

University of Michigan Medical School

Policies for Medical Student Evaluation, Advancement, and Graduation 2005-2008

Approved by the Medical School Executive Committee on February 2, 2006

**These policies supersede all previous policies for Medical Student
Evaluation, Advancement, and Graduation.**

Questions regarding the information contained herein may be referred to:

**Office of the Associate Dean for Medical Education
3808 Medical Science II
1315 Catherine Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5608
(734) 763-3265**

Procedures relevant to the policies contained herein may be found at:

<http://www.med.umich.edu/medstudents>

All information is subject to change by action of the Medical School.

**POLICIES FOR MEDICAL STUDENT EVALUATION, ADVANCEMENT,
AND GRADUATION**

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**POLICIES FOR GRADING, REGISTRATION, RECORDS, PROMOTION,
AND GRADUATION**
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I. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

1. The Medical School system of evaluating a medical student's progress includes both cognitive and non-cognitive components. In each phase of the educational program, the student's ability is assessed through observation, practical examinations, and tests of knowledge and problem-solving skills. Professional characteristics essential to the practice of medicine are also considered in the evaluation process.
2. To be recommended for graduation, each student must receive a Satisfactory/Pass grade or better in every course, sequence, clerkship, all required experiences, and the United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE) Steps 1 and 2 (both the clinical knowledge and clinical skills components—hereafter referred together as Step 2), and must have demonstrated appropriate professional behavior throughout the educational program (*see section VI. Professional Conduct*).
3. The Medical School utilizes a periodic review and promotion system. Academic Review Boards convene monthly throughout the academic year to review the progress of students, take action as indicated and, when necessary, make recommendations to the Medical School Executive Committee.
4. The Academic Review Board critically reviews the overall academic performance and professional conduct of students in the curriculum. At the time of review, the Review Board may take action up to, but not including, dismissal from registration. The Academic Review Board may recommend a student's dismissal to the Executive Committee at any point following matriculation.

II. REGISTRATION STATUS

Most medical students remain in formal registration from the start of their educational program through graduation. However, registration may be interrupted temporarily or may be terminated for a number of reasons including:

1. Dismissal
 - a. Permanent removal of a student from registration by the Executive Committee when the Committee has determined that a student's academic performance and/or professional behavior does not meet the Medical School's standards or that the student has violated Medical School or University policies.
 - b. An Academic Review Board, Hearing Committee, or Associate Dean can recommend dismissal; only the Executive Committee can take action to dismiss.
2. Suspension
 - a. Temporary removal of a student from registration.
 - b. Suspension may occur for failure to meet Medical School or University requirements, or because of serious allegations of unprofessional conduct, or if the student is deemed to be a danger to patients, him/herself, or others.

- c. Action to suspend can be taken by a faculty member, a department, the Associate Dean for Student Programs or the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Academic Review Board or Hearing Committee, or the Executive Committee. Further review will occur as soon thereafter as is practicable. If suspension is to be continued beyond one month, the extension must be reported to, and approved by, the Executive Committee.
- d. If an investigation concerning a student's behavior is inconclusive, or if the student is found not responsible, the suspension will be rescinded.

3. Leave of Absence

- a. Temporary interruption in registration.
- b. Leaves of Absence and related policies:

- i. Leave of Absence - Administrative

A student is placed on Administrative Leave of Absence by the Academic Review Board for academic difficulties or issues related to professionalism. Return of a student to registration from an Administrative Leave of Absence requires approval of the Academic Review Board. A psychiatric evaluation maybe required.

- ii. Leave of Absence - Educational

Educational/Research Leaves of Absence (up to one year) may be granted to students who have been admitted to a degree-granting program or to students who have secured a position to explore a particular research interest. Approval for Educational/Research Leaves is granted by the Associate Dean for Student Programs, who may also return students to registration in the Medical School. The Academic Review Board must approve extension of Educational/Research leaves on an annual basis.

- iii. Leave of Absence Detached Study

Detached Study is a specific category of leave reserved for students who have secured research scholarships or fellowships, or have secured positions in other formal scholarly or educational programs. Students on Detached Study Leaves of Absence qualify for deferment of their educational loans. The status of Detached Study is not automatically conferred, but must be requested in writing by the student with documentation from the student's mentor or the program awarding the scholarship or fellowship. Approval for Detached Study Leaves is granted by the Associate Dean for Student Programs, who may also return students to registration in the Medical School. The Academic Review Board must approve extension of Detached Study Leaves on an annual basis.

- iv. Leave of Absence - Personal/Medical

Personal/Medical Leaves of Absence may be granted by the Associate Dean for Student Programs to students who have compelling personal circumstances that are temporarily impeding their academic progress, or for documented medical reasons.

- The Academic Review Board, or the Associate Dean for Student Programs, may require a student to submit a physician's note or undergo a psychiatric evaluation before considering a request to return to registration from Medical/Personal Leave of Absence.
- In Components III/IV the Associate Dean for Student Programs may return students from Personal/Medical Leaves of Absence that are six weeks or less in duration. Only the Academic Review Board can return students from Personal/Medical Leaves of Absence that exceed six weeks.

v. Leave of Absence - USMLE

Students who do not pass the USMLE Step 1 examination are placed on USMLE Leave of Absence by the Associate Dean for Student Programs, who can return students from USMLE Leave of Absence once a passing score is achieved. (All policies related to USMLE examinations apply; *see section IV.1-5*).

- c. Total time spent out of registration on Personal/Medical or USMLE Leaves of Absence will not exceed one year unless specifically approved by the Academic Review Board on a prospective annual basis. The Associate Dean for Student Programs, or designee, will present the student's appeal for an extension and will advise the Academic Review Board.
- d. Students who are not in registration are prohibited from taking part in the Medical School's formal educational programs, including classroom, laboratory, and clinical course work. However, in certain circumstances, students on leave of absence and in good standing may, under the supervision of a faculty member and with the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Programs, participate in experiences that enhance their education.

III. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. Grading

- a. To graduate, students must pass all courses, sequences, clerkships, USMLE Steps 1 and 2, the M2 and M4 Comprehensive Clinical Assessments (CCA), Seminars in Medicine, and any other required experiences.
- b. Students repeating failed course work must do so at the University of Michigan unless permission is obtained to repeat the course work at another institution. If a student fails the repeated course work, he/she will be recommended for dismissal (*see section III.5.c*).
- c. Satisfactory performance in Components I and II will be graded using Satisfactory (S). Satisfactory performance in Components III and IV will be graded using Pass (P), High Pass (HP), Honors (H) grades. Incomplete course work or Incomplete Due to Exam Failure in all four years will be designated as (I) and (I/E), respectively. Unsatisfactory performance in all four years will be graded using the Unsatisfactory (U), Withdrawal/Failing (W/F) or Fail (F) grades.
- d. All final grades assigned will appear on the student transcript.
- e. Residency programs will be notified of academic failures that occur after the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (Dean's) letters have been sent. In special circumstances an appeal of this action may be made to the Clinical Academic Review Board.
- f. Grading Scale:
 - i. Honors (H) characterizes outstanding or distinguished performance (15-20% of the class is suggested).
 - ii. High Pass (HP) indicates excellent or near Honors performance (40-45% of the class is suggested).
 - iii. Satisfactory (S) indicates satisfactory mastery of course requirements as indicated for the course or experience(s).
 - In Components I and II, students who achieve a cumulative average of 75% in each of the sequences will be assigned a Satisfactory grade.
 - iv. Pass (P) indicates satisfactory mastery of the material.
 - Passing standards for all other clerkships and experiences are as determined and published by the departments and faculty.
 - v. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be assigned to students whose course work is unfinished due to excused illness or other compelling circumstances.

- Students in Components I-IV must complete unfinished course work within six months of notification by the Academic Review Board.
 - Once course work is completed, a final grade will be assigned and will replace the Incomplete grade on the transcript.
 - Unless an extension is granted by the Academic Review Board, Incomplete grades revert to Fail grades if the six months deadline is not met. The deadline does not apply while a student is on leave of absence. Students with an Incomplete grade(s) will not advance (be promoted) to the next component.
- vi. Incomplete Due to Exam (I/E)
- In Component I, students whose cumulative course/sequence score is below 75% will be assigned an I/E and a grade of Incomplete will be posted to the transcript. If a student passes the remediation, the Incomplete grade will be replaced with a Satisfactory grade. If a student fails the remediation, the Incomplete grade will be replaced with a Fail grade. The deadline for remediating the I/E grade is the same as those for the Incomplete (I) grade (*see section v. above*).
 - In Component II, students whose cumulative course/sequence score is between 75% and 65% (or a score that is within 2 s.d. below the class mean score whichever is lower) will be assigned an I/E and a grade of Incomplete will be posted to the transcript. Students with cumulative scores below 65% will be assigned a grade of Fail. If a student passes the remediation, the Incomplete grade will be replaced with a Satisfactory grade. If a student fails the remediation, the Incomplete grade will be replaced with a Fail grade. The deadline for remediating the I/E grade is the same as those for the Incomplete (I) grade (*see section v. above*).
 - In Components III/IV, an I/E grade may be assigned to students who fail a clerkship exam(s) on the first administration but perform sufficiently well on other components of the clerkship as defined by the clerkship. If a student passes the exam on the second administration, the I/E will be replaced with the appropriate grade. If a student fails the examination on the second administration, the I/E is replaced with a Fail grade. The deadline for remediating the I/E is the same as those for the Incomplete (I) grade (*see section v. above*).
- vii. Fail (F), Unsatisfactory (U), and Withdrawal/Failing (W/F) indicate failing performance that requires a remedial plan that may include repetition of all or a part of the course or clerkship, or its approved equivalent. These grades are permanent and will remain on the transcript even after the course has been remediated and a new grade assigned.
- viii. A Withdrawal (W) or No Credit (N/C) means the student has received no credit for the course.

2. Dismissal

In addition to the various conditions explained below that may result in dismissal, the Academic Review Board may review the overall academic performance and professional conduct of a student at any time and recommend, to the Executive Committee, additional remediation or action, up to, and including dismissal.

3. Academic Warning

- a. The accumulation of three Incomplete/Exam (I/E) grades at anytime over the course of the medical curriculum will place a student on academic warning.
- b. A Fail or Unsatisfactory grade in a course, sequence, or clerkship, in the Seminars in Medicine, on the M2 or M4 Comprehensive Clinical Assessments (CCA), or on the USMLE 1 and 2 examinations can place a student on academic warning or can count as a single additional failure, but not both.

- c. A third Fail grade is not remediable with a make-up examination or any other form of remediation unless approved by the Executive Committee.
- d. Once on academic warning, students who accumulate three (3) additional I/E or failing grades (F or U) will be presented for dismissal by the Associate Dean for Medical Education to the Executive Committee. The Academic Review Board will monitor the progress of all students on academic warning and will provide input to the Executive Committee as a dismissal recommendation moves forward.
- e. Academic warning is a permanent status. It is not reported on the student's transcript but may be noted in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (Dean's Letter).
- f. All students on academic warning will be referred for appropriate academic assistance.
- g. If a student fails a preclinical course or sequence, and then receives some form of remediation short of repeating the course (e.g., a makeup exam) and fails again, the second failure does not count as an additional failing grade. If, however, the student fails the repeat of a course or sequence that was failed earlier, the second Fail grade counts in the academic warning process and the student will be recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.
- h. If a student receives a Fail grade for a clinical clerkship, remediates any portion of that clerkship, and then fails the remediation, the second Fail grade will count in the academic warning process and will result in the student being recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.

4. Academic Difficulty

Students enrolled in a reduced program must pass all course work or a recommendation for dismissal will be considered by the Academic Review Board.

5. Remediation of Course Work

- a. Plans for individual students to remediate Incomplete, Incomplete/Exam, or Fail grades will be determined and approved only by the Academic Review Board with input from the appropriate course director, sequence coordinator, or clerkship director.
- b. The location for remediation of clerkships will be determined by the Academic Review Board in consultation with the clerkship director.
- c. A student repeating a course/sequence in Components I/II must receive a final grade of Satisfactory to remain in registration; no makeup examination or other form of remediation is permitted. A student repeating a clerkship/elective in Components III/IV must receive a final grade of Satisfactory, Pass, High Pass, or Honors to remain in registration; no makeup examination or other form of remediation is permitted. Students failing a repeated course, sequence, or clerkship will be automatically recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.
- d. Residency programs will be notified of any student who will not graduate and begin their residency training on time due to a failure of the USMLE Step 2 examinations (CK or CS) or other graduation requirement.

6. Grade Grievance

Grade grievances should be related to final grades in a course, sequence, clerkship, or experience and should be based on concerns about discrimination or the process used to assign the grade. Based on findings, a grievance committee or the Academic Review Board can overturn a grade that has been submitted by a course director, sequence coordinator, or clerkship director. In the review process, grievance committees will seek to ensure that grades have been assigned and submitted using appropriate processes.

7. Withdrawal from Course Work

a. Pre-clinical Courses

A student may withdraw from a Medical School course or sequence only after first obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Student Programs.

- i. In Components I and II, students who have completed more than half of the graded requirements of a sequence will receive a “W” or “W/F” grade, whichever reflects their performance at the time of withdrawal.
- ii. Grades indicating withdrawal are permanent and will appear on the transcript as noted below.

Students must successfully complete or repeat and complete any course in which they have been assigned a “W” or “W/F” grade.

There is no tuition refund for course withdrawal after Week 6 of any term.

b. Clinical Clerkships:

Students who go on leaves of absence or who are deferred prior to the end of a clerkship will receive an “Incomplete” or “No Credit” (N/C) grade for that clerkship, whichever is appropriate.

8. Completion of Course Work

a. Pre-clinical:

- i. It is expected that all students will complete pre-clinical course work within two calendar years (or three years if granted a one year leave of absence) of the first day of registration in Medical School.
- ii. Appeals for a fourth calendar year (from the first day of registration in Medical School) to complete pre-clinical course work can be made to the Academic Review Board. Time spent on leave of absence does count toward the time limit for completing pre-clinical course work.
- iii. Students who do not complete pre-clinical course work within four years will be recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.
- iv. Appeals for more than four calendar years (from the first day of registration in Medical School) to complete pre-clinical course work can be made to the Executive Committee; a written recommendation from the Academic Review Board must accompany each appeal.

b. Clinical:

- i. It is expected that all students will complete clinical course work within two calendar years (or three years if granted a one year leave of absence) of beginning the clinical phase.
- ii. Appeals for a fourth calendar year to complete clinical course work can be made to the Academic Review Board. Time spent on leave of absence does count toward the time limit for completing clinical course work.
- iii. Students who do not complete clinical course work within four years will be recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.
- iv. Appeals for more than four calendar years (from the start of clinical training) to complete clinical course work can be made to the Executive Committee of the Medical School; a written recommendation from the Academic Review Board must accompany each appeal.

IV. UNITED STATES MEDICAL LICENSURE EXAMINATION (USMLE) STEPS 1 & 2

1. Passing the USMLE Step 1 is a requirement for promotion to the clinical phase; passing the USMLE Step 2 (both the clinical knowledge [CK] and the clinical skills ([CS] examinations) is a requirement for graduation.
2. A student who fails the USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 2 CS once must petition the Academic Review Board for permission to repeat the examination. The petition must include a specific study plan.
3. A student who fails the USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 2 CS a second time must make a personal presentation to the Academic Review Board to request permission to take the examination a third time.
4. Students who have taken the USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 2 CS three times without passing will be recommended for dismissal to the Executive Committee.
5. USMLE Step 1 Examination
 - a. All students must sit for the USMLE Step 1 before beginning clinical training and within 12 months of completing M2 course work. Failure to do so will result in an automatic recommendation of dismissal.
 - b. Students will be allowed to start their clinical training if the USMLE Step 1 score is pending and if it is their first attempt of the examination.
 - c. No student may receive more than one month of clinical credit for completed clerkships before formal notification of passing the USMLE Step 1 is received.
 - d. Students who do not achieve a passing score on the USMLE Step 1 will be placed on Leave of Absence.
 - One month clerkships: Students who have completed at least 50% of a one-month clerkship will be allowed to finish the month before being placed on Leave of Absence.
 - Clerkships that exceed one month: Students will be placed on Leave of Absence as soon as notification of failure is received and will receive no credit (NC) for work completed.
 - e. Students repeating the USMLE Step 1 exam for the first time may petition the Basic Science Academic Review Board to be allowed to return to the clinical clerkships prior to notification of their score if initial score is within 10 points of the minimum passing score.
6. USMLE Step 2 Examinations (CS and CK)
 - a. Students must complete all third year clerkships prior to taking the USMLE Step 2 CS and CK examinations.
 - b. Students are *required* to take the Step 2 CS and CK examinations before *December 1* of their senior year, if graduation is anticipated in May. Scheduled examination dates will be closely monitored by the Office of Student Programs to ensure compliance with these dates. No student may defer the Step 2 CS and CK examinations beyond December 1 without appropriate approval (*see c. below*).
 - c. In extenuating circumstances, the Academic Review Board may allow a student to take the Step 2 CS and CK examinations prior to completion of all junior clerkships, or to defer the Step 2 beyond December 1. If the Academic Review Board has already met and the Step 2 CS and CK examinations dates are near, the Associate Dean for Student Programs may grant a deferral(s) and report it at the next Academic Review Board. No student may defer the Step 2 CS and CK examinations without prior approval.
 - d. Students have, with the approval of the Academic Review Board, a maximum of 12 months after completion of their clinical course work to record a passing score on the USMLE Step 2 CS and CK examinations.

V. COMPREHENSIVE CLINICAL ASSESSMENT (CCA) M2 AND M4

Passing the M2 CCA is a requirement for promotion to the clinical phase; passing the M4 CCA is a requirement for graduation.

1. M2 CCA

- a. Students with an unsatisfactory performance on 1-4 stations (but have a satisfactory performance overall):
 - i. will receive a grade of Incomplete,
 - ii. must participate in remediation as directed by the CCA director (and/or CCA Committee) with approval of the Academic Review Board prior to retaking the failed stations. The remediation may include completion of additional course work that could delay progression to the M3 year and,
 - iii. must repeat the station(s) at scheduled make-up times until a passing score(s) is achieved. Incomplete remains the grade of record until a Satisfactory grade has been achieved.
- b. Students with an unsatisfactory performance on the CCA overall, or who fail 3 or more stations, will be assigned a grade of Incomplete/Exam and must repeat the entire CCA (including those stations previously passed), following required remediation.
- c. Students who do not pass repeated stations will be reported to the Academic Review Board which must approve any further remediation and repeats. The grade of Incomplete or Incomplete/Exam will remain until a Satisfactory grade has been achieved.
- d. Students who repeat the entire CCA and do not achieve an overall satisfactory performance will be assigned a grade of Fail which will be reported to the Academic Review Board, which must approve any further remediation and repeats. The Fail grade will appear on the transcript.
- e. Any student with an unexcused absence from the CCA will receive a Professionalism Concern Note and will be reported to the Academic Review Board.

2. M4 CCA

- a. Students with an unsatisfactory performance on 1-4 stations (but have a satisfactory performance overall):
 - i. will receive a grade of Incomplete,
 - ii. must participate in remediation as directed by the CCA director (and/or CCA Committee) with approval of the Academic Review Board prior to retaking the stations. The remediation may include completion of additional course work that could delay graduation and,
 - iii. must repeat the station(s) at scheduled make-up times until a passing score(s) is achieved. Incomplete remains the grade of record until a Satisfactory grade has been achieved.
- b. Students with an unsatisfactory performance overall, or who fail 5 or more stations, will be assigned a grade of Incomplete/Exam and must repeat the entire CCA (including those stations previously passed), following required remediation.
- c. Students who do not pass repeated stations will be reported to the Academic Review Board which must approve any further remediation and repeats. The grade of Incomplete or Incomplete/Exam will remain until a Satisfactory grade has been achieved.
- d. Students who repeat the entire CCA and do not achieve an overall satisfactory performance will be assigned a grade of Fail which will be reported to the Academic Review Board,

which must approve any further remediation and repeats. The Fail grade will appear on the transcript.

- e. Any student with an unexcused absence from the CCA will receive a grade of Incomplete/Exam and a notation in their Medical Student Performance Evaluation.
- f. CCA grades will be recorded on the academic transcript in early October.

VI. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. In conferring the M.D. degree, the University of Michigan certifies that the graduate is competent to undertake a career as a Doctor of Medicine. It also certifies that in addition to competency in medical knowledge and skills, the graduate possesses those traits essential to the profession of medicine, which include altruism, accountability, compassion, duty, excellence, and respect for others. Allegations of unprofessional behavior may be handled using several processes, depending on the circumstances and may result in disciplinary actions that include placement of a Professionalism Concern Note (*see section 2 below*) in a student's file, notation in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation, dismissal or revocation of the medical degree.

2. Professionalism Concern Note

The purpose of the "Professionalism Concern Note" is to report instances or patterns of substandard professional behavior by medical students. This allows confidential referral of students to the Office of Student Programs (OSP) to review the concern and receive counseling or formal intervention. Professionalism Notes may result in a report of substandard professionalism in the student's formal academic evaluation and/or Medical Student Performance Evaluation (Dean's Letter).

3. Commendation Note

The purpose of a "Commendation Note" is to report the exceptional professional behavior or service of a student. This information is conveyed to the student and recorded in the student's medical school file. The Commendation Note is not used to highlight academic excellence, as this is evaluated and reported through the current grading and evaluation system.

VII. MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (DEAN'S LETTER)

The Medical Student Performance Evaluation (Dean's Letter) is the official Medical School performance evaluation and record for graduating medical students. It includes a description of the student, unique student characteristics, coursework, grades, and clinical comments (M3), and a summary statement on overall academic performance and professionalism. The Medical Student Performance Evaluation also reports all leaves of absence, course and USMLE Step examination failures, and remediation.

VIII. GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

Students who have performed in an outstanding manner both academically and professionally will be considered for the privilege of graduating with distinction. This honor can be bestowed only by the Medical School Executive Committee.

IX. GRADUATION CEREMONY

The Medical School holds one graduation ceremony each year. Students who have completed all requirements for graduation, or are on schedule to complete requirements for graduation by the end of Period 6 in the following academic year, may participate in the graduation ceremony.

The graduation program lists all students who will participate in the graduation ceremony; however some students may not have completed all degree requirements.