

Grading and Promotion Committee Policies and Procedures *Final 7.5.16*

GRADING POLICIES

Promotions Policies & Procedures

1. Introduction

The responsibility for evaluation of students rests with the faculty of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. Faculty have an obligation to the students, to the school, and to the larger society to award passing grades only to those students who have demonstrated mastery of the course material. In addition to evaluation of students' knowledge and skills, the faculty has the obligation to determine whether students' behavior or conduct is suitable for the practice of medicine. It is inappropriate to allow a student to progress or graduate when unacceptable behavior or conduct in the treatment and care of patients and/or in relationships with staff and peers have been established, even if grades on tests or other forms of evaluation have been satisfactory.

The faculty of the School of Medicine has the responsibility for recommending students for promotion and graduation. This responsibility is administered through the Grading and Promotion Committee (GPC) that represents the faculty at large. Every attempt will be made to apply principles of fairness and due process when considering actions of the faculty or administration that might adversely affect the students. Comments, questions, and concerns should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs.

2. Students covered by this policy

These grading and promotions policies apply to students enrolled in the courses necessary to complete the requirements for the Doctor of Medicine degree in the TTUHSC School of Medicine. These policies do not cover the course work done for the other degree programs in which the student may be enrolled.

3. Responsibilities for monitoring of student progress:

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs in conjunction with the College Masters and the Associate Dean of Medical Education is responsible for monitoring the progress of medical students during their course of study in order to provide or refer students to the appropriate academic or personal counseling services, if applicable. The office of Student Affairs will provide staff support to the GPC and will maintain permanent minutes of GPC actions. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs serves as advocate for due process for students.

4. Responsibilities of the GPC

The GPC is a committee of the faculty appointed by the Dean with recommendations by the Faculty Council and is charged with the responsibility to review and evaluate the academic and behavioral progress of each medical student enrolled at TTUHSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. It is not a policy making body but rather applies the policies that are approved through the Curriculum Education Policy Committee and the Faculty Council.

5. Responsibilities of the Dean

The Dean, as the Chief Academic Officer, has the final responsibility for actions taken regarding a student. The initial recommendation and subsequent action for each student are delegated to the GPC. However, the Dean is responsible for executing the appeals process in which a final decision is made.

6. Grading and Promotion Committee

- a. The voting members of the Grading and Promotion committee consists of nine faculty, three basic scientists involved in teaching in the first and second year, three clinicians involved in teaching in the first and second year and three clinicians involved in teaching in the third and fourth year.
- b. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Director of Academic and Disability Support Services and the Associate Dean for Medical Education serve as ex-officio members, with voice but without vote.

- c. The chair is elected by the committee from its members.
- d. The proceedings of all meetings are held confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. The proceedings and decisions of the GPC are privileged information. GPC members may not discuss particular cases or the outcome with anyone outside the GPC.
- e. All committee decisions requiring a vote are determined by a simple majority vote with the Chair as a voting member. Five members of the committee constitute a quorum at a regular or called meeting. The Chair may, in urgent cases, consult with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs regarding an emergency leave of absence for a student in academic difficulty. The Chair and Associate Dean will set the conditions for return from a leave of absence, with approval of the Dean.
- f. Recusal – College masters that serve on the committee will recuse themselves for the vote of one of their college students. Likewise, a course director who is a committee member shall also recuse themselves if the student being considered had an unsuccessful outcome in their course.

7. Review of Year 1 and 2 coursework

All courses for the first two years at TTUHSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine are Pass/Fail. Please consult the individual course syllabi for specific grading policies for each course.

Progress of a student will be reviewed by the GPC at least at the end of each semester in the context of all course work, student's professionalism, evidence of progressive improvement and personal circumstances.

a. Semester Review – January of each year

Committee will consider all students after completion of the fall semester.

- i. If a student has passed all courses satisfactorily – no further discussion.
- ii. If a student is considered “at risk” they will be placed on academic watch level 1 or 2 at the discretion of the committee. (See Academic Standing policy). A proposed learning plan will be devised in order to strengthen identified deficiencies.
Definition of “at risk”:
 - a. Incomplete on any semester course:
 - a. SPM
 - i. One unit – Academic Watch level 1
 - ii. Two units – Academic Watch level 2
 - b. SCI, Medical Skills, Masters’ Colloquium
 - i. Academic Watch level 1
 - b. Course director identifies the student at risk based on performance on given disciplines or low test scores
 - c. College master concern
 - d. Professionalism concern
- iii. Failure of any semester course at the semester placed on Academic warning if repeating the year consideration by committee:
 - a. One semester course failure – consideration for either remediation as recommended by the course director or restarting the year at the next academic year
 - b. Two semester course failures – consideration for restarting the year at the next academic year or dismissal
 - c. Three or four semester course failures –Dismissal

b. Year Review of Progress

Committee will consider all students after completion of the spring semester.

- i. Year 1 students
 - a. If a student has passed all courses satisfactorily and passed the CEYE - promotion to second year.
 - b. If a student is “at risk” as defined below they will be placed on academic watch and remediation may be required :

- Incomplete on any semester course (see levels of academic watch above)
 - Course director identifies the student at risk based on performance on given disciplines or low test scores
 - College master concern
 - Professionalism concern
 - Failure on CEYE first attempt
- c. Failures –will be placed on Academic Warning if repeating the year or as considered by committee
- One semester course in year – repeat of year or individualized remediation
 - Two or more semester courses in year – repeat of year or dismissal
 - Failure of CEYE on 2 attempts – repeat of year or individualized remediation
 - Failure of three or more semester courses – dismissal
- c. Year 2 student
- i. If a student has passed all courses satisfactorily they are eligible to sit for Step 1 and promotion to third year.
 - ii. If a student is “at risk” as defined below they will be placed on academic watch and remediation may be required :
 - a. Incomplete on any semester course (see levels of academic watch above)
 - b. Course director identifies the student at risk based on performance on given disciplines or low test scores
 - c. College master concern
 - d. Professionalism concern
 - e. Failures – will be placed on Academic Warning if repeating the year or as considered by committee
 - One semester course in year – repeat of year or individualized remediation
 - Two semester courses in year – repeat of year or dismissal
 - Failure of three or more semester courses – dismissal
 - Failure of Step 1 on three attempts – dismissal
 - iii. Timeline – completion requirement for remediation:
 - a. Year 1 students - July 1 after completion of Year 1 (or prior to orientation of next Year 1)
 - b. Year 2 students - May 1 to complete the semester work, Must take Step 1 prior to Year 3 orientation in order to begin Year 3 on schedule; AND one calendar year after completion of year 2 to complete the three attempts of Step 1. (See 3d for GPC action if fails Step 1.)
 - c. Student must be available for scheduled remediations and may not attend off campus school related activities (SARP, other research) until they have successfully completed their requirements.
 - d. Students repeating a year – The Grading & Promotion requirement for a repeat year may be more restrictive than that for a first time student. The requirements will be defined in the individual student’s letter from the committee and must be adhered to.
 - e. The first 2 years of medical school must be completed within three years including leaves of absences or repeating of the year.

Important Notes:

Remediation is recommended by the course director and agreed to by the GPC.
 Students may be dismissed without academic watch or warning ever being designated.
 The GPC may also choose to remove “Good Standing” as a disciplinary action.

8. Grading & Promotions Committee (GPC) Review of Year 3 and 4

All courses for the Year 3 and 4 at TTUHSC Paul L. Foster School of Medicine are Honors/Pass/Fail. Progress of a student will be reviewed by the GPC after each block in the context of all course work, student’s professionalism, evidence of progressive improvement and personal circumstances. The GPC may place a student on academic watch or warning or revoke Good Standing if there are concerns regarding professionalism.

a. Grading and Promotion Committee Review for Year 3

If	Then
Failure of one clerkship: a. Fail clinical component OR b. Fail Professional component OR c. Fail 2 attempts at the NBME OR d. Fail 2 attempts at the OSCE	a. One month remediation in the fourth year in that discipline without receiving elective credit OR b. Repeat of third year OR c. Dismissal
Failure of two clerkship (same definition as above)	a. Remediation* OR b. Repeat of year OR c. Dismissal
Failure of the NBME in three different clerkships (on first attempt)	a. Remediation* OR b. Repeat of the third year OR c. Dismissal
Failure of three clerkships	a. Repeat of third year OR b. Dismissal
Rating of "Needs Improvement" in the same competency on three or more Clerkship Final assessments	a. Remediation* OR b. Repeat of third year OR c. Dismissal

*** The remedial work will not be counted as elective time in satisfying the conditions for graduation.**

b. Grading and Promotion Committee Review for Year 4

- i. Failure of a required or elective experience in the fourth year – review by GPC for remediation, repeat of year or dismissal.
- ii. Failure of more than one block in year 4 – review for remediation, repeat of the year or dismissal.
- iii. Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on first attempt – no review required by GPC but student must log a pass of CK and CS by May 1 in order to graduate in May.
- iv. Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on the second attempt – discussion by GPC of remediation and delay of graduation.
- v. Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on the third attempt - Dismissal.

9. Transcript notation

When a student receives a failing grade in a semester course that does not require a repeat of the year a grade of "F" (Fail) will be entered in the transcript with a notation of "Successfully Remediated" when the remediation is complete. If a student repeats a year, the transcript will list both attempts at the course with a "RP "(repeat) notation after the courses from the first attempt and the final grade of the second attempt at the course.

10. Documentation of Student Academic Performance

All grades will be recorded in Web-Raider for each student and will be available in the student's electronic portfolio. TTUHSC Office of the Registrar in Lubbock maintains the official transcript of all students.

11. Promotion Policies

Normal progression through the School of Medicine curriculum requires that a student demonstrate a consistently satisfactory level of performance and professional behavior. Students will be expected to complete the medical school curriculum within four (4) years of the initial date of matriculation.

The curriculum may be extended due to 1) a leave of absence, 2) academic difficulty requiring repetition of an academic year as per this policy. However, inability to complete Years One and Two of the curriculum in three years and/or the entire curriculum within six (6) years will result in dismissal.

12. General Issues

- a. The committee is not bound by categorical or arithmetic assessment of student performance but rather reviews each student in the context of his/her academic achievement and any other circumstances that may influence performance. If a student exhibits conduct or behavior inconsistent with a potential physician, a course or clerkship grade of Fail may be given. Such conduct or behavior that occurs beyond the boundaries of a class or rotation may also be considered by the GPC. In that case, the student will be referred for disposition of the case under the Code of Professional and Academic Conduct in the TTUHSC Paul L. Foster SOM Student Affairs Handbook.
- b. For a course being remediated, a transcript notation of "successfully remediated" will be attached to the original failing grade when successful remediation is accomplished.
- c. Failure to successfully remediate a course in Years 1 and 2 according to course standards before the start of the next academic year will result in repetition of the entire year in which the failure occurred.
- d. Final grades will be reviewed at the end of each semester. Students who receive a grade of Fail may meet with the GPC to discuss their academic performance and possible actions by the committee. For deliberations not delegated to the Chair and Chair-Elect, the Committee will be convened.
- e. If a student repeats an entire academic year, the new grades are recorded on the transcript in addition to the original ones.
- f. Students who are required to repeat an academic year may not take courses from the next academic year during the period of repetition.
- g. Students reviewed by the GPC will be notified in writing of the GPC decision with any stipulations for continuation in the curriculum.
- h. A final grade in each course or clerkship may be derived from the component scores. The components for evaluation are defined by each course or clerkship.
- i. Repetition of the clerkship and remedial work, as defined and prescribed above, will not be counted as elective time in satisfying the conditions for graduation.
- j. The completion of the medical school curriculum within the above standards and the approval of overall performance by the GPC are required for graduation. The Student Affairs Office will annually present to the Dean and HSC Registrar a list of candidates for receipt of the Doctor of Medicine Degree based on the above.

13. Notification of Students with Satisfactory Progress

The Office of Student Affairs will notify students in writing if they need to meet with the GPC and the outcome of their deliberations. All other students will proceed through the curriculum with no formal notice of promotion.

14. Deliberations of GPC

- a. Each student who has demonstrated unsatisfactory progress in the curriculum as defined above will be subject to the courses of action as previously set forth in this policy. When meeting with a student on an issue related to academic performance, the GPC may also take into account a prior history of sanctions for misconduct in making a determination.
- b. At a hearing with the GPC, the student will be expected to discuss their academic performance and to propose a course of action to address the academic deficiencies. Following the hearing with the student, the GPC may then vote for a course of action. With a quorum present, the committee action will be determined by a majority vote.
- c. The determination and stipulations arising from the actions of the GPC will be communicated in writing by the Chair of the GPC to the student and the Dean. The student may appeal a decision by the GPC under Section 15 and 16.

- d. Following the final decision, the Offices of Accounting Services, Financial Aid, Registrar and other pertinent HSC offices are to be notified in writing by the Office of Student Affairs of the dismissal of a student or repetition of a year by a student.

15. Dismissal and Appeals Policies

- a. A student shall be dismissed if the GPC determines that the student has not performed satisfactorily in academic pursuits, is not competent to pursue the assigned course of study, or has been deemed by the GPC, for just reason, unfit to continue the study of medicine. The student shall be notified in writing of the action of the GPC.
- b. A student may appeal the decision of the GPC. This appeal must be made to the Dean of the School of Medicine within five (5) business days, must be in writing, and must cite grounds for the appeal. An appeal may only be based on a claim that due process of GPC policies and procedures was not followed.

16. Appeals Procedure

- a. A student shall appeal a decision by the GPC within five (5) business days of notification of the decision by submitting to the Dean through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs a written notice of appeal containing a detailed basis for the request.
- b. The Dean may issue the decision alone or may appoint an Appeals Committee comprised of three members of the senior faculty to determine whether a basis for appeal exists. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Chair of the GPC (or designee) will serve as ex officio members of the Committee.
- c. The Appeals Committee will be convened by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs within five (5) business days after appointment to consider the student's 'appeal.
- d. The student shall notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in advance if he/she is to be accompanied by an attorney or other representative. An attorney or representative may appear only in an advisory capacity and may not address the Appeals Committee. Should the student be accompanied by an attorney or representative, the School of Medicine shall be represented by the Office of General Counsel. If necessary, the appeal hearing may be delayed up to **five (5)** business days of the scheduled date if needed to allow personnel from the Office of General Counsel to attend.
- e. The student may present a statement to the Appeals Committee relative to the appeal. Collection of additional information to resolve the issue may be pursued. Both the Appeals Committee and student may call witnesses relevant to resolution of the appeal. Should information or witnesses be either repetitious or not relevant, the Appeals Committee shall take action to expedite the proceedings. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Appeals Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Dean. If the recommendation is not unanimous, a minority view will be appended.
- f. Unless suspended for some justifiable reason, the student shall remain on the class roll and may pursue appropriate course work until the appeal is resolved.
- g. After reviewing the Appeals Committee recommendation (if applicable) the Dean will make a final decision. The decision of the Dean is final. The student and the Chair of the GPC Committee will be notified in writing by the Dean.

17. Policy Regarding USMLE-Step I Exam

- a. In order to become fully licensed to practice medicine in the United States, individuals must have passed all 4 USMLE Step exams – Step 1, Step 2 Clinical Knowledge, Step 2 Clinical Skills, and Step 3. Each state's medical licensing board determines the number of attempts individuals may make at each Step in order to remain eligible for licensure. In Texas individuals are limited to 3 attempts on each Step.
- b. Students are expected to take Step 1 of USMLE prior to the start of Year Three. Students may request a delay in taking Step 1 if they have concerns regarding their readiness to take Step 1 and proceed with Year Three. A written request must be made to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs before the start of their third year.

- c. All students who take the USMLE Step 1 prior to the scheduled start of Year Three will be eligible to start the Year Three clerkship rotations. Passage of USMLE Step 1 is required for students to proceed in Year Three beyond the end of the first clerkship block.
- d. Students who fail USMLE Step 1 on their initial attempt will then be assigned to Independent Study to prepare for and retake Step 1. Students may return to the Year 3 curriculum upon passage of Step 1.
- e. Students cannot pursue any elective time in satisfying the conditions for graduation until they have passed Step 1 and completed any outstanding remediation for third year coursework.
- f. Inability to pass Step 1 within one year after the completion of Year 2 coursework or three unsuccessful attempts will result in review by the GPC and possible dismissal (see grid). Appeals regarding this issue will be handled as outlined in Sections 15 and 16 of the Promotions policy.

18. Policy Regarding USMLE Step II Exam

- a. Passage of Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Step 2 Clinical Skills will be required for graduation. Initial attempts at Step 2 exams must be taken by October 31 of the year preceding graduation. Students who fail to do so will not be allowed to participate further in clinical rotations until these exams are taken.
- b. Passing scores must be documented no later than May 1 of the year graduating. Failure to document a passing score by May 1 will result in a delay in graduation.

19. GPC Role Regarding Allegations of Student Misconduct

- a. If allegations of misconduct arise, an Ad Hoc committee (Student Conduct Board per TTUHSC Student Affairs Handbook Code of Professional and Academic Conduct) will be appointed by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
- b. When the Ad Hoc committee issues its findings and recommendations related to these specific complaints to the Dean, the Chair of GPC will be included in the reporting line.
- c. Upon receipt of the ad hoc committee findings and recommendations, the Chair of the GPC will then act as follows:
 - i. If there are no findings of misconduct by the Ad Hoc committee, the GPC will not act further on the matter.
 - ii. If the Ad Hoc committee finds misconduct has occurred the GPC will consider further action.
- d. Following these deliberations by the GPC, the Chair of the GPC will submit the decision from the GPC to the Dean related to the current complaint in light of the prior history of sanctions related to academic or misconduct issues. The Dean may then take this decision into account along with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc committee in making a final determination regarding the present matter.

20. Procedure for Amending of GPC Policies and Procedures

- a. A proposal to amend the policies and procedures may be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Curriculum and Education Policy Committee by any person or group who believes a need for revision exists. The proposal shall be considered by the full CEPC for review and discussion. If the CEPC approves the amendment, it shall be initiated with notification to the Faculty Council at the next CEPC report date.
- b. Clarification or non-substantive rewording of policy may be performed by the GPC. The clarification will be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and copies forwarded to the CEPC.

Year review	Student Performance	Committee action
Year 1	Passed all courses both semesters with no significant professionalism concerns	Proceed in curriculum
	AT RISK – see narrative in policy Academic Watch Level 1 or 2	Discuss remediation as recommended by course director
	Failure in one semester course Academic Watch level 2 or Warning if repeating the year	a. Repeat of year OR b. Individualized remediation
	Failure in two or more semester courses Academic Warning if Repeating year	a. Repeat of year OR b. Dismissal
	Failure of CEYE on second attempt Academic Warning	a. Repeat of year OR b. Individualized remediation
Year 2	Passed all courses both semesters with no significant professionalism concerns	Proceed in curriculum
	AT RISK – see narrative in policy Academic Watch Level 1 or 2	Discuss remediation as recommended by course director
	Failure in one semester course Academic Watch Level 1 or 2 unless dismissed	a. Individualized remediation OR b. Dismissal
	Failure in two semester courses Academic Warning if Repeating year	a. Repeat of year OR b. Dismissal
	Failure in three or more semester courses	Dismissal
	Failure of Step 1 on three attempts	Dismissal

Year 3 Student Performance Committee Action

	<p>Failure of one clerkship: a. Fail clinical component OR b. Fail Professional component OR c. Fail 2 attempts at the NBME OR d. Fail 2 attempts at the OSCE Academic Watch Level 1</p>	<p>a. One month remediation in the fourth year in that discipline without receiving elective credit OR b. Repeat of third year OR c. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Failure of two clerkship (same definition as above) Academic Watch Level 2 or Academic Warning if repeating the year</p>	<p>a. Remediation OR b. Repeat of year OR c. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Failure of the NBME in three different clerkships (on first attempt) Academic Watch Level 2 or Academic Warning if repeating the year</p>	<p>a. Remediation OR b. Repeat of the third year OR c. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Failure of three clerkships Academic Warning if Repeating year</p>	<p>a. Repeat of third year OR b. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Rating of "Needs Improvement" in the same competency on three or more Clerkship Final assessments Academic Watch Level 2 or Academic Warning if repeating the year</p>	<p>a. Remediation OR b. Repeat of third year OR c. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Issues of Professionalism</p>	<p>c. a. Dependent on occurrences</p>

Year 4 Student Performance Committee Action

	<p>Failure of one or more required rotations or electives Academic Watch</p>	<p>a. Remediation b. Repeat of year c. Dismissal</p>
	<p>Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on first attempt Academic Watch Level 2</p>	<p>9 No review required by GPC but student must log a pass of CK and CS by May 1 in order to graduate in May.</p>

	Issues of Professionalism	a. Dependent on occurrences
	Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on the second attempt Academic Warning	Discussion by GPC of remediation and delay of graduation.
	Failure of Step 2 CK or CS on the third attempt	Dismissal