Policy Title: Medical Student Promotion, Dismissal, and Graduation

Policy Number: SE.09.02.170808

Applies to: All medical students in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine (ESFCOM)

Date: 8/8/2017

1.0 Policy Statement:
It is the ESFCOM policy to monitor appropriate student progress in meeting standards for promotion, the granting of the MD degree, and the actions that might occur (remediation, repetition, dismissal and graduation).

2.0 Definitions
Academic Warning: A decision by SEPAC designed to bring a student considered at risk from ongoing academic lapses to the attention of those who might help the student overcome his or her difficulties.
Adverse Ruling: A SEPAC decision to impose probation, remediation, repetition, dismissal or to not recommend a student for promotion or graduation.
Dismissal: Permanent separation from the ESFCOM.
Dean: The ESFCOM dean.
Component: Segments of a course all of which need to be passed by the student in order to successfully pass that course.
MSPE: Medical Student Performance Evaluation, also known as the “Dean’s letter”, is a comprehensive assessment of your performance in achieving the educational objectives of the medical school. It is not a letter of recommendation.”
NBME (National Board of Medical Examiners): A standardized national test to assess knowledge gained in a particular clerkship.
Notification of Concern: As described in the foundational and clinical syllabi, an internal communication to the student from component, course, clerkship or elective directors who have the option of transmitting this information to SEPAC.
OSCE: An objective structured clinical examination designed to test skills required to perform in clinical settings.
Probation: An action imposed on the basis of academic concerns including professionalism concerns resulting in restrictions and correction needed in order to avert dismissal.
Professionalism: A set of attitudes, behaviors and expectations as defined in the ESFCOM Medical Student Handbook and Honor Code to which a student must demonstrate in academic settings (courses / clerkships), co-curricular activities and public forums.
Readmission: The process whereby former students who withdrew while in good standing seek to re-enter the ESFCOM.
Remediation: An academic activity to remove a deficiency as determined by the SEPAC after consideration of a course, clerkship or course director recommendation, an
assessment of a student's overall academic performance, a student's written request or other factors deemed relevant.  

**Repetition:** Retaking part or all of an academic year due to substandard academic performance, usually following unsuccessful deficiency remediation with SEPAC determining whether the process requires concurrent or sequential repetition of other courses or clerkships.  

**SEPAC:** The Student Evaluation, Promotions and Awards Committee (SEPAC) which functions to monitor the progress of students throughout the medical education program. While the majority of SEPAC time is spent evaluating student progress, the committee also makes decisions regarding superior academic achievement and awards.  

**USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Exam)** A national licensing exam divided into steps given at different stages of training. For medical students, the steps are:  

- Step 1 assesses fund of knowledge from the Foundational years  
- Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) assesses fund of clinical knowledge  
- Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS) assesses skills garnered in clerkships and electives  

3.0 **Responsibilities**  
Chair, SEPAC  
Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience  

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I. **General Principles**  

**SEPAC Meetings**  
- SEPAC meets quarterly to review student academic progress.  
- Ad hoc SEPAC meetings may also be held to address specific concerns regarding a student’s academic progress.  

**Progress through the Academic Curriculum**  
- Students must successfully complete one academic year to be promoted to the next sequential year.  
- Students must pass all components within a course to pass that course in the Foundational years.  
- Students must receive permission from the school to take USMLE Step 1 and must pass it by the end of their third year.
• Students must pass the clinical portion which includes the exam for the clerkship or elective in the clinical years.
• Students must adhere to the professional standards of the college.

**Actions Available to SEPAC**

• Recommendations for awards, promotion and graduation
• Academic warning
• Probation
• Remediation
• Repetition
• Dismissal

**Student Appearance at SEPAC**

• The Committee may mandate an in-person meeting with the student.
• Students may request to appear before the Committee in person or in writing.
• When appearing before SEPAC, a student may choose to be accompanied to the meeting by one specific advocate (a faculty member, a staff member, or a fellow student) but the advocate is not allowed to speak on behalf of the student at the meeting.

**II. Promotions**

**Response to Notifications of Concern**

• The ESFCOM has a system in place for faculty to be able to give a student a notification of concern. Examples include:
  1. In the Foundational Curriculum, a student may receive a notification of concern for missing a required session or being late in completing an assignment.
  2. In the Clinical Curriculum, a student may receive a Notice of Concern for missing a required session or because of unprofessional or unethical behavior with a patient or a preceptor.
• Faculty have the option of transmitting notifications of concerns to SEPAC.
• If so informed, SEPAC will use this information in its discussion of the student's overall performance as part of its decision making.

**Response to Reports of Violations of the Honor Code**

Irrespective of performance in courses, satisfactory performance throughout the medical education program requires adherence to professional standards, specifically ESFCOM’s Honor Code.

• Reports regarding breeches in professionalism or ethics can reach SEPAC from administration, faculty, staff, students, or patients.
• If so informed, SEPAC will use this information in its discussion of the student's overall performance.
• Failure to adhere to standards may result in disciplinary actions ranging from Academic warning to dismissal.
**Academic Issues**
While the Curriculum Committee sets course objectives, pass-fail parameters and remediation approaches, it is SEPAC which makes the progress, probation and resolution decisions. This occurs after a thorough review of an individual student's performance in components, courses or clerkships.

**Pertaining to a Grade of Incomplete**
- Students receiving a grade of Incomplete in a course will be monitored by SEPAC until the grade of Incomplete is removed from the student’s record.
- The course director responsible will provide documentation to SEPAC of resolution of the grade of Incomplete.
- Pending resolution, the student with a grade of Incomplete is considered in good academic standing and has no clinical restrictions.

**Procedures Pertaining to Course or Standardized Test Failures**

*Failures in M1 or M2 Year (Foundational years)*
- If a student fails one course, the student must undergo remediation. If the student then fails the remediation attempt, the student must repeat the current academic year.
- If a student fails two or more courses within one academic year, the student must repeat that academic year.
- If a student fails one course in the repeated academic year, the student will be dismissed.

*Failures in M3 or M4 (Clinical years)*
- If a student fails a clerkship quarter or elective, the student must remediate by repeating that quarter or elective.
- If a student fails two clerkship quarters or electives in one academic year, the student must repeat the clinical academic year.
- If student fails remediation, the student will be dismissed.

*Failures across academic years 1-4*
- If a student fails three or more courses during the entire medical education program, the student will be dismissed.

**USMLE Failures**
- Students must pass USMLE Step 1 before the end of the third year.
- To progress to residency, students must pass USMLE Step 2 CK and CS.
- Inability to pass USMLE Step 1 within three attempts will result in dismissal.
- Inability to pass USMLE Step 2 CK or CS within three attempts will result in dismissal.
III. Academic Warning and Probation

Academic Warning
SEPAC may place a student on Academic Warning for:
- Concerns about academic risk.
- Failure to pass USMLE Step 1 or Step 2 CS or CK.
- Failure to pass a OSCE in the clinical years.

SEPAC's purpose for an Academic Warning is to refocus the student's efforts to succeed.
- Students will be advised to seek input from faculty and counseling if deemed necessary.
- Students may be encouraged to temporarily suspend extracurricular activities.
- Students will remain in good academic standing.
- Academic Warnings will not be noted in the MSPE letter.

Probation
SEPAC may impose probation for any of the following:
- Failing grade
- Honor code violations

Procedures and Processes for Probation
- Students on probation are not in good academic standing.
- A note about probation will appear in the MSPE letter.
- SEPAC may impose other specific conditions of probation.
- Duration of probation is determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Probation may need to be reported to state licensing boards.
- Additional academic or professionalism deficiencies while on probation may lead to immediate dismissal.

Resolution of Academic Warning or Probation
- SEPAC reviews students on academic warning or probation at each session.
- Meeting SEPAC's requirements may return the student to good academic standing.
- Student must be in good academic standing in order to graduate.

IV. Dismissal

Reasons for Dismissal may include:
- Student unable to meet the promotion standards to a given academic level.
- Student receiving a grade of Fail in a course being repeated.
- Student requiring more than one repeated year to meet promotion standards.
- Student unable to achieve a passing score on USMLE Step 1 or USMLE Step 2 CK and CS within three attempts.
- Student exhibiting unprofessional or unethical behavior that violates the Honor Code.
V. Notification of Adverse Rulings

- Notification to the student and the Dean of a SEPAC's adverse ruling is emailed to the student (using the student’s WSU email address) and the Dean within ten (10) business days of the ruling.
- Students must acknowledge receipt of adverse rulings by email within ten (10) business days of the notification being sent.
- The decision of SEPAC is final unless appealed as specified below.

VI. Appeal of Adverse Rulings

The procedures outline the steps a student must take to appeal an adverse ruling.

However, these procedures do not apply to academic grievances related to grades or instruction. For those steps to follow in appealing grades or academic instruction, refer to WSU Academic Regulations, Sections 104 and 105: Academic Complaint Procedures (http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations).

Primary Appeal Procedure

- Within ten (10) business days of notification of an adverse ruling, a student must file a formal written appeal with SEPAC and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
- The aggrieved student must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to ensure factual accuracy of the basis for appeal, review the processes and procedures, and anticipate preparation of documentation for the committee meeting.
- In the written appeal, the student must describe the rationale for the grievance in detail and propose a resolution.
- An ad hoc group of SEPAC, including the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the SEPAC Chair, and one member of the committee will perform a comprehensive review to investigate the grievance to be completed within ten (10) business days of the receipts of the written appeal.
- At a specially called SEPAC meeting, the ad hoc group presents the student's written statement and any supporting documentation, and the ad hoc group's investigatory summary.
- SEPAC may request an appearance of the student at this meeting.
- If asked to appear, the student may be accompanied by a faculty member of the student’s choice who might provide advice to the student but will not present to the committee.
- Within ten (10) business days of this meeting, SEPAC will provide its written decision to the student.
- The decision of SEPAC is final unless appealed to the Dean.
- The student continues in the curriculum until the appeal process is exhausted, unless the student's continuance poses a safety concern.
Secondary Appeal Procedure

- Within ten (10) business days following receipt of SEPAC's primary appeal decision, the student may file a written secondary appeal to the Dean and notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs of this secondary appeal.
- The student's appeal portfolio must include a justification statement for secondary appeal and all documentation provided to the committee.
- The student may seek advice regarding constructing the appeal portfolio from a faculty member of the student’s own choice.
- Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the Dean may elect to:
  1. Take no action, allowing the committee decision to stand;
  2. Modify the decision;
  3. Make an alternate decision; or
  4. Impanel an ad hoc committee to re-examine the grievance and make recommendations.
- If an ad hoc committee is impaneled, it will be composed of three ESFCOM faculty members appointed by the Dean.
- The committee will have full investigative authority and make recommendations directly to the Dean.
- At the discretion of the Dean, a face-to-face meeting with the aggrieved student may be required.
- A faculty member of the student's choosing may accompany the student in face-to-face meetings with the Dean and/or ad hoc committee.
- Within twenty (20) business days from receipt of the student’s appeal, the Dean will provide a written decision to the student, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Chair of SEPAC.
- The decision of the Dean is final unless appealed to the Graduate School.
- The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will meet with the student to inform the student of the Dean’s decision.
- At the next scheduled SEPAC meeting, the Chair will present the decision of the Dean for entry into the minutes.

Tertiary Appeal Procedure

- Within 15 (15) calendar days of the Dean's decision, the student may file a formal written tertiary appeal to the Graduate School Dean as provided in the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- The student may contact the Graduate School Dean at gsdean@wsu.edu, 509-335-6412.
- It is not in the purview of Graduate School Dean to overturn whether a professional conduct or academic integrity violation as defined by ESFCOM occurred, rather, it is to investigate if processes or procedures were not followed.

VII. Graduation
The complete ESFCOM Specification of Degree Requirements for Graduation with the MD Degree approved by Academic Affairs Committee (02/28/2017) can currently be found on SharePoint. The file's location is subject to change.
Procedure
In making decisions regarding the granting of the MD degree, SEPAC will follow the requirements established by the ESFCOM faculty. The requirements are outlined below:

To graduate with the Doctor of Medicine degree, ESFCOM students must:
- Be at least 21 years of age at the time the degree is awarded.
- Pass all required first and second year Foundations of Medical Science courses.
- Pass all components of the Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships.
- Pass one sub internship clinical rotation.
- Pass the clinical rotation in Emergency Medicine and pass either the clinical rotation in Rural Medicine or the clinical rotation in Underserved Medicine.
- Pass any six additional clinical rotations.
- Take and pass USMLE Step 1, Step 2 (CS) and Step 2 (CK) within the allotted number of attempts for each.
- Complete the ESFCOM Leadership in Medicine and Healthcare Certificate.
- Complete a scholarly project.
- Complete all requirements within six consecutive academic years.
- Receive SEPAC's and the Dean’s recommendations for graduation and receipt of the MD degree.

To complete the MD degree, students must remain in compliance with the following standards:
- Medical health requirements and Immunizations;
- Data security and privacy (HIPAA) training;
- Maintenance of consistent evidence of professionalism as assessed by the SEPAC; and
- Satisfaction of technical, non-academic standards that include observation, communication, motor, intellectual (conceptual, integrative and quantitative), behavioral/social, and task completion skills.

Degrees will be conferred once a year on Commencement Day in the spring. Students completing requirements for a degree prior to their scheduled degree conferral date will be conferred the degree on the official Commencement Day, but may request that the SEPAC provides a written confirmation that the student has met all graduation requirements.

These requirements may be changed at any time to ensure that all graduates meet the required qualifications of a practicing physician.

5.0 Related Policies
WSU Academic Regulations, Sections 104 and 105: Academic Complaint Procedures (http://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-regulations)
6.0  **Key Search Words**

| advancement, promotion, progress, fail, remediate, repeat, fail, academic warning, probation, dismissal, behavior, honor code, leave, withdraw, readmission |

7.0  **Revision History**

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**Responsible Office:**

Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience

**Policy Contact:**

Chair, SEPAC
Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience

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