Keywords: promotions

I. POLICY

The Medical Student Promotions Policy recognizes both the responsibility of the School of Medicine (SOM) to provide appropriate resources for medical student success in the curriculum and the public trust to graduate competent, responsible, and professional physicians.

To those ends, each student’s record is reviewed on a monthly basis to identify potential learning needs and areas for improvement and those students with academic performance or professional issues are discussed by the appropriate (i.e., Preclerkship or Clerkship) Student Assessment and Formational Committee (SAFC). These committees provide suggestions to assist the student in those areas. Behaviors that fall under the Academic Integrity Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, or the Student Conduct Code will be investigated and resolved pursuant to the procedures in those policies and not discussed at the SAFC. All students are expected to maintain good academic standing and satisfactory academic progress and to adhere to accepted standards of professional behavior in their contacts with fellow students, faculty, patients, staff, and others. Please see the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (MSPP034), the Medical Student Honor Code (MSPP037), the Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Conduct Code. A student is considered to be in good academic standing unless on academic probation, suspended, or dismissed.

All students must satisfactorily complete the full work of an academic year and be in good standing before advancing to the next year.

Based on its review of students’ performance, the SAFC may place a student in one of two academic categories (1) Formal Notice and (2) Formal Monitored Academic Status:

1. Formal Notice. On behalf of the SAFC, the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs (or designee) will send a Formal Notice to students who:
   a. Do not pass two preclerkship examinations or one shelf examination in a required core clerkship, and/or;
   b. Who have a documented failure to meet expected standards of professional behavior, despite feedback and remediation efforts, as outlined in the syllabi for all courses and clerkships based on the AAMC subcompetencies of professionalism:
      i. Demonstrate behaviors that show compassion, integrity, and respect for others
      ii. Demonstrate behaviors that show responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest
      iii. Demonstrate behaviors that show respect for patient privacy and autonomy, and
      iv. Demonstrate behaviors that show accountability to self, patients, colleagues, the profession, and society as set forth in the Medical Student Accountability Policy.

   The Formal Notice will include a written explanation of the SAFC’s concerns. It will also be sent to the student’s Colleges Advisor and to the SOM’s Learning Specialist.
2. Formal Monitored Academic Status (MAS). This status represents a higher level of monitoring by SOM and is designed as a program tailored to meet a student’s ongoing challenges or needs. Students on this status are expected to work closely with their Colleges Advisor and other offices to remediate their difficulties and employ available SOM resources. On behalf of the SAFC, the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs (or designee) will send a notice to students that they have been placed on MAS if one or more of the following occurs:
   a. Failure of a course or clerkship;
   b. Two or more failures of shelf examinations or other final objective exams in required clerkships;
   c. Two or more Formal Notices from the SAFC;
   d. Failure on an NBME Step examination;
   e. Two or more episodes of failure to meet expected standards of professional behavior.

*During the transition from preclinical to clinical phases of the curriculum, each student’s academic record will be reviewed. If a student only has a single academic Formal Notice acquired during year one, the Formal Notice will not be counted towards a future MAS placement.

Students on this status may not serve on SOM committees and are required to limit extracurricular activities in consultation with their Colleges Advisor.

Notice that the student has been placed on MAS will include a written explanation of the SAFC’s concerns. The notice will also be sent to the student’s Colleges Advisor and to the SOM’s Learning Specialist.

A student who fails a clerkship (see 2.a. above) will be permitted to complete any subsequent required clerkship they began prior to being placed on MAS, but additional clerkships cannot be taken until the failure is remediated.

Students will remain on MAS for a minimum of one year to allow for sufficient monitoring of performance. During MAS, the student will meet regularly with their Colleges Advisor and Office of Medical Student Affairs dean. Updates on the performance of students on MAS will be provided regularly to the appropriate SAFC. If a student’s academic performance improves with the remediation efforts provided, the SAFC can remove the student from this status at any point after the year has passed using the following criteria:

1. SOM Learning specialist, Colleges Advisor, and Office of Medical Student Affairs dean are in agreement that the student can be removed from MAS; and
2. There have been no academic challenges (preclinical exam or shelf exam failures) for a minimum of six months.

If a student on MAS receives an additional Formal Notice or other additional challenge as described under MAS referral criteria (2a-e above), they will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC). This committee is charged with ultimately deciding upon student promotion throughout the curriculum and for making summative decisions regarding students’ continuation in the educational program at the SOM. The student will be notified in writing that they have been referred to the SPC and the notice will include a written explanation of the reason for that referral. This notice will also be sent to the student’s Colleges Advisor and to the SOM’s Learning Specialist.

Students may also be directly referred to the SPC for conduct handled by other areas of the University, or law enforcement authority, if additional sanctions or actions may be warranted based on the school’s professionalism standards. In cases where it is not clear which procedure should apply, the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs and the Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Johns Hopkins University, will decide whether investigation and resolution of an incident of

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alleged misbehavior will be handled by SOM or the University. Any student facing a potential adverse decision by the SPC will be invited to address the Committee along with a SOM faculty advocate of their choosing. A family member who is a SOM faculty member may not serve as a student’s faculty advocate. The student may put forth an explanation for the deficient performance, any extenuating circumstances and any other information relevant to the student’s fitness to continue the academic program.

The SPC may take one of four potential adverse decisions against a student: (1) Academic Probation, (2) Suspension, (3) SPC-imposed Leave of Absence, or (4) Dismissal.

1. Academic Probation

This is an action that results in the student’s status in the MD program to change from “good standing” to “academic probation.” This status is intended to convey to the student the considerable concern raised by the student’s academic performance and/or professional behavior and is documented in the student’s permanent record including the official transcript and the student’s Medical School Performance Evaluation.

Students may be placed on Academic Probation for the following reasons:

a. Two or more course or clerkship failures;
b. Two or more failures of a USMLE Step examination;
c. Failure of a course while on MAS;
d. Failure to complete conditions specified by the SAFC; and/or
e. Serious or repeated failure to meet standards for professional conduct and responsibility. See Student Conduct Code, Academic Integrity Policy (MSPP040), and Medical Student Honor Code (MSPP037).

Students who are placed on Academic Probation will not be allowed to serve on SOM committees and must discontinue extracurricular activities. The length of the Academic Probation will be determined by the SPC once the student has successfully fulfilled the expectations or conditions specified by the SPC. The minimum period for Academic Probation will be one year to allow sufficient time for the correction of academic/behavioral difficulties and the close monitoring thereof. Updates of the student’s performance will be provided to the SPC on a regular basis to inform the length of the probation as detailed above.

2. Suspension

When it is determined by the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs that the student’s academic performance/behavior imposes a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of students, patients, or others in the SOM community, the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs independently or at the request of the SPC will suspend the student from the SOM. This decision will be reviewed by the SPC with regard to the length of the suspension and any conditions that may allow the student to return to the curriculum. This is an action that results in the student’s status in the MD program to change from “good standing” to “suspension.”

3. Leave of Absence

The SPC may suggest that a student take a voluntary leave of absence to address issues that were brought to the committee’s attention during its deliberations of the student’s performance/behavior. If the student is unwilling to take such a leave, an involuntary leave of absence may be imposed. (See Involuntary Leave of Absence Policy, MSPP021)
4. Dismissal

This is an action taken when students have demonstrated a continuing pattern of the academic and/or behavioral failures described in the criteria listed above for each status that have not improved with extensive remediation efforts.

Appeals

A student who is the recipient of an adverse decision (e.g., academic probation, suspension, leave of absence or dismissal), which affects their status in the educational program may appeal in writing to the Vice Dean for Education within five (5) business days following the notice of outcome on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Procedural error that could have materially affected the decision;
2. New information that was not available at the time of the decision meeting and that could have reasonably affected the decision; and/or
3. Excessiveness of the sanction(s).

An appeal will involve the review of the file. On review of the appeal, the Vice Dean for Education may:

1. Revise the sanction(s); or
2. Uphold the original decision.

The Vice Dean for Education will simultaneously send the appeal determination to the committee and to the student. The Decision of the Vice Dean for Education is final. No further appeals are permitted.

At the end of the fourth/final year of a student’s participation in the curriculum, their entire record will be reviewed by the SAFC and approved students will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee. Those who have satisfactory records and who are judged by the Committee to have demonstrated evidence of their suitability for a career in medicine will be recommended to the Advisory Board of the Medical Faculty for their approval of the receipt of the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

*For the purposes of this policy, the term “family member” refers to: spouse, and parents thereof; parents, and spouses thereof; brothers and sisters, and spouses thereof; domestics partner and parents thereof, or any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the student is the equivalent of a family relationship.

II. SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

**Responsible Office:** Office of Medical Student Affairs

**Responsible Role:** Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs

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