student fails a repeated course or fails two courses in the Foundational years, the student may be dismissed.

Failures in Clinical Years: M3 (Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC)) or M4

- If a student fails a required clerkship or sub-internship, the student will normally be allowed to undergo remediation. If it is determined that the amount of remediation is more than targeted skills development (e.g. deficiencies that cross more than one assessment modality or competency domain), the student may receive a failing grade.
- If a student fails an elective, the SEPAC will review the student's performance. Depending on the issue, the student may be offered remediation or may receive an F and may be offered the opportunity to repeat the elective. Note: students must complete the required number of electives to meet the graduation requirements of the program.
- If a student is in the process of remediating at the end of a term when grades are due to the registrar's office, the student will receive a grade of X for the course. If the student is successful in completing all required remediation, the grade of X will be changed to Satisfactory.
- If a student fails more than one required clerkship, sub-internship, selective, elective or required project in Years 3 and 4, the student may be dismissed.

Failures across academic years 1-4

- If a student fails a graduation requirement (such as a required course, sub-internship, required electives or required projects), the student must remediate and satisfy all requirements. If the student fails the remediation, the student may be offered the opportunity to repeat the failed experience. If the student fails a repeat experience, they may be required to repeat the year extend their MD program until they meet the required competencies; or may be dismissed from the program.
- If a student fails three required experiences during the entire medical education program, the student will be dismissed.

Pertaining to a Grade of X or Incomplete

- Students receiving a grade of X or Incomplete in a course will be monitored by SEPAC until that grade is removed from the student's record.
- Decisions regarding students with an incomplete will be made by on an individual student basis by the SEPAC. Decisions may include remediation, repetition of a course, repetition of an academic year, required leave of absence, academic warning, academic probation, or dismissal from the program.

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If changes in the curriculum or graduation requirements occur during a student leave of absence, SEPAC will consult with the Curriculum Unit and the Assessment Unit to determine if successful re-engagement with the curriculum will require the student to repeat a course or year.

Failures related to licensure exams

- Students must pass USMLE Step 1 before graduation.
- To graduate, students must pass USMLE Step 2 CK and CS.
- Inability to pass USMLE Step 1 within three attempts will result in dismissal.
- Inability to pass USMLE Step 2 CK or CS within three attempts will result in dismissal.

III. Academic Warning and Probation

Academic Warning

SEPAC may place a student on Academic Warning for:

- Concerns about academic risk.
- Failure to pass USMLE Step 1 or Step 2 CS or CK.

SEPAC's purpose for an Academic Warning is to refocus the student's efforts to succeed.

- Students may be required to seek input from faculty and counseling if deemed necessary.
- Students may be required to temporarily suspend extracurricular activities such as Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine committee membership.
- Students will remain in good academic standing.
- Academic Warnings will not be noted in the MSPE letter.

Probation

SEPAC may impose Probation for any of the following:

- Failing grade
- Honor Code violations
- Professionalism concerns
- Multiple academic warnings with significant academic risk

Procedures and Processes for Probation

- Students on Probation are not in good academic standing.
- SEPAC may impose other specific conditions of probation.
- Duration of Probation is determined by the SEPAC on a case-by-case basis.
- A note about Probation will appear in the MSPE letter.
- Probation may need to be reported to state licensing boards and clinical host agencies depending on the reason(s) for probation.

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- Additional academic or professionalism deficiencies while on Probation may lead to immediate dismissal.

Resolution of Academic Warning or Probation

- The SEPAC reviews students on Academic Warning or Probation at each quarterly meeting, and/or at special meetings called by the Chair.
- Meeting the SEPAC's requirements will return the student to good academic standing, provided other deficiencies do not arise while a student is on Academic Warning or Probation.
- Students must be in good academic standing in order to graduate.

IV. Dismissal

Reasons for Dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Student unable to meet the promotion standards to a given academic level.
- Student receiving a grade of Fail in a course being repeated.
- Student failing to meet promotion standards after repeating a year.
- Student unable to achieve a passing score on USMLE Step 1 or USMLE Step 2 CK and CS within three attempts respectively.
- Student exhibiting unprofessional behavior or unethical behavior that violates the Honor Code.
- Student failing to meet graduation requirements.

V. Notification of Adverse Rulings

- Notification to the student of a SEPAC's adverse ruling is emailed to the student (using the student's WSU email address), within five (5) business days of the ruling.
- Students must acknowledge receipt of adverse rulings by email within two (2) business days of the notification being sent.
- The decision of the SEPAC is final unless appealed as specified below.

VI. Appeal of Adverse Rulings

Appeal Procedure

- Within ten (10) business days of notification of an adverse ruling, a student must file a formal written appeal with SEPAC and the Dean
- Before filing an appeal, the aggrieved student must meet with a Dean of Student Affairs to ensure factual accuracy of the basis for appeal, review the processes and procedures, and prepare any relevant documentation for the SEPAC meeting.
- Any student wishing to pursue an appeal must describe the rationale for the grievance in detail in writing, specifically including any relevant information not previously considered by SEPAC and/or a proposed alternative resolution of the issue.

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- The original adverse ruling will be held in abeyance while under appeal. However, progression through degree requirements (such as continued course enrollment, research activities, internships, and clinical training activities) may be suspended.
- The student may seek advice regarding constructing the appeal portfolio from a faculty member of the student's own choice.
- The University Ombudsman is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.
- Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the Dean may elect to:
 1. Deny the appeal, allowing the committee decision to stand;
 2. Modify the decision;
 3. Make an alternate decision; or
 4. Impanel an ad hoc committee to review the case and make recommendations to the Dean.
- If an ad hoc committee is impaneled, it will be composed of three Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine faculty members appointed by the Dean who are not on SEPAC.
- The ad hoc committee will have full investigative authority and make recommendations directly to the Dean.
- At the discretion of the Dean, a face-to-face meeting with the appealing student may be required.
- A faculty member of the student's choosing may accompany the student in face-to-face meetings with the Dean and/or ad hoc committee but may not speak for the student.
- Within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will provide a written decision to the student, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Chair of SEPAC.
- A Vice Dean for Students and Faculty Experience and/or the Dean for Student Affairs will meet with the student to inform the student of the Dean's decision. If the student is not available to meet, the decision will be transmitted electronically via the student's WSU email address, with a "READ" receipt.
- At the next scheduled SEPAC meeting, the Chair will present the decision of the Dean for entry into the minutes.
- The decision of the Dean is final unless appealed to the Graduate School Dean.
 - An appeal to the Graduate School Dean may only be filed based on process or procedural errors in the SEPAC or appeal processes.

Procedural Appeal

- Within five 5 business days of the SEPAC decision or the Dean's decision, respectively (depending on where/when in the process/procedures the error is alleged to have occurred) , the student may file a formal written appeal to the Graduate School Dean as provided in the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities.

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- The student may contact the Graduate School Dean at gsdean@wsu.edu, 509-335-6412.
- It is not in the purview of Graduate School Dean to overturn whether a professional conduct or academic integrity violation as defined by the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine occurred; rather, it is to investigate if processes or procedures described in this document were not followed.

VII. Graduation

The complete Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Specification of Degree Requirements for Graduation with the MD Degree can be found on SharePoint.

Procedure

In making decisions regarding the granting of the MD degree, SEPAC will follow the requirements established by the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine faculty. The requirements are outlined below:

To graduate with the Doctor of Medicine degree, Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine students must:

- Be at least 21 years of age at the time the degree is conferred;
- Pass all required first and second-year Foundations of Medical Science courses;
- Pass all components of the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship;
- Pass one sub-internship clinical rotation;
- Pass the clinical rotation in Emergency Medicine and pass either the clinical rotation in Rural Medicine or the clinical rotation in Underserved Medicine;
- Pass 24 weeks of additional clinical or research electives;
- Pass USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CS and Step 2 CK within the allotted number of attempts for each;
- Pass all courses comprising the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Leadership in Medicine and Healthcare Certificate.
- Successfully complete a scholarly project;
- Successfully complete 12 hours of service learning;
- Successfully complete all requirements within six consecutive academic years and
- Receive recommendations from both the SEPAC and the Dean stating that the candidate is eligible for graduation and receipt of the MD degree.

To complete the MD degree, students must remain in compliance with the following standards:

- Medical health requirements and immunizations;
- Data security and privacy (HIPAA) training;

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- Maintenance of consistent evidence of professionalism as assessed by SEPAC; and
- Satisfaction of technical, non-academic standards that include observation, communication, motor, intellectual (conceptual, integrative and quantitative), behavioral/social, and task completion skills.

Degrees will be conferred once a year on Commencement Day in the spring. Students completing requirements for a degree prior to their scheduled degree conferral date will be conferred the degree on the next official Commencement Day. If requirements are met after their scheduled degree conferral date they will be conferred their degree on the next official Commencement Day, but the student may request that SEPAC provides a written confirmation (i.e. to a residency program director, research supervisor or employer) that the student has met all graduation requirements.

These requirements may be changed at any time to ensure that all graduates meet the required qualifications of a practicing physician.

5.0 Related Policies

Assessment of Medical Student Performance Policy CU.09.03.170808

Timing for Submission of Grades Policy CU.09.01.170808

SEPAC Conflict of Interest Policy SE.09.04.170808

Chapter 12E Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities. Section 3 Graduate and Professional student complaint and grievance procedures for academic progress and other issues. Subsection: professional student grievance and appeal procedures:

<https://gradschool.wsu.edu/rights-and-responsibilities/>

6.0 Key Search Words

advancement, promotion, progress, fail, remediate, repeat, fail, academic warning, probation, dismissal, professionalism, behavior, honor code, leave, withdraw, readmission, graduation, appeal, grade of X, incomplete

7.0 Review History

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Responsible Office: Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience

Policy Contact: Chair, SEPAC; Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience

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