

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA  
MEDICAL CENTER  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

**Scholastic Evaluation Committee  
Guidelines**

**2009 - 2010 Academic Year**

**Class of 2013**

**Class of 2012**

**Class of 2011**

**Class of 2010**

The Scholastic Evaluation Committee (SEC) is a standing committee of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Medicine, with the responsibility and prerogative for determining the fitness of a student to continue in the College of Medicine. Any student, who by quality of work, by conduct, or other reason indicates unfitness to enter the practice of medicine, may be dismissed from the College.

The guidelines that follow detail the working policies of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee. The criteria set forth in this document are guidelines for determining Scholastic Evaluation Committee recommendations; each student case requiring action by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee will be considered on its own merits.

### Charge, Structure and Action of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee

**Role:** The primary responsibilities of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee are the evaluation of student academic performance and progress as well as the recommendation of scholastic criteria for consideration and incorporation into these guidelines. Secondary responsibilities include providing feedback on student performance to the Admissions and Curriculum Committees as well as reviewing and making recommendations concerning candidates for degrees and honors programs.

**Composition:** The Scholastic Evaluation Committee consists of representative faculty members in the cores or clerkships for which evaluation is required, a house officer and a student. The Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student and Multicultural Affairs, the Director of the Curriculum Development Office and the Director of the Student Counseling Center, are non-voting members.

**Considerations:** In evaluating student performance and progress, the Scholastic Evaluation Committee reviews data related to examinations, clinical competence, and the Professionalism Checklist. The Committee takes into account such matters as fund of knowledge, ability to organize and logically present information, test-taking skills, understanding and judgment, clinical skills and professional behavior.

Furthermore, when reviewing students in academic difficulty, the Scholastic Evaluation Committee may seek information about the student's personal and psychological adjustment as well as financial status.

**Objectives:** The Scholastic Evaluation Committee's objective is to identify students with weak performance as early as possible in an academic period and assist those students to achieve success. Some of the mechanisms used to achieve these objectives are: "On Review" letters, Academic Probation letters, counseling with the Scholastic Evaluation Committee Advisory Board, meeting

with the Director of the Student Counseling Center, and possible enrollment in the Academic Success Program.

**Reporting Procedure:** The Scholastic Evaluation Committee meets regularly to evaluate student progress. All recommendations (academic probation, termination, honors, etc.) of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee are forwarded to the Dean of the College of Medicine for action.

### Guidelines

#### **GRADES:**

The grading system is as follows: Honors (H), High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Marginal (M), Fail (F) and Incomplete (I).

**Honors:** Reserved for approximately 10% of the best performers in cores and 20% of the best performers in clerkships.

**High Pass:** Reserved for approximately 20% of high performers in cores or clerkships.

**Pass:** Most students in any core or clerkship are expected to receive a grade of Pass.

**Marginal:** A grade of Marginal indicates performance that is below standard that may subject the student to remedial or termination action.

**Fail:** A grade of Fail indicates unsatisfactory performance. Since promotion or graduation cannot occur with any grade of Fail, repetition is required for grades of Fail.

**Incomplete:** A core or clerkship, which, for good reason, has not been completed at the end of the term, but in which progress has been satisfactory, may be reported as Incomplete (I). A grade of Incomplete cannot be used as a method of remediation of marginal or failing performance in a core/clerkship. A core or clerkship issuing a grade of Incomplete will indicate, in writing, with a copy to the student and to the Scholastic Evaluation Committee, how the Incomplete is to be removed. The core/clerkship director must enact a plan that can be completed by the end of the term following the one in which the Incomplete was received. Failure to remove the Incomplete by the end of the following term will result in the grade automatically being converted to a Fail. Core or clerkship directors may petition the Scholastic Evaluation Committee to make individual exceptions to this rule.

#### **ON REVIEW:**

The Scholastic Evaluation Committee uses the designation of "On Review" to indicate a student whose performance is marginal during the course of the

academic year. This may include, but not be limited to, performance on a single examination that is more than 1.5 standard deviations below the class mean, or performance in a core or clerkship. Students “On Review” will be advised of their status and they will be required to discuss any difficulties with the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. They may also be required to enroll in the Academic Success Program.

The academic performance of students “On Review” will be reviewed following the posting of core or clerkship grades. Students may be removed from “On Review” with consistent improvement in academic performance or be placed on Academic Probation if their performance remains sub-standard.

### **ACADEMIC PROBATION:**

Academic Probation may be imposed in any instance in which academic work and/or professional conduct has been or is unsatisfactory. This may include, but not be limited to, marginal and/or failing performance in a core or clerkship. While on Academic Probation, the student, while enrolled in classes, is prohibited from engaging in employment at UNMC and holding University-related elected offices or appointed positions. Students may not participate in summer research programs while on Academic Probation.

The performance of students on Academic Probation will be reviewed at the end of the academic year. Academic Probation may be removed at the discretion of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee if improvement in performance has been demonstrated. Students will not be recommended for graduation while on Academic Probation.

### **REPORTING PROCESS:**

Core and clerkship directors must provide the Scholastic Evaluation Committee with a written description of the decision-making process used to assign Marginal or Fail grades. This description should include any information given to students during the course of the core/clerkship describing examination and grading policies and any information (in addition to achievement scores on examinations) that was used in the decision-making process of assigning the final grade.

## **EXAMINATIONS**

### **Comprehensive Examination (M1 Students):**

Passage of all cores and all subsections of the Comprehensive Examination is a requirement for promotion to the second year. This examination is given at the end of the first year. Scores are reported as Pass or Fail overall and for each subsection. Students who fail one subsection of the comprehensive examination are given an opportunity to sit for that subsection of the examination toward the end of May. Students who fail more than one subsection of the comprehensive examination will be given the opportunity to retest prior to the start of the second year.

A student is required to pass the subsections of the comprehensive examination on the second occasion. Failure to do so will incur an obligation to repeat the first year in its entirety. Students who repeat a year of medical school must pass all subsections of the comprehensive examination for that year whether or not they passed the examination previously.

**USMLE Step 1 (M2 Students):**

Passage of USMLE Step 1 is a requirement for graduation from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. All students must take the examination before entering the junior year clerkships. Students who fail will be expected to re-take the examination within 90 days of receipt of the failing grade.

**First Time Failure:** First time failure of the examination will result in Academic Probation and automatic review by the Committee of the students' performance and any extenuating circumstances. Possible actions may include remediation of a core, participation in a board review course, or repetition of the academic year.

If a student is currently enrolled in the twelve-week Internal Medicine Clerkship, the student will be removed from the clerkship. In the case of a six or eight week clerkship, removal from the clerkship will be dependent upon consultation with the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. This action may result in a delay of graduation.

**Second Time Failure:** Second time failure of the examination will result in the student being removed from clinical rotations for a period of six months, placed on an extended leave of absence and strongly urged to enroll in a board review course.

**Third Time Failure:** Third time failure of the examination will result in termination of enrollment.

Students enrolled in a special program that requires a passing score on USMLE Step 1, as a condition for advancement into that medical curriculum (e.g. oral surgery), must meet the requirements for passing the examination as prescribed by the program.

**OSCE (M4 Students):**

Passage of the OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) is a graduation requirement. Students who fail the Senior OSCE have an opportunity for a make-up examination. Students who fail to pass the make-up Senior OSCE must remediate the failure by a proposed course of study that meets the approval of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee.

## **REMEDIATION OF MARGINAL AND/OR FAILING GRADES**

The Scholastic Evaluation Committee considers the following criteria as primary justifications for requiring the remediation of a core, clerkship or the entire academic year:

### **Remediation of One Core/Clerkship:**

1. A grade of Fail in a core (M1 and M2 students).
2. A grade of Marginal in a M1 core and failure to pass the Comprehensive Examination or subsection pertaining to failed core on the first attempt.
3. A grade of Marginal in two or more M1 or M2 cores in a single academic year.
4. A grade of Fail in a clerkship/elective (M3 and M4 students).

In the case of a single grade of Fail in a core, the Scholastic Evaluation Committee may permit the student to take a remedial course of study in an equivalent summer enrollment if the course is approved by the core director who assigned the failing grade.

In the case of a single grade of Fail in a clerkship or elective, the clerkship or elective must be repeated within one year (M3 students) or six months (M4 students) with departmental and Scholastic Evaluation Committee approval.

In the case of two grades of Marginal in a clerkship or elective, both clerkships and/or electives must be repeated within one year (M3 students or M4 students). This action may result in a delay of graduation.

Any summer courses that are permitted by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee must be completed and passed in time for the student to take the next appropriate examination (Comprehensive Examination for M1 students or USMLE Step 1 for M2 students).

The only acceptable grade for a core or clerkship being remediated is Pass. A grade of Marginal or Fail upon remediation is not acceptable and will result in termination of enrollment. Students remediating cores, clerkships or electives cannot obtain grades of High Pass or Honors.

The following are guidelines for students who are required to repeat a single core outside of the normal course schedule, i.e. summer remediation.

1. The student must re-register for the repeated core and will be charged tuition at the current graduate rate per credit hour.
2. The grading system will be Pass/Fail. Grades of Honors and High Pass are not permitted for repeated cores.
3. Repeat performance must be a level above one standard deviation below the mean of the performance of the class in the original core.

4. The core director must submit to the Chair of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee a written description of the proposed content of the remediated core and a timetable for completion of the core to be approved by the Chair of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee and the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs before implementation. The core director will be responsible for the format and content of the core. The core content should address the specific knowledge deficits of the student if these can be identified
5. The grade for the repeated core will be permanently recorded on the students' transcript along with the original core grade.
6. The final percentage score and resulting z-score ranking of the student will be determined from the average of the initial and repeated attempts at the core.
7. A student required to repeat a core in the second year will be required to delay USMLE Step 1 until the core has been successfully remediated. Progression into clerkships may be delayed in order to accommodate core remediation and preparation for the examination. Delays in progression into the third year may require a delay in graduation.

**Repetition of an Academic Year:**

1. Failure to pass any section of the Comprehensive Examination on the second attempt (M1 students).
2. One grade of Fail in the M1 year, coupled with an overall z-score in all six (6) M1 cores of -1.75 or lower.
3. Two grades of Marginal in the M1 year, coupled with an overall z-score in all six (6) M1 cores of -1.75 or lower.
4. One grade of Fail in the M2 year, coupled with an overall z-score in all seven (7) cores of -1.85 or lower.
5. Two grades of Marginal in the M2 year, coupled with an overall z-score in all seven (7) cores of -1.85 or lower.
6. One grade of Fail and two or more grades of Marginal during the same academic year (M1 and M2 students).
7. Two or more grades of Fail during the same academic year (M1, M2, and M3 students).
8. Three or more grades of Marginal during the same academic year (M1, M2, and M3 students).

Repetition of a year will require repeating the entire course load for the repeated year and earning a grade of Pass in all repeated cores/clerkships or any core that resulted in a grade of "audit." Repeated cores with prior grades must be passed at a level greater than -1 standard deviation. Repetition of a single core and/or clerkship is not an option while repeating the year.

Grades of Marginal and Fail received in the initial enrollment will be part of the students' transcript; they will remain despite re-registration and repetition. The

final percentage and resulting z-score ranking in the core will be average of the initial and repeated attempts at the core (M1 and M2 students only).

The following are guidelines for students who are required to repeat cores/clerkships during the normal course schedule, i.e. repetition of an academic year:

1. The student must re-register for the repeated cores/clerkships and will be charged tuition at the current rate for that academic year.
2. The content, format and grading procedure applied to the student for the repeated cores/clerkships will be the same as administered to the class as a whole. Grades of Honors and High Pass are not permitted for repeated cores.
3. Grades for repeated cores/clerkships will be permanently recorded on the transcript along with the original core/clerkship grade.
4. The final percentage core and resulting z-score ranking of the student will be determined from the average of the initial and repeated attempts at the cores.
5. A student required to repeat the entire second year must delay USMLE Step 1 until the repetition has been successfully completed.

#### **TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT:**

The Scholastic Evaluation Committee considers the following as primary justifications for recommending the termination of enrollment of students for performance in an academic year:

1. Failure to obtain a grade of Pass in a repeated core, clerkship or elective, even if the original grade was "audit."
2. Failure to obtain a grade of Pass in all repeated cores, clerkships or electives during repetition of an entire academic year.
3. Failure to pass the Comprehensive Examination after repeating the year (M1 students).
4. A third failure on USMLE Step 1.
5. Grades of Marginal or Fail requiring remediation of more than one entire academic year.
6. Documentation of unprofessional behavior.

#### **EXTENDED COURSE OF STUDY:**

The normal medical curriculum is expected to be completed in four years. An extended course of study is not intended as an elected alternative pathway for the medical curriculum. The course of study to complete the M.D. degree is limited to five years.

Extension beyond the five year limit will be permitted only under unusual circumstances. Extension beyond the five year limit will not be considered for students "On Review" or "Academic Probation" status.

Students, who are in good standing, but because of family, personal or financial problems, are unable to complete the normal curriculum, may be moved from the regular program to an extended course of study only with prior approval of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

Students may be granted a Leave of Absence (LOA) from medical school. Leaves of Absence are granted for academic, medical or personal reasons by the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs.

The following guidelines apply to all requests for a Leave of Absence. The student must request the Leave of Absence in writing. The request should describe, in detail, the rationale for requesting the Leave of Absence and should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs.

Any such Leave of Absence granted shall be solely based upon the merits of the request, and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students who are considering requesting a Leave of Absence should discuss this request with their academic advisor and with the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs.

Requests for a Leave of Absence from students who are not in good standing may be referred to the Scholastic Evaluation Committee. This would include any student on Academic Probation or students with failing grades in core examinations, junior clerkships or senior electives. If the Scholastic Evaluation Committee grants such a Leave of Absence, it may require specific actions to be completed by the student as a condition for return to classes at a later date.

In the case of a medical Leave of Absence, the Scholastic Evaluation Committee may require documentation from a physician stating the student's fitness to return to the medical curriculum, before the student is allowed to return.

A student who is the subject of an involuntary dismissal from medical school, for any reason, including but not limited to, academic performance or disciplinary action, is ineligible to invoke the procedures contained in the Leave of Absence policy.

The student is responsible for initiating determination of the financial consequences of taking a Leave of Absence. Financial obligations regarding tuition payment and loan repayment need to be reviewed with the Director of Financial Aid.

If a Leave of Absence is granted, the student will be required to return no later than the beginning of the next academic year, unless a shorter time is specified. It will be up to the discretion of the core, clerkship or clinical elective director to

assign a grade of Withdraw Passing (WP) or Withdraw Failing (WF) if the Leave of Absence occurs before the end of a core, clerkship or clinical elective. Extension of a Leave of Absence for longer than one year will require a request, in writing, directed to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. Approval will depend upon the strength of the rationale for the request.

Students who have been granted a Leave of Absence are responsible for notifying the office of Admissions and Students of their intentions to return to classes on the appointed date no later than two months before the start of classes. If not so notified, the students' place in the class will be forfeited. Re-entry into the College of Medicine would require re-application through the usual admissions process of the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS).

Students who withdraw from the College of Medicine with an official Leave of Absence will be required to approach the college through the regular admissions/application process, i.e. through AMCAS.

Students who withdraw from the College of Medicine in poor academic standing or are dismissed from the College of Medicine by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee are not eligible for re-admission to the College of Medicine.

Upon re-enrollment following a Leave of Absence, the student will be subject to all rules and regulations that pertain to the class being joined. In the case of mid-year graduates, i.e. December, the student is considered part of the class of the calendar year in which the student graduates. The rules, regulations and graduation requirements may differ from those for the class into which the student initially matriculated.

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE:**

Any student with academic difficulty manifested by grades of less than Pass, failure of the Comprehensive Examination, USMLE Step 1, and/or questionable behavior, will be subject to thorough review by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee.

The invitation to appear before the Committee will be extended to any student whose academic deficiencies are of major proportions. This includes students for whom such actions as termination of enrollment, repetition of an academic year or other major alterations in progress are likely possibilities. In less severe cases, written statements provided by the student or supplied by others to clarify extenuating circumstances may be sufficient for the review process.

All student appearances before the Committee shall be arranged by the Office of Admissions and Students and are confirmed in writing or by E-mail prior to the meeting. Likewise, the presence of an advisor or counselor for the student is permitted if prior arrangements with the Chair of the Scholastic Evaluation

Committee have been made. The purposes of providing the student access to the Committee are to guarantee that all information required by the Committee is provided and to reassure the student that judgment will not have been rendered in a remote or impersonal manner.

**APPEAL PROCEDURES:**

Students recommended for dismissal or repeat of a year by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee for failure to meet academic or professional standards, who believe that extenuating circumstances in their lives may have been overlooked or misinterpreted to the Scholastic Evaluation Committee, or who can provide information not otherwise available to the Scholastic Evaluation Committee, have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeal Board appointed by the Dean of the College of Medicine. An appeal must be made, in writing, within two weeks after receiving notification of the recommendation of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee. A student cannot continue in classes and/or clerkships, pending an appeal.

The Appeal Board shall consist of four members of the full-time faculty from the College of Medicine and one medical student, all with equal voting status. The Board shall not include current members of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee or other individuals who might have a conflict of interest.

The members of the Appeal Board shall select one of the members as Chairperson in a manner agreed upon by the members. The Chairperson shall, in all cases, vote as a member of the Board.

If a student requests a personal appearance before the Appeal Board, the request shall be granted. The student requesting an appeal will be given at least one week's notice about the time and place of the hearing, the membership of the Appeal Board and the procedures to be followed.

An advisor or counselor of choice may accompany the student wishing to appear personally before the Appeal Board. The name of the advisor must be provided to the Office of Admissions and Students at least 72 hours before the hearing. The role of the advisor, unless the Chairperson of the Board specifically permits, shall be limited to assisting the student. In addition, legal counsel may also accompany the student. In this case, the student must provide this information to the Office of Admissions and Students at least one week in advance of the hearing. The Appeal Board may have the assistance of counsel for the University to advise the Board on procedural and other matters.

The Chairperson of the Appeal Board shall determine the order of the hearing, will direct questioning of the student, if present, and any other witnesses, if present, and ensure that the student and an advisor, if present, and any other individuals appearing before the Appeal Board are treated fairly.

The Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, who is a non-voting member of the Appeal Board, shall act as Secretary to the Board. The secretary shall keep minutes of the Board's proceedings. Although it will not be necessary to provide a verbatim transcript of testimony before the Board, either the student or the Appeal Board may request that the proceedings be audio recorded. Requests by students must be made 72 hours before the meeting. If the Appeal Board requests an audio recording of a meeting, the student shall be notified prior to the meeting. If a request for an audio recording of the meeting is made, the secretary shall arrange for audio recording of the student's testimony and the testimony of any other witnesses and also prepare a digest of the hearing. Deliberations of the Appeal Board will not be audio recorded. The student shall have access to the recording of the testimony and the testimony of any other witnesses that appear before the Board and to the digest.

After consideration of all the presented written and/or oral testimony, the Appeal Board shall determine by secret ballot, either to sustain the original recommendation of the Scholastic Evaluation Committee or recommend its abrogation or modification. The decision of the Appeal Board, which will be based solely on the results of the investigation and, if a hearing has been held, the evidence presented at the hearing, shall be presented to the Dean of the College of Medicine as a recommendation. The Dean shall make the final decision.

In cases in which a student is reinstated as a result of the Appeal Board recommendation, a program of remediation to meet the academic expectations of the faculty shall be developed by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee. The proposed program for remediation may come from a recommendation of the Appeal Board and also may become part of the action recommended by the Dean. Further appeal by the student to the Dean shall be limited to matters of procedure and fairness and shall not involve merits of the case.

Approved by the Scholastic Evaluation Committee  
August 7, 2007