THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
College of Medicine
Tucson

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Student Appeals Committee Procedures

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Summary

This policy document outlines the procedures of the Student Appeals Committee (SAC) at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson. It details the SAC's functions, membership guidelines, and the processes for reviewing student appeals related to academic dismissals, conduct dismissals, and requirements to repeat an academic year. The document specifies the criteria for appeal, the steps for submitting and reviewing appeals, and the decision-making process, including the roles of the Vice Dean, Medical Education, and the Dean of the College of Medicine – Tucson.

Related LCME Standards:

9.9 Student Advancement and Appeal Process

A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.

Applicability & Scope

These policy and procedures apply to all students in the medical education program leading to the MD degree.

Definitions

None

Policy and Procedures Statement

I. Functions of the Student Appeals Committee

A. The Student Appeals Committee (SAC) will review Academic Dismissal and Conduct Dismissal decisions issued by the Student Progress Committee (SPC) when the student requests an appeal as defined and outlined in the Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal or the Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal.

B. The SAC will review decisions requiring students to terminate and repeat an academic year issued by the SPC when the student requests an appeal as defined and outlined in the Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal.

C. All SAC decisions require a majority of a quorum of the eligible voting membership. Quorum for the SAC is defined as two-thirds of the eligible membership.

D. The SAC may extend the timeframes outlined in these procedures for good cause and with notice to the student and the Vice Dean, Medical Education.

E. The SAC does not have the authority to grant an exception to College of Medicine policies or an extension of time to comply with policy.

II. Membership Guidelines of the Student Appeals Committee

A. The membership of the SAC is specified in Article VI.J of the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.

B. Typically, each faculty member is elected for a 3-year term. When needed, the Nominating Committee will appoint a member of the faculty to fill a vacancy on an interim basis until the spring meeting of the COM-Tucson Faculty. The vacancy will then be filled by nomination at this meeting of the faculty, followed by an election.

C. Attendance at meetings is critical to the function of the SAC. Members who are consistently unable to attend meetings will be asked by the Chair to increase their participation, reconsider their membership, and/or resign from the Committee. The Chair of the Committee reserves the right to request a replacement.

D. It is the responsibility of each member of the SAC to participate in carrying out the mission of the Committee. Such participation includes regular attendance at Committee meetings, contribution to Committee proceedings, and thoughtful consideration of matters before the Committee.

E. To avoid conflicts of interest, as specified in Article VI.J of the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson, the membership excludes the following from serving on the SAC: “Current society mentors, block directors, clerkship directors, and any faculty member whose participation on this Committee would constitute a conflict of interest are not eligible to serve on this Committee.”

    1) To further mitigate conflicts of interest, SAC members with familial ties, prior significant and consistent mentorship (academic/research mentor), a business relationship, are providing and have provided healthcare in the past, have previously submitted a failing grade about the student or who perceive a conflict of interest to a student under review, must recuse themselves from participating in the committee proceedings and voting on any motion as it pertains to the student with whom there is a conflict of interest.

2) Members must recuse themselves by notifying the SAC Chair.

F. Members may resign from the Committee by sending notice in writing (including email) to the Committee Chair. The vacancy will be filled as specified in the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.

III. Procedures Regarding Review of Academic Dismissal Appeals

A. If the student chooses to appeal an Academic Dismissal, the student must submit a written statement to the Chair of the SAC outlining the student's position on why the student should not be dismissed.

B. The appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice of Dismissal from the Vice Dean, Medical Education.

C. The student is responsible for providing the SAC with any supporting documents that the student believes support the appeal, including the student's transcript, correspondence with faculty and administrators, and communications from the SPC. This information must be submitted with the written appeal statement.

D. The student's written statement must identify one or both of the following grounds as the basis for the appeal:
   1) College of Medicine policies do not require or support the Academic Dismissal.
   2) The Academic Dismissal process was not substantially consistent with University or College of Medicine policies and procedures, and the process should be repeated or reversed to correct the specific error(s).

E. If the SAC Chair determines that the student's written appeal fails to identify one or both of the above grounds as a basis for the appeal, the Chair will reject the appeal and inform the student of the deficiency. The student will have one opportunity to resubmit the appeal within 5 business days of the notice of deficiency from the Chair.

F. Once the appeal is accepted, the Chair will notify the Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs and provide a copy of the appeal packet. The Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs will have 5 business days to provide a written response to the SAC addressing the student's grounds for appeal. The student will receive a copy of the Associate Dean's response but is not permitted to submit a response.

G. Within 10 business days of receipt of the student's written appeal statement and supporting documentation, the SAC will meet, review the student's appeal packet, and discuss the student's appeal.

H. SAC meetings are closed to everyone except voting members of the Committee, Committee support staff, and counsel to the Committee. The Vice Dean for Access, Community, and Belonging is also required to attend as an ex officio member.

I. If the SAC believes additional information is required before a decision is made, the Committee may seek that information from the student or the College administration. The information must be directly relevant to the stated grounds for the appeal. Any information obtained directly from the College and considered in the appeal decision must be shared with the student. The student will have 2 business days to respond to any additional information.

J. Within 10 business days of meeting to review the appeal, the SAC will inform the Vice Dean, Medical Education of its recommendation. The SAC's recommendation must outline the basis to grant or deny the appeal.

K. Upon receipt of the SAC's recommendation, the Vice Dean, Medical Education will send a Notice of their determination to the student outlining the basis for their determination. The Notice will be sent within 5 business days of the Vice Dean, Medical Education receiving the SAC's recommendation.
L. The student may appeal the Vice Dean, Medical Education's decision to the Dean of the College of Medicine within 5 business days of receiving the decision from the Vice Dean, Medical Education.
M. The decision of the Dean of the College of Medicine is final and is not subject to further review in the College.

IV. Procedures Regarding Review of Conduct Dismissal Appeals

A. If the student chooses to appeal a Conduct Dismissal, the student must submit a written statement to the SAC Chair outlining the student's position on why the student should not be dismissed.
B. The appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice of Dismissal from the Vice Dean, Medical Education.
C. The student's written statement must identify one or more of the following grounds as the basis for the appeal:
    1) The hearing was not conducted in a manner substantially consistent with the procedures set forth in the Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal or the Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal and resulted in an unfair process.
    2) The finding that the student violated University or College of Medicine policies or standards is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence or is contrary to law or policy.
    3) The student's conduct does not constitute a violation of University or College of Medicine policies or standards.
    4) The student was not given procedural or substantive due process.
    5) The dismissal is excessively severe under the circumstances.
D. If the SAC Chair determines that the student's written appeal fails to identify one or more of the above grounds as a basis for the appeal, the Chair will reject the appeal and inform the student of the deficiency. The student will have one opportunity to resubmit the appeal within 5 business days of the notice of deficiency from the Chair.
E. If the SAC Chair determines the appeal states the required grounds for appeal, the SAC Chair will inform the SPC Chair or the Honor Code Committee (HCC) Chair of the appeal.
F. Within 5 business days of the notice from the SAC Chair, the SPC or HCC Chair must provide the SAC with a copy of all supporting documentation considered during the hearing, a copy of their determination and the audio recording of the hearing.
G. Within 10 business days of receipt of supporting documentation, the SAC will meet, review the documentation, and discuss the student's appeal.
H. SAC meetings are closed to everyone except members of the Committee, Committee support staff, and counsel to the Committee. The Vice Dean for Access, Community, and Belonging is also required to attend.

I. Within 10 business days of meeting to review the appeal, the SAC will inform the Vice Dean, Medical Education of its recommendation. SAC's recommendation must outline the basis to grant or deny the appeal.
J. Upon receipt of the SAC's recommendation, the Vice Dean, Medical Education will send a Notice of their determination to the student outlining the basis for their determination. The Notice will be sent within 5 business days of the Vice Dean, Medical Education receiving the SAC's recommendation.
K. The student may appeal the Vice Dean, Medical Education's decision to the Dean of the College of Medicine within 5 business days of receiving the decision from the Vice Dean, Medical Education.
L. The decision of the Dean of the College of Medicine is final and is not subject to further review in the College.

V. Procedures Regarding Review of Requirement to Repeat an Academic Year Appeals

A. If a student chooses to appeal a requirement to terminate and repeat an academic year, the student must submit a written statement to the SAC Chair outlining the student's position on why the student should not be required to terminate and repeat the academic year.
B. The appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice to Repeat an Academic Year from the SPC.
C. The student is responsible for providing the SAC with any supporting documents that the student believes support the appeal, including the student's transcript, correspondence with faculty and administrators, and communications from the SPC. This information must be submitted with the written appeal statement.
D. The student's written statement must identify one or both of the following grounds as the basis for the appeal:
    1) College of Medicine policies do not require or support the decision to terminate and repeat the academic year.
    2) The decision process was not substantially consistent with University or College of Medicine policies and procedures, and the process should be repeated or reversed to correct the specific error(s).
E. If the SAC Chair determines that the student's written appeal fails to identify one or both of the above grounds as a basis for the appeal, the Chair will reject the appeal and inform the student of the deficiency. The student will have one opportunity to resubmit the appeal within 5 business days of the notice of deficiency from the Chair.
F. If the appeal is accepted, the Chair will notify the Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs and provide a copy of the appeal packet. The Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs will have 5 business days to provide a written response to the SAC addressing the student's grounds for appeal. The student will receive a copy of the Associate Dean's response but is not permitted to submit a response.
G. Within 10 business days of receipt of the student's written appeal statement and supporting documentation, the SAC will meet, review the student's appeal packet, and discuss the student's appeal.
H. SAC meetings are closed to everyone except members of the Committee, Committee support staff, and counsel to the Committee. The Vice Dean for Access, Community, and Belonging is also required to attend.

I. If the SAC believes additional information is required before a decision is made, the Committee may seek that information from the student or the College administration. The information must be directly relevant to the stated grounds for the appeal. Any information obtained directly from the College and considered in the appeal decision must be shared with the student. The student will have 2 business day to respond to any additional information.

J. Within 10 business days of meeting to review the appeal, the SAC will inform the Vice Dean, Medical Education of its recommendation. SAC's recommendation must outline the basis to grant or deny the appeal.

K. Upon receipt of the SAC's recommendation, the Vice Dean, Medical Education will send a Notice of their determination to the student outlining the basis for their determination. The Notice will be sent within 5 business days of the Vice Dean, Medical Education receiving the SAC's recommendation.

L. The student may appeal the Vice Dean, Medical Education's decision to the Dean of the College of Medicine within 5 business days of receiving the decision from the Vice Dean, Medical Education.

M. The decision of the Dean of the College of Medicine is final and is not subject to further review in the College.

Related Information

Policies and Documents

- COM-T Policy 1-106: Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal
- COM-T Policy 4-101: Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal
- The Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson

Revision History

2023/12/13: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to the policy/procedures.

2023/03/31: Policy/procedures revised.

2021/09/22: Policy/procedures revised.

2020/03/18: Policy/procedures revised.

2019/10/16: Policy/procedures revised.

2019/09/13: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved the policy/procedures.