



**Policy Title**

Student Evaluation, Remediation, Requirements for Promotion, and Appeal

**Identifier**

USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.00

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office for Academic Affairs	
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee	<b>Review Date:</b> 06/14/2023
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**LCME Standards**

9.9 – Student Advancement and Appeal Process

10.3 – Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination

**Scope**

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students, faculty and staff

**Policy Statement**

This policy outlines those academic and professional standards and the role of the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC) in reviewing progress, and the conditions that constitute promotion, remediation of unsatisfactory academic progress and professional conduct, and dismissal. A student will be requested to appear before the committee prior to a negative action of dismissal or repeat of the year being taken. Students who have a recommended probation, suspension, or expulsion from the Honor and Professionalism Committee (HPC) will also be requested to appear before the SEPC prior to finalizing the sanction. Students who have failed a single module or clerkship and are not at risk of dismissal or repeat of the year may attend upon their request. In addition, students who have a recommended written warning or monitoring period from HPC may also request to appear before the SEPC. A student may bring their Career Counselor or a faculty mentor with them to the SEPC for support but the Counselor or mentor may not represent the student during the meeting. A student may not bring legal representation, a family member, or individual who does not serve as an official Career Counselor or faculty mentor to SEPC meetings or any subsequent meetings. The policy also outlines the Student Appeal Process and elements of due process. Students must meet academic and professional standards defined by the faculty to qualify for promotion.

**Reason for Policy**

A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.



The faculty of a medical school establish criteria for student selection and develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student application, selection, admission, assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters.

### **Procedures**

The Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC) will regularly review the academic, professional, and clinical performance of each medical student and make decisions regarding graduation, advancement, probation, dismissal, additional educational activities and support. The SEPC will review the performance of students in academic difficulty and those students who have exhibited unprofessional behavior or non-compliance with other standards of performance.

The Committee may recommend resources for the student, may develop more comprehensive longer-term supplemental education plans for those students having difficulty, and make decisions on appropriate disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal from the program. Students will receive an email containing a letter from the SEPC chair via their USC email with read receipt. The student must read the letter in its entirety.

For a list of members of SEPC, please see this [link](#). Seven or more of the nine voting members are required to participate in any decision to dismiss a medical student or to require repeat of an academic year. Five or more voting members must vote in favor to dismiss a student. Likewise, five or more voting members must vote in favor of repeating a year.

### **Recusals:**

If one of the voting members is the module/clerkship director and has previously issued a failing grade or witnessed the circumstance of an honor code violation or unprofessional behavior, the voting member will recuse themselves from the meeting until discussion and voting is completed. If a professional serving as a provider of medical or psychological services for an UofSC School of Medicine Greenville student happens to be a member of an evaluation or promotions committee at the time of the evaluation of one of the students to whom he/she has rendered services, the professional will recuse themselves from the meeting until discussion and voting is completed.

### **Annual Evaluation and Promotion:**

Each student will be reviewed annually by the SEPC to determine the student's preparedness for advancement to the next level of medical study.

- Students receiving all passing grades with no reports of unprofessional or unacceptable behavior for all modules or clerkships in a given year are advanced to the next year of study or for graduation. A student must pass all modules or clerkships to be promoted to the next academic year.



## **Review of Academic Difficulty**

Students with one or more Incomplete (I), Unsatisfactory (U), or Failing (F) grades and/or with reports of unprofessional or unacceptable behavior will be reviewed by SEPC to determine their suitability for continuing in the medical school. SEPC may recommend additional educational activities/support or require the student to attend programs for modification of behavior, retake of a module, repeat of a year, or dismissal from the medical school.

1. Incomplete Modules in M1/M2 Year: The grade of **I\_P** is used to denote an Incomplete. If a student receives an **I\_P** in a Biomedical Science module in M1 or M2 year, they must take a similar summative exam (and/or practical exam) covering the content of the failed component. An "**I\_P**" for Incomplete will be recorded until the remediation exam is completed and the final grade resolved. Please see the student handbook for remediation dates. If the student passes the remediation exam, a passing grade of "**S**" will be recorded for that module at the end of the academic year, unless there are failures of other modules. If there are failures of other modules and the Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (SEPC) may require the repeat of a year or dismissal from school, the Module Director may elect to assign a Grade of "**U**" for the module.
2. Failed Modules in the M1/M2 Year: The grade of **U** is used to denote failure in a module; a student receiving a grade of **U** in one or more modules may be subject to dismissal. Due to the integrated nature of the preclinical curriculum, repeating of a module may be accomplished through intensive independent study with the module faculty/director at an appropriate time that does not interfere with current academic activities. A student permitted to repeat a module must repeat the module at the UoSC School of Medicine Greenville. If the student fails the repeated module, the SEPC may require the student to repeat the academic year.
3. Integrated Practice of Medicine (IPM 1-4): Students are expected to achieve a passing grade on all components of the Integrated Practice of Medicine modules. If a student does not pass an OSCE, they may remediate the next time it is offered for that module to change their grade from **I** or **U** to a **S**, which will be denoted on the transcript as Satisfactory Pass with remediation.
4. Failed or Incomplete Core Clerkships or Rotations in the M3/M4 Year: Students are expected to achieve a passing grade on all components of a required clinical clerkships or rotations. Failure to do so may result in an Incomplete (**I**) or failing (**F**) grade. Refer to Grading System Policy USCSOMG - ACAF 2.00.

The grade of **I** is used to denote an Incomplete. The student will be given the opportunity to remediate the failed component as described below.

- a NBME shelf exam grade less than the 5%ile of the national average for the quarter. The student will have the opportunity to remediate that exam. The student will receive a grade of "**C**" at the conclusion of the M3 year upon successful retake of the exam as long as the student has passed all components of the core clerkships. A note will be made in the MSPE of the need to remediate the exam. If the NBME shelf exam grade less than the 5%ile of the national average a second time, the student will receive a grade of "**F**" and must repeat the course.
- a score on the OSCE below 69.45. The student will have the opportunity to remediate that portion of the grade. The student will receive a grade of "**C**" for the clerkship at the conclusion of the M3 year upon successful passing of the OSCE and a note will be made in the MSPE of the need to remediate the OSCE. If the OSCE score is below 69.45 a



second time, the student will receive a grade of “F” and must repeat the course.

- a failure to complete Core Clerkship requirements, such as patient encounter data, submitted histories and physicals, CLIPP/SIMPLE cases, case presentation, etc., the student will receive an “incomplete” in the clerkship until the requirements have been met.

Additionally, at the discretion of the Clerkship Director, a student is eligible for an incomplete (I) with need for remediation or failure (F) should any of the following apply:

- One (1) or more ratings of “Unsatisfactory” by a faculty or resident
- Three (3) or more ratings of “Below Expectations” by a faculty or resident
- Documented unprofessional behavior on the part of the student

A grade of U/F is used to denote an Unsatisfactory or Failure. Upon satisfactory completion of repeated module or clerkship/rotation, both the original U/F grade and the grade received in the repeated module or clerkship/rotation will be recorded on the student's transcript and the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) will reflect the need to repeat the course.

5. Failure to Complete more than one Core Clerkship

Upon failure of a second core clerkship, OSCE or NBME shelf exam for a clerkship, the student will be referred to the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee (SEPC) and if allowed to continue, will receive an Incomplete for the second clerkship. If the components of the two clerkships are remediated, the grade for the clerkships will convert to a “C” at the conclusion of M3 year as long as the student has passed all components of other core clerkships. Upon failure of any NBME shelf exam or OSCE of a third clerkship, the student will be referred to SEPC and if allowed to continue, all 3 clerkship Incompletes will convert to Fs and the student must re-enroll in those clerkships. The Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee (SEPC) will decide if the student will repeat only those three clerkships or the full year.

6. Step 1: Students are required to pass Step 1 in order to officially be promoted to the third year, although they may begin clerkships while awaiting their Step 1 exam date. Refer to USCSOMG – ACAF – 3.05 United States Medical Licensing Examination policy.
7. Repeated Year: A student who is repeating the year must pass each module or clerkship in order to be promoted to the next academic year. Any module or clerkship failure occurring during the repeat year will be reviewed by SEPC and may result in dismissal. Per USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.03 Requirements for Graduation policy, students must meet all graduation requirements within six years.
8. Personal and Professional Conduct and Competencies: Student progress is based upon professional performance which includes both cognitive mastery of the basic and clinical sciences and personal and professional conduct and competencies that reflect the high standards of moral and ethical behavior and judgment necessary for professional practice as a physician. Factors which could result in a student's suspension or dismissal from the School of Medicine Greenville, regardless of grades in academic course work and clinical clerkships and rotations, include, but are not limited to, violations of the School of Medicine Greenville Policy on Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct, violations of University regulations as described in the Carolina Community, or conviction of a criminal offense. Honor and Professionalism violations are initially reported to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC), and the HPC submits reports and recommendations to the SEPC. The final decision on



responsibility and the sanction rests with the SEPC. See USCSOMG – STAF – 5.03 Honor and Professionalism System.

9. Unsatisfactory Mark in Personal and Professional Conduct: A student who receives an “Unsatisfactory” mark in any of the personal and professional conduct or competency portions of a third- or fourth-year clerkship evaluation is eligible to receive a grade of “F” in that clerkship. A student receiving a failing grade will be required to repeat the clerkship, including the OSCE/OSAT and shelf exam. If a second “Unsatisfactory” mark is received in the personal and professional conduct portions or competencies of the professional evaluation in the repeat clerkship or another clerkship, then the student will be subject to dismissal. If the student receives exemplary or satisfactory marks in personal and professional conduct or competencies and a C or higher letter grade in the repeat clerkship, he or she will be permitted to continue in the third or fourth year. Any additional “Unsatisfactory” marks in personal and professional conduct during the third year or during the fourth year will render the student subject to dismissal. Refer to USCSOMG – ACAF –2.00 Grading System.

#### **Appeal Process:**

1. A student may request review of the advancement or professionalism decision by the SEPC if the student feels that the decision was made inappropriately and not in accordance with the procedures for annual evaluation and promotion. To appeal an SEPC decision, a student must submit, in writing to the Dean's designee (as stated in the SEPC letter) for a request for review within five (5) business days of receipt of the SEPC letter. The Dean's designee may opt to convene an ad hoc committee comprised of four additional faculty members in accordance with the SEPC recusal policy and the Conflict of Interest in Student Assessment policy. Students will have the opportunity to discuss the rationale for their appeal before the Dean's designee and if needed the ad hoc appeal committee but may not bring legal representation to these meetings or any subsequent meetings, although they may seek legal counsel. The Dean's designee will make a final disposition of the request within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the student's request for appeal.
2. An appeal of the decision of the ad hoc committee is to the Dean. A student must make a written request to the Dean within five business days of receipt of the decision of the Dean's designee. After review of relevant information and meeting with the student, the Dean of USC School of Medicine Greenville shall make a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) business days.
3. A final request for review may be made to the Provost of the University of South Carolina of any decision made by the Dean of USC School of Medicine Greenville. This request for review must be made, in writing, within ten (10) business days of the student's receipt of the Dean's decision. During the review process, the student will be invited to submit to the Provost a personal statement (maximum 10 pages, double-spaced) in which the grounds for the request for review are explained. There will be four possible grounds for a request for review: (1) that the decision of the Dean is not supported by substantial evidence; (2) that a procedural violation has occurred that has prejudiced the Dean's deliberations; (3) that, when the record is reviewed as a whole, the decision of the Dean is punitive rather than academically appropriate; and/or (4) that the Dean's decision is an arbitrary and capricious one. The Provost can reverse, affirm, or modify the Dean's decision. Any modification of the Dean's decision by the Provost cannot require greater effort on the part of the student than that required by the Dean's original decision regarding an academic alternative. Ideally, the outcome of the Provost's review will be communicated to the student, in writing, within 30 days of the date of receipt of the request for a review. The Provost's review will consist of an assessment of the student's existing record in the School of Medicine, with no new information being provided by the student or by the School of Medicine.
4. A student may continue in the academic program during the process of an appeal on academic grounds.



The student may not continue in the academic program during the process of an appeal for unprofessional behavior, unless explicit permission is granted by the SEPC.

### **Graduation Evaluation:**

Students will be reviewed and approved for graduation during the fourth year by the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee to determine suitability for graduation. In conducting that review, the Committee will examine the student's performance in all aspects of the required curriculum and their demonstrated professionalism exhibited throughout the program of study. In addition, the Committee will verify that any required examinations have been completed. Refer to USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.03 Requirements for Graduation policy.

All students must take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 and pass at the national standard in order to graduate. In addition, all students must take and pass the USMLE Step 2 CK examination in order to be certified for graduation. Students should take the Step 2 CK examinations no later than the October date released by Academic Affairs unless permission has been granted by the Office for Academic Affairs. Refer to USCSOMG – ACAF – 3.05 USMLE policy.

### **Sanctions**

Repeat course or clerkship, repeat year, or dismissal as determined by Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC).

If the HPC finds the student to be guilty of an Honor & Professionalism System infraction, the HPC will make recommendation for sanctions. The final decision on responsibility and the sanction rests with the SEPC. The decision of the SEPC will be effective immediately, unless there is an appeal to the Dean's designee.

Where possible, sanctions should provide a process for remediation rather than punishment.

The following sanctions may be imposed upon a student found to have violated the Honor & Professionalism System:

- Written warning
- Monitoring Period
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion

### **Additional Contacts**

Office for Student Affairs and Admissions

Office for Academic Affairs

Honor and Professionalism Council

### **Related Information**

USCSOMG – ACAF – 2.00 Grading System

USCSOMG – ACAF – 3.05 United States Medical Licensing Examination

USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.03 Requirements for Graduation

USCSOMG – STAF – 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct

USCSOMG – STAF – 5.03 Honor and Professionalism

## History

Date of Change	Change
June 2023	Page 5, appeal process #1, "...or professionalism..." addition to verbiage and update to appeals process verbiage.
December 2021	HPC will make a decision on whether a student is responsible or not for reported HPC violations. HPC will make recommendations to SEPC regarding the sanctions. SEPC will make the final decision and communication regarding the sanctions.
June 2021	Updated appeal process to include Dean's designee
April 2021	Removed COVID-19 modifications and the requirement of Step 2 CS for graduation
November 2020	Clarified timing expectations for appeal process, further clarified who a student may or may not bring to SEPC meetings, and quorum of the SEPC.
June 2020	Updated with COVID-19 response
Feb 2020	Updated authority of the SEPC to a deciding body, with an opportunity to appeal to the Dean.
June 2019	Clarified the appeal process, added remediation language from a previous policy, editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles.
July 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI