

## **School of Dentistry Academic Progress Policies**

### **A. Review of Academic Progress**

Academic progress of students is monitored by the Student Academic Review Committee. At the end of each semester, and at any other time deemed appropriate, the Student Academic Review Committee reviews and evaluates each student's performance and recommends one of the following to the Dean:

1. continue enrollment as a regular student;
2. continue enrollment as a student on academic probation;
3. continue enrollment as a special student;
4. repeating of coursework in any deficient areas, as appropriate;
5. repeating of a portion of the curriculum;
6. administrative withdrawal from clinical courses if a National Board Exam is failed;
7. dismissal; or
8. promotion to the next year of the curriculum (effective the end of Spring Semester of each year), as appropriate.

### **B. Dean's List**

Students who exhibit acceptable professional behavior and whose grade point average (GPA) while carrying at least 12 hours in any semester is 3.25 (on a 4.00 scale) or higher and who have not received any unsatisfactory or failing grades for the semester are named to the Dean's List. Dean's List qualifications for students receiving grades of Incomplete (I) will not be determined until the I is replaced by an earned grade.

### **C. Failing Grades and Incompletes**

1. Failing grades  
Students must pass all courses within the curriculum to be eligible for graduation. When a failing grade is received, an F is recorded. The student must be re-registered in the course before a passing grade can be earned. Each course syllabus will state the criteria for satisfactorily repeating a course that has been failed. Students must participate in additional learning experiences under the supervision of the course director prior to receiving a final grade for the second attempt of a course that was previously failed. Promotion to the next year of the curriculum is precluded until all courses in the preceding year have been completed with a passing grade.
2. Incompletes  
If a student receives an Incomplete (grade of I), the course director will notify the student in writing of the time limitations and requirements to remove the I, subject to approval by the Student Academic Review Committee and the Dean. When the student completes the course, the course director is responsible for submitting the grade earned by the student to replace the I. Grade changes should be submitted within 3 days of course completion. Any I grade not replaced by an earned grade within the next two semesters in residence following the assignment of the I will be changed to a grade of F. Promotion to the next year of the curriculum is precluded until all Incomplete grades have been removed. Responsibility for monitoring resolution of I grades rests with the Chair of the Student Academic Review Committee.

### **D. Definitions**

1. Special Students  
Any student who, as a result of academic deficiencies, is required to study in an altered curriculum (e.g., more courses, fewer courses, or different courses than the student's class would normally be taking) will be considered a special student. Special students would normally not be expected to graduate on time.
2. Time Limitations  
In all policies of the Student Academic Review Committee regarding time limitations, working days shall include the five days of the work week (Monday through Friday) regardless of whether classes are in session, and shall exclude all official holidays of the Medical College of Georgia. Exceptions to this definition will be listed as calendar days.

### **E. Administrative Withdrawal from Clinical Courses**

1. Part I of the National Dental Board Examination is given in July following completion of the second year of the curriculum. If a student receives a total score of below 75 on Part I the SARC will meet to consider making the following recommendation to the Dean. The student will be immediately withdrawn from the



a. Notice to Student

Once the SARC has determined that a dismissal hearing is indicated the Chair of the SARC will immediately notify the student, the Dean and all SARC members that a hearing will be arranged. Every effort should be made to schedule the hearing within 10 days. In extraordinary circumstances the hearing may be delayed in order to obtain important additional information, to secure a quorum, etc. At least 5 days prior to a dismissal hearing before the SARC, the student will receive a written notice of the time, date, and place of the hearing and a written notice of the applicable policies which could lead to the student's dismissal.

b. Hearing Procedure Rules

- (1) An audio recording and minutes of the hearing proceedings shall be kept and a copy made available to the parties concerned through the legal department in the event an appeal is filed.
- (2) The Vice-Chair of the SARC will present the student's academic record to the Committee and may present witnesses from the faculty to provide information about the student's performance in courses. In the absence of the Vice-Chair or in the event of a potential conflict of interest the Chair may name a designee to serve in place of the Vice-Chair.
- (3) Students appearing before the SARC will be permitted an advisor of his\her choice except that a student may not select an attorney as his or her advisor. If a student selects an advisor who is not a faculty member of the Medical College of Georgia, the student must sign a written waiver of confidentiality for the advisor to attend the hearing. Any such waiver of confidentiality is intended to permit the non-faculty advisor to attend the hearing, and the student's right to privacy will otherwise be protected to the extent allowed by law. Advisors may not directly participate in the hearing.
- (4) At least eight voting members of the SARC must be present for a dismissal hearing. The SARC will deliberate in executive session to formulate a recommendation regarding the student's academic standing. The recommendation will be voted on by a written, secret ballot. The Vice-Chair shall not vote, and the Chair will vote only in the event of a tie. Recommendations must pass by a simple majority of the voting members present.
- (5) The student shall have access to his (her) academic record.
- (6) The student shall be afforded an opportunity to obtain and present witnesses and documents or other evidence.
- (7) The student and all members of the SARC shall have the right to question all witnesses.
- (8) The decision of the SARC shall be based on the student's academic record and shall be presented by the Chair of the SARC to the Dean in the form of a written recommendation within 24 hours of the end of the hearing.
- (9) In cases where the Chair of the SARC determines that participation of a faculty member in a student dismissal hearing creates a conflict of interest, the faculty member will be excused from the hearing.

5. Dean's Responsibilities

The Dean may implement the SARC's recommendation or modify the recommendation. At the discretion of the Dean, the Dean may dismiss the student or continue the enrollment of the student as a regular student, a special student on an altered curriculum, or as a student on academic probation. The Dean shall advise the student in writing of his (her) decision within 5 days of receiving the written recommendation of the SARC. The Dean's decision is final for the School of Dentistry. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to create, manage and store the written and audio records that are related to the

hearing. The management of the records should follow the institutional policies that apply to all schools of the Medical College of Georgia.

#### **H. Appeal of Dismissal**

A student may appeal the Dean's dismissal decision to the President of the Medical College of Georgia. A decision by the President may be appealed to the Board of Regents in accordance with Board policy.

#### **I. Readmission**

Any student who is dismissed or who withdraws from the School of Dentistry may apply to the Student Admissions and Recruitment Committee for readmission as a first year student by submitting a regular application for admission following standard admission procedures. No re-enrollment with advanced standing will be permitted except under the provisions of the School of Dentistry's Leave of Absence policy.

#### **J. Graduation**

Successful completion of all requirements leads to the D.M.D. degree. Approval to graduate rests with the Dean. Graduation requirements are:

1. A minimum of 11 semesters in residence; and
2. Completion of the curriculum within 16 semesters in residence except that students in the D.M.D./M.S. and D.M.D./Ph.D. programs may request a waiver of the 16 semester rule from the Dean.
3. Passing grades in all required courses; and
4. Cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or higher; and
5. Satisfactory completion of all clinical services; and
6. Passing Part I and Part II of the National Board Dental Examination; and
7. Return of assigned institutional property and equipment in acceptable condition; and
8. Payment of all outstanding financial obligations to include tuition and all required student fees, and
9. Completion of all required course and instructor evaluations including all clinical course and instructor evaluations.

#### **K. Leave of Absence Policy**

##### 1. Emergency Leaves of Absence

Emergency leaves of absence can be recommended by the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni and approved by the Dean for up to 10 working days. In the case of absence or unavailability of the Dean or the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni either may make the emergency decision. All missed work must be made up.

##### 2. Family Leave of Absence

a. Any student enrolled in the School of Dentistry may request from the Dean a family leave of absence in the event of:

- x the birth of the child of the student;
- x the placement of a child with the student for adoption;
- x a serious health condition of the student's child, spouse, parent or spouse's parent necessitating the student's presence; or
- x a serious health condition of the student which renders him/her unable to perform the duties of a student.

b. A family leave may serve for an intermediate time period or for a period of part-time attendance and does not require withdrawal from the Medical College of Georgia.

c. Students taking a family leave of absence are required to make up all missed work.

d. Family leave of absence request procedures:

(1). Students must request a family leave of absence from the School of Dentistry by submitting a written request to the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni. The request should state the following:

- (a) The reason the leave is being requested.

(b) When possible, the inclusive dates (i.e., beginning and ending) of the leave or the part-time nature of the leave.

(2). A letter of support for the action should be included if appropriate (i.e. physician letter, etc.)

(3). The Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni will inform the Dean of the request. If the Dean approves the student's request, the Dean will refer the matter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs who will in conjunction with appropriate course directors and department chairs develop conditions that must be met by the student and any necessary remediation activities the student is to complete during or after the family leave.

(4). The Dean will review the conditions submitted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs regarding the leave of absence and may approve, deny, or modify the conditions. The Dean will notify the student in writing of the action on the student's request, including any conditions that must be met by the student. In the case of absence or unavailability of the Dean in an emergency situation, the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni may approve the Family Leave following the conditions stated in this policy.

(5). Some patients of students who have been approved for a family leave of absence may need to be reassigned.

(6). Students receiving financial aid through the Medical College of Georgia must comply with all federal policies to maintain eligibility for aid.

(7). In the event that the family leave becomes excessive the student may apply for an extended leave of absence.

### 3. Extended Leaves of Absence

a. Any student enrolled in the School of Dentistry may request from the Dean an extended leave of absence for cause. Any student who is granted an extended leave must officially withdraw from the Medical College of Georgia in keeping with institutional policies.

b. Students taking an extended leave of absence will re-enter the curriculum no later than the point at which the leave began, and students may be required to repeat a portion of the curriculum. Students who are on an extended leave from the School of Dentistry for more than one calendar year may be required to repeat all or a significant portion of the curriculum.

#### c. Extended Leave of Absence Request

(1). Students must request an extended leave of absence from the School of Dentistry by submitting a written request to the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni. The request should state the following:

(a) The reason the leave is being requested (i.e., ill health, financial burdens, family problems, personal problems, reconsideration of career or life goals, etc.)

(b) When possible, the inclusive dates (i.e., beginning and ending) of the leave.

(2). A letter of support for the action should be included if appropriate (i.e. physician letter, etc.)

(3). The Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni will inform the Dean of the request. If the Dean approves the student's request, the Dean will refer the matter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs who will in conjunction with appropriate course directors and department chairs develop conditions that must be met by the student to re-

enroll. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will include in the conditions the point in the curriculum where the student will re-enroll and any necessary remediation activities the student is to complete before or after re-enrollment.

(4). The Dean will review the conditions submitted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs regarding the leave of absence and may approve, deny, or modify the conditions. The Dean will notify the student in writing of the action on the student's request, including any conditions that must be met by the student. A copy of the Dean's written notice to the student will be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar for filing in the student's record. In the case of absence or unavailability of the Dean in an emergency situation, the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni may approve the Family Leave following the conditions stated in this policy.

(5)e. If the leave is granted, the student must personally complete withdrawal procedures through both the School of Dentistry and the Office of the Registrar.

(6). The patients of students who have been approved for a leave of absence will probably be reassigned.

(7). In cases where the leave of absence extends for more than sixty calendar days, the student must confirm his or her plans to re-enroll by notifying the Dean in writing at least thirty calendar days prior to the previously determined re-enrollment date (see J.3.a.(2), above). The Dean will then notify the Chair of the SARC and the Registrar of the point within the curriculum at which (semester and year) the student will re-enroll (the student's course schedule should be attached to the Dean's notification to the Registrar). Students seeking reinstatement will be required to meet all conditions for reinstatement that had been established.

(8). Students who fail to confirm their re-enrollment date in accordance with this policy or students who do not notify the Dean of a change in plans may not be allowed to re-enroll in the School of Dentistry. Students must also complete all institutional procedures required for re-instatement as specified by the School and Registrar.

4. The Dean's Office will notify involved course directors and Department Chairs when a leave of absence of either type has been granted.

#### **L. Student Academic Grievances Policy**

The following policy relative to academic grievances shall be applicable to all predoctoral students enrolled in the Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry.

##### **1. Grounds for Grievances**

A student may file an academic grievance if (s)he feels one of the following grounds apply:

- a. grading was not in accordance with published course grading policy;
- b. grading was arbitrary or capricious; or
- c. grading was determined on the basis of race, disability, gender, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

##### **2. Academic Grievance Protocol**

Any student who has a grievance should attempt to resolve it with the faculty member involved. If the problem is not resolved, the student should then meet with the appropriate course director. If the problem is not resolved at this level, the student should meet with both the course director and the Department Chair. If the problem is still not resolved, the student may request that the grievance be heard by the Student Academic Review Committee citing one or more of the grounds listed above. The Chair of the SARC must



(3) Whenever each of the parties concerned appear before the Committee, (s)he will be permitted to have present an advisor of his (her) choice that is a member of the MCG academic community. The role of the advisor will be to advise the student. Advisors may not directly participate in the hearing. A student may not select an attorney as his or her advisor.

(4) The SARC will deliberate in executive session to formulate a recommendation regarding the student's academic grievance. The recommendation will be voted on by a written, secret ballot. The Chair will vote only in the event of a tie. Recommendations must pass by a simple majority of the voting members present.

(5) The student shall have access to his (her) academic record.

(6) The parties concerned shall be afforded an opportunity to obtain and present witnesses and documents or other evidence.

(7) The parties concerned shall have the right to question all witnesses.

(8) The decision of the Committee shall be based on the evidence introduced at the hearing.

(9) The Chair shall notify the Dean in writing of the Committee's recommendation within three (3) working days of the hearing. The recommendation shall include a brief statement of facts, the Committee's decision, and the reasons therefore. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to create, manage and store the written and audio records that are related to the hearing. The management of the records should follow the institutional policies that apply to all schools of the Medical College of Georgia.

(10) After receipt of written notification of the recommendation of the Committee, the Dean shall advise the student and other parties concerned in writing of his (her) decision and the reasons supporting this decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the Committee recommendation.

(11) The student has the right to appeal any adverse decision by the Dean to the President of the Medical College of Georgia within five (5) working days of receipt of the Dean's decision.

#### **M. Grading Models, Course Failure Policies, and Attendance Policies in Course Syllabi**

##### **1. Grading Models**

Each course syllabus must contain a grading model clearly stating how the final course grade will be determined. The procedure for determining numerical values must include the rounding procedure.

##### **2. Course Failure Policies**

All course syllabi shall have a clearly written policy for treatment of students receiving a failing grade as described in the course grading policy. The course syllabus should also include any limitations that will be placed on the student in subsequent course work or clinical activity as a result of failing the course. When considering treatment of such students, the course director should take into account:

- a. the other courses for which the failed course is a pre-requisite;
- b. whether there will be adequate time in the student's schedule for the course to be repeated the next time that the course is regularly scheduled to be offered;
- c. the emphasis for areas of deficiency (cognitive vs. manual dexterity);

d. whether it is appropriate to provide additional training or self-teaching to resolve the specific student's deficiencies in lieu of complete repetition of the course; and

e. the failing grades policy of the School of Dentistry which requires that students be re-registered for any course failed and that students must participate in additional learning experiences under the supervision of the course director before a grade for the second attempt at the course can be assigned.

### 3. Attendance Policies

Each course syllabus must contain a clearly written description of the course's attendance policy. If attendance is mandatory, a clearly stipulated policy must be present which outlines the implications for the student for non-compliance.

### **N. Student Excused Absence Policy**

Successful completion of the dental program depends directly upon student participation in and completion of all required courses. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classroom, laboratory and clinic sessions. However, it is understood that on occasion students may be required to be absent from a scheduled class, laboratory or a clinic session for excusable reasons. An excused absence excuses only a student's attendance at a scheduled class session. In all cases, any missed work must be made up.

1. The Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni has the authority and may grant an immediate excused absence for a student in the following circumstances.

a. Personal illness or illness of a close family member when the attention of the student is required.

b. Death of an immediate family member.

c. Personal appointments for acute or preventive health care. (A student missing a scheduled examination must document a visit to Student Health or a private physician in order to qualify for a make up examination. Whenever possible, students should schedule preventive appointments at times which are minimally disruptive to their class schedule).

d. Accident or other unforeseen circumstances making it impossible for a student to attend a scheduled class.

2. Students are expected to report their reason for requesting an excused absence to the Associate Dean for Students on the day of the absence or as soon as possible. If the request for an excused absence is approved, the Associate Dean for Students will notify the course directors and advise the student to arrange to make up any missed work as soon as possible. The Associate Dean for Students will have the responsibility to determine the validity of the reason for the request. Students are not required to notify each course director or to divulge the reason for the absence to anyone other than the Associate Dean for Students. Student confidentiality must be respected and preserved unless required by subpoena or other legal process. A record of excused absences will be maintained in the office of the Associate Dean for Students until the Student Academic Review Committee reviews grades at the end of the semester.

3. The following may also constitute reasons for an excused absence but these are not emergencies and they should be planned well in advance. The student has the responsibility to notify the course director and the Associate Dean for Students and arrange in advance to make up any work to be missed.

a. Serving off campus as a representative of the institution or an institutionally sponsored organization.

b. Seniors interviewing for a graduate program or practice opportunity.

c. Scheduled participation in an off site rotation or elective.

d. Religious holiday.

e. Other circumstance as may be approved by the course director.

4. Faculty has the responsibility to monitor class attendance. When attendance is part of the course grade, attendance must be taken for all students at every class session. Students that are suspected of abusing the Excused Absence Policy should be reported to the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions and Alumni for investigation and action as prescribed by the School of Dentistry Code of Conduct.

5. A student who misses a scheduled class session without an excused absence is not entitled to any special consideration to make up missed projects, work or examinations. These students should be treated in accordance with the class attendance policy published in the course syllabus.

6. A student grievance arising due to an excused absence action should be handled as specified in section K of the Academic Progress Policies.

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