

## ACADEMIC STANDING AND DUE PROCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Student Progress and Advising Committee (SPAC) is appointed by the dean to monitor student academic and professional standards as determined by the faculty. SPAC reviews academic performance after each grading period and upon receipt of scores on all required national exams and determines each student's academic standing. The dean may also request the committee to review any issue pertaining to a student's evaluation and/or performance. Students in good standing, who have passing grades and satisfactory competency assessments automatically advance to the next unit of instruction. Students not in good standing must meet with the committee. Each year the committee also endorses the graduation of all students who have successfully completed all graduation requirements.

**I. Satisfactory Academic Progress**—Students are expected to complete their medical school training within the following guidelines:

- A. A student not participating in an approved graduate study or research leave must complete graduation requirements within six years of matriculation.
- B. A student may not take more than a total of 18 months of leave of absence. Approved research and graduate study leaves of absence do not count towards this 18-month maximum.
- C. A student who takes a leave of absence must meet all agreed upon terms of the approved leave.
- D. A student must take the appropriate school or national examination by the dates set by the school.
- E. A student must meet the terms of an isolated deficiency remediation.
- F. A student must meet the terms of a corrective action plan as outlined by the committee.

**Note: Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid eligibility should not be confused with the college's academic policies described here.**

**II. Good Standing**—A student in good standing

- A. has maintained the committee's guidelines for satisfactory academic progress
- B. does not have a current academic deficiency that the committee considers eligible for placement on academic probation (See Section IV)

A student not in good standing may be administratively removed from their next unit of academic instruction at the discretion of the college's Office of Student Affairs leadership team. When this occurs, the student will be advised of his or her ability to continue academic training after meeting with the committee.

**III. Leave of Absence**—A student requesting to take a leave of absence for medical or personal reasons must present his or her request in writing to the committee and, unless permitted by the committee, must appear before the committee and discuss the situation leading to the request and the student's proposed plan for maintaining academic readiness to return to their program of study. After deliberation, the committee will determine whether to approve the leave and the conditions to be met for

the student to return to their medical studies. The chair of the committee will inform the student of the required conditions.

**IV. Academic Probation**—A student may be placed on probation by the committee for any of the following academic deficiencies:

- A. fails a block, required clinical rotation, or elective clinical rotation
- B. fails a required national exam
- C. fails to maintain acceptable academic standards, ethics, or professional behavior
- D. fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress (See Section I)

The Committee will review the status of all students on probation annually.

**V. Isolated Deficiency**—A student may be placed on academic probation by the committee if he or she receives an isolated deficiency in a course, clerkship, or elective after the student's academic record is reviewed by SPAC. Alternatively, the committee may also assign a specific isolated deficiency remediation (See Section VII) without placing the student on academic probation.

**VI. Additional Academic Concerns**—The ADASA and Learning Community Mentors will monitor formative feedback/evaluations pertaining to students; the ADASA may refer a student to SPAC if the student receives feedback from small groups, blocks, clinical clerkships, or elective clinical rotations indicating that he or she is noted for borderline performance on repeated formative evaluations, final grade evaluations or national examinations. After reviewing the concerns, the committee may place the student on academic probation for failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress. The committee may also assign remediation (See Section VII) without placing the student on academic probation.

**VII. Remediation**—The committee may require one or more remedial measures to be successfully completed by the student in order for the student to be removed from academic probation and returned to good standing. Typical remedial measures include:

- A. repeat a block, required clinical rotation, or elective clinical rotation with a passing grade
- B. successfully complete required block, course or clerkship remediation
- C. repeat the entire year/phase with passing grades
- D. successfully complete required competency remediation
- E. successfully pass required school or national exams
- F. successfully complete corrective action plan as determined by the committee
- G. engage in independent study and take and pass a departmental examination or national examination

**VIII. Removal of Academic Probation/Return from Leave of Absence**

- A. Administrative Action: At the discretion of SPAC, a student can be administratively removed from academic probation and reinstated to good standing between SPAC meetings once the

required remediation has been successfully completed. This action will be acknowledged at a subsequent regularly scheduled committee meeting.

**B. Committee Recommendation and Action**

1. Probation: The committee must review the academic record of any student who has appeared before the committee related to their academic deficiency and probation to ensure they have met the required remediation and determine if the student can be removed from academic probation and reinstated to good standing.
2. Leave of Absence: The committee must review the academic record and evidence of the student's fulfillment of the conditions of the leave of absence and determine whether the student has successfully met the conditions of the leave before the student may return to the academic program.

**IX. Suspension**—The committee may suspend a student from school for failure to meet acceptable academic standards, ethics, professional behavior, or satisfactory academic progress.

**X. Dismissal**—The committee may decide to dismiss a student from the college for any of the following reasons. Any student who meets any of the below criteria will be required to appear before SPAC to discuss why he/she should not be dismissed from school.

- A. fails two blocks in the first and/or second year/phase
- B. fails a block, required clinical rotation, or elective clinical rotation while on academic probation
- C. fails two required clinical rotations
- D. fails two elective rotations
- E. fails an elective rotation and a required clinical rotation
- F. fails USMLE Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 2 CS on the third attempt
- G. receives any isolated deficiency or is noted for Additional Academic Concerns (Section VI) when currently on Academic Probation
- H. has been cited for lack of acceptable academic standards, ethics, or professional behavior
- I. is not making satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of their degree

A decision to recommend academic dismissal will prevent the student from continuing to attend classes unless the Committee determines otherwise.

**XI. Due Process/Appeal Procedures**

Initial SPAC Review: The chair of the committee will contact a student when a corrective or adverse academic action to which the student has not already agreed is being considered. The student will be scheduled to meet before SPAC as soon as possible, but not less than seven calendar days after receiving notification from the chair. The chair will notify the student of the general nature of the academic

concern, the potential adverse action(s) that may be considered, advise the student of their rights and provide a copy of the relevant policies that describe the initial presentation and subsequent appeals process, including a personal appearance before SPAC. In addition, the Learning Community Mentor is expected to serve as a resource and provide advice and support for students referred to SPAC for academic (including professionalism) issues.

- SPAC meetings are limited to the student and appropriate university representatives. The student may not have an adviser during the personal appearance.
- The student will have an opportunity to make an opening and closing statement and to take notes during the meeting.
- The student may submit written materials to SPAC in advance of or at the meeting.
- The student will not be permitted to be present during deliberations of SPAC.

SPAC decisions that result in any action other than a required remediation plan, suspension, or dismissal are final.

Request for Reconsideration of Remediation Plan, Suspension or Dismissal: A student may request to meet again with SPAC after receiving the committee's decision on a required plan for remediation or in favor of suspension or dismissal. The student's request for reconsideration must be received, in writing, by the chair of the committee within 21 calendar days of the date of the committee's action. A student's presentation for reconsideration must provide new information not previously communicated to the committee. The two possible outcomes of this process are:

1. The reconsideration results in reversal or revision of the original action, and
  - a. in the case of remediation, the student will complete an alternate or revised remediation pathway
  - b. in the case of suspension or dismissal, the student remains on academic probation and must complete the Committee's remediation plan,or
2. The reconsideration does not result in a change to the original action and the recommendation for the originally-prescribed remediation, suspension, or dismissal is forwarded to the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. The student has five business days to notify the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs of the student's intention to appeal the Committee's decision.

If the student does not appeal or withdraws within 21 calendar days of the date of the committee's action, the recommendation will be forwarded to the dean for review. The dean's decision is final and may not be appealed. See Section XII regarding the student's option to withdraw.

Appeal to Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs: Appeals to the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs are available under two circumstances:

1. the student wishes to appeal a prescribed plan of remediation, suspension or dismissal, but was disqualified from reconsideration by SPAC because the student had no new information, or

2. the student had a reconsideration hearing with SPAC and desires to appeal the outcome of the reconsideration.

Upon receipt of a student's notice of intent to appeal a prescribed plan of remediation, suspension or dismissal, the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs will convene and chair an *ad hoc* committee comprised of three faculty members not serving on SPAC. The chair and *ad hoc* committee will meet with the student within 10 business days of receiving the student's appeal.

- The meeting with the student is limited to the student and appropriate university representatives including the student's Learning Community Mentor. The student may not have an adviser present during the meeting.
- The student will have an opportunity to make an opening and closing statement and to take notes during the meeting.
- The student may submit written materials to the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in advance of or at the meeting.
- The student will not be permitted to be present during discussions or deliberations of the *ad hoc* committee.

The Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs and the *ad hoc* committee are entitled to review the student's complete academic record as well as all information available to SPAC during prior SPAC hearing(s) and are entitled to independently determine the action(s) appropriate in the student's case (including determining that a more severe consequence is warranted). The Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs and the *ad hoc* committee will make a recommendation to the dean. Actions of the dean are final.

**XII. Withdrawal**—A student who has been recommended for dismissal by SPAC may request to withdraw from the college at any point prior to the dean's final decision. A student's request to withdraw after the committee has initially recommended dismissal can be granted by the chair of the committee in consultation with the Executive Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. If a student requests to withdraw after the committee upholds its original recommendation for dismissal, permission must be granted by the dean. In cases of ethical or academic misconduct, the request to withdraw must always include the approval of the dean. A student's approved withdrawal is considered as permanent and not reversible.

**XIII. Probation After Successful Appeal of Dismissal**—Students whose academic dismissal is reversed by successful appeal and who are permitted to repeat coursework will be placed on probation and will automatically be dismissed if they receive a grade of *F* (fail), or an unsatisfactory competency evaluation in any block, course, or clerkship during the time on probation. If the coursework is satisfactorily completed, students will continue on probation for an additional calendar year, at which time the student may be removed from probation by favorable action of SPAC. Students who are allowed to repeat fourth-year coursework will remain on probation until they have successfully completed all of the requirements for graduation.

Students whose dismissal for deficits in the competency of professionalism is reversed by successful appeal and who are permitted to continue in their training will be on probation and may be dismissed automatically if further unprofessional behavior is identified by SPAC.

Any voting member of SPAC who has had extensive direct involvement in a matter under review by SPAC, which involvement could constitute a conflict for such member, shall recuse himself or herself from voting on such a matter. SPAC is charged with the responsibility of making decisions about the standards and procedures relating to student evaluation, advancement, graduation, and academic action including dismissal and applying such standards and procedures to students. Academic and professional performance will be evaluated by a variety of methods approved by faculty committees governing the curriculum, described in each course or clerkship syllabus, and will include not only formal examinations but also assessments based on observation of student performance in lectures, examinations, laboratories, and all other clinical and academic settings of the university or clerkships.

#### **Coordination between SPAC and the Nova Southeastern University Office of Student Affairs**

In addition to the activities described above, SPAC will review situations involving medical students that have been adjudicated through the university procedure for violations of university rules, such as NSU's Code of Student Conduct. University officials in the Nova Southeastern University Office of Student Affairs (or other university officials, as applicable) and the members of SPAC will coordinate and keep one another informed of pertinent violations by medical students under this policy. SPAC may impose additional academic sanctions on such student, in accordance with the policies and practices of NSU MD as well as customary practices among medical schools.

In circumstances where it is unclear whether student conduct is subject to NSU's Code of Student Conduct, or is more appropriately subject to this policy, the university Office of Student Affairs and the NSU MD Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will discuss the situation to determine the appropriate process to apply in reaching an appropriate resolution.