

# Medical Student Academic Progress Review

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Effective Date: 7/11/2018

Responsible Party: Sr. Associate Dean for Medical Education

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## POLICY ABSTRACT

The Medical Student Academic Progress Review Policy details the authority of the Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC) to review and make decisions regarding medical student academic remediation, progression, and dismissal.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

This policy sets the standards for academic remediation, progress and dismissal for medical students. It also meets the requirements set forth by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) accreditation requirements as follows:

### **Standard 10: Medical Student Selection, Assignment, and Progress**

“A medical school establishes and publishes admission requirements for potential applicants to the medical education program and uses effective policies and procedures for medical student selection, enrollment, and assignment.”

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## SCOPE

This policy outlines the procedures by which the SASC reviews student performance and approves appropriate actions for academic status, remediation, and progression. In addition, the procedure outlines the appeals process and provides a summary of actions. The policy applies to all academic performance for students in the MD curriculum.

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## POLICY

To uphold uniform standards, the School of Medicine utilizes the Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC). This committee reviews student academic and professional performance throughout academic years at UAB School of Medicine and makes decisions about academic remediation, progression, and dismissal. Professional ethics and conduct are as essential to the practice of medicine as academic excellence and may be considered by the Committee in its deliberations.

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## PROCEDURE

The SASC is composed of faculty members from Joint Health Sciences and Clinical Departments with representatives from all four UABSOM campuses, as well as two medical students who have completed preclinical coursework. The committee meets four to five times per year. Matters that require attention between regular meetings may be considered by a Faculty Review Panel (FRP) appointed by the Senior Associate Dean

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for Medical Education. The Committee reviews pertinent information, approves grades, and makes decisions about student academic status, remediation, and progression. SASC actions are final, subject to appeal as described below.

The Associate Dean for Students or designee represents the students at the SASC and FRP meetings. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean prior to the meetings to discuss factors that may have contributed to their academic difficulty. The SASC does not meet with or interview students before or during deliberations. The Committee will take into consideration extenuating circumstances (such as personal events, financial problems, health concerns) that may interfere with a student's optimal performance. In cases where the extenuating circumstances are determined to be confidential and sensitive, then only information approved by the student will be included in the committee's deliberative process. If the student chooses to share personal health information, they must give written permission. While the Committee may consider known extenuating circumstances as presented by the Associate Dean for Students, it is not the responsibility of the Committee to investigate actively whether such circumstances exist.

Non-academic matters affecting progression through medical school, such as possible disciplinary action for academic or non-academic misconduct, will be referred to the appropriate parties (UAB Office of Conduct, Title IX office, Honor Council) for further investigation and action. Results of such disciplinary action may be shared with the SASC when deemed appropriate by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. The Committee may consider unethical and/or inappropriate professional behavior by medical students in its deliberations.

SASC actions may include decisions for changes to student academic status including academic probation, academic and/or professionalism remediation, repeating the academic year in its entirety ("recycling"), promotion, and dismissal from the School of Medicine. If a medical student's performance is sufficiently unsatisfactory, the SASC may dismiss the student from the School of Medicine.

The Associate Dean for Students or designee will notify students of the SASC decisions, typically by phone or email shortly after the meeting. The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education notifies the students by letter on behalf of the Committee.

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## APPEALS PROCESS

Students may only appeal SASC decisions that impede or terminate their academic progression in the School of Medicine. These include decisions for recycling an academic year or dismissal from the school. Academic probation is not subject to appeal because it does not affect progression. When the SASC decision impacts a student's progression, communication from the Associate Dean for Student's will immediately share the committee's decision with the student and when relevant, explain the student's right to appeal and the process for appeal. The committee's letter will also include notification of the student's right to appeal and specific instructions for the

student to appeal. These include:

- Written notification of student's intent to appeal submitted to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (email is acceptable).
- Deadline for notification specified by date and time
- Consequences of missing the deadline (adverse event becomes final with no further possible appeal)

The SASC Faculty Appeal Panel (FAP) considers appeal requests. This subcommittee of the SASC is composed of three experienced faculty SASC members who do not attend the regular SASC meetings. The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education charges the FAP and provides instruction and guidance regarding the deliberation process. The panel selects a chair from the group who presides at the meeting. Students may submit written documents and may meet with the FAP to review extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their academic performance or support their appeal. The panel may vote to uphold the original decision of the SASC, modify it, or grant the student's appeal. The outcome is communicated to the student via email and letter from the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education on behalf of the chair of the appeal panel.

In the event that the original adverse decision is upheld or the modified decision impacts academic progression, the student will be informed in writing that a final appeal may be made to the Dean of the School of Medicine. Specific written instructions for the student to appeal to the Dean will include:

- Written notification of intent to appeal submitted to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education (email is acceptable)
- Deadline for notification specified by date and time.
- Consequences of missing the deadline (the adverse event becomes final with no further possible appeal).

The Dean will not reconsider the facts and statements on which the original decision was based. The Dean will consider only where there is evidence that committee acted in an arbitrary or capricious manner, evidence of discrimination, a material procedural error in SASC's review that prejudiced the student's ability to receive a fair hearing/decision, or where new information that was unavailable has been discovered.

The outcome will be communicated to the student via email and certified letter from the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education on behalf of the Dean. The Dean's decision is final.

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**SUMMARY OF SASC DECISIONS, REPORTING OF ACTIONS ON  
TRANSCRIPTS AND THE MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR APPEAL**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Adverse Action</b>	<b>Academic Record</b>	<b>MSPE</b>	<b>Appeal Option</b>
Letter of concern	Possible	Possible	Possible	No
Academic probation	No	Yes	Yes	No
Remediation	Possible	Yes	Yes	No
Recycle (repeat year)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dismissal	Yes	Yes	Yes, if decision overturned on appeal, otherwise N/A	Yes

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**HISTORY****Approved: 7/11/2018 by UA System Office****Revised: 7/11/2018**

UABSOM policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the UABSOM community.