



Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal

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Summary

This policy document outlines the procedures and processes of the Student Progress Committee (SPC) at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson. It details the SPC's roles and responsibilities, membership guidelines, and procedures for reviewing student progress, addressing unsatisfactory performance, and determining dismissals. The document also describes the protocols for student appearances at SPC meetings, the process for academic and conduct-related dismissals, and the appeals process for SPC decisions.

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

Advisor – A faculty member, staff member, or other individual selected by a student to support the student during a meeting or a hearing conducted by the Student Progress Committee (SPC).

Unless the Advisor is an Attorney, the Advisor may not speak for or on behalf of the student unless the SPC Chair asks the Advisor to address the Committee. Attorneys are only permitted to serve as Advisors at SPC hearings, not meetings.

Academic Dismissal – Dismissal from the College of Medicine – Tucson for failure to progress through the curriculum, failure to meet academic or programmatic requirements, failure to satisfy the professionalism component of an academic course, or failure to adhere to the Grading and Progression Policy.

Attorney – An individual licensed to practice law in the State of Arizona.

College, COM-T – The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.

Conduct Dismissal – Dismissal from the College of Medicine – Tucson for Honor Code violations, lack of academic integrity, unprofessional behavior in extracurricular activities or interactions, violation of clinical site policies (including HIPAA), or other violations of the [Arizona Board of Regents Student Code of Conduct \(ABOR Policy 5- 308\)](#). If a student is suspended or expelled by the University of Arizona Dean of Students Office, the Conduct Dismissal from the College is automatic, and the student is not entitled to a hearing before the SPC or Honor Code Committee (HCC).

Dismissal, Dismiss – Terminating the student’s enrollment at the College. Once dismissed, a student must reapply for admission through the standard admission procedures. Dismissal occurs at the written direction of the Student Progress Committee.

E-Vote – A vote of the eligible members of the Committee conducted via email. The Chair may instruct an E-vote on issues that require Committee approval but do not warrant discussion. A Quorum of responses is required.

Graduation Requirements – Those requirements established by the College’s Tucson Educational Policy Committee (TEPC), as described in the [Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#).

Main Campus – The parent university, The University of Arizona.

Notice, Notify – A written communication emailed to the recipient using the recipient’s official University email address. Recipients may identify an alternate email address to the SPC Chair. All time limits are calculated using business days. A Notice is deemed received the day after the email date stamp. All notices will include a link to the SPC Procedures and Process for Dismissal on the College’s website.

Preponderance of the evidence – The Committee members find the position of one party more likely and/or more credible than the position of the other party; it is the standard by which SPC makes decisions following a hearing.

Quorum – One-half of the eligible voting members of the Committee. A voting member is not eligible if the member recuses themselves from the vote due to a conflict or leave of absence. To conduct business under these procedures, a quorum must be present at the beginning of a presented issue and must remain present throughout the vote on that issue.

Policy and Procedures Statement

I. Functions of the Student Progress Committee

- A. The SPC will review the academic progress of any student presented to the Committee by a student affairs dean.
- B. The SPC shall review the professional conduct of any student who is brought to the Committee's attention by any College faculty member or administrator via the student affairs dean. In response, the SPC may require or recommend the actions listed in section VII.B.
- C. A student may request to meet with the SPC to discuss their own academic progress or professional conduct by communicating directly with the Chair of the SPC in writing.
- D. If a student fails to progress in accordance with the requirements established by the [Grading and Progression Policy](#), the SPC will consider the circumstances and determine the appropriate action regarding progress or remediation.
- E. The SPC will consider requests for non-medical leaves of absence and determine any conditions upon which students will be permitted to take or return from such leaves.
- F. The SPC will review the status of students who are either admitted to the College as a result of transfer from another school of medicine or who are readmitted to the COM-T following withdrawal to determine the student's placement in the curriculum and timing of admission.
- G. The SPC will review and make recommendations about the promotion and graduation of all students at regular intervals, typically annually.

II. Membership Guidelines of the Student Progress Committee

- A. The membership of the SPC is specified in Article VI.K of the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson.
- B. The committee consists of 8 elected faculty members, elected by the COM-T faculty. The committee also has 4 elected student members. Student members are representative of each of the four classes.
- C. Each faculty member is elected for a 3-year term, with one exception. 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-T Faculty. The vacancy will then be filled by nomination at this meeting of the faculty, followed by an election. Student members are directly elected by their class in their first semester of medical school and serve for 4 years. The committee members elect the committee chair. Ex officio members include the student affairs dean, curricular affairs dean, access, community, and belonging vice dean, house deans, learning specialists and the director of student records/registrar. Curricular Affairs provides administrative support for the committee.
- D. Attendance at meetings is critical to the function of the SPC and members are expected to give notification prior to missing a meeting. Members who miss two meetings within 6 consecutive months 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.
- E. It is the responsibility of each member of the SPC 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.

- F. To avoid academic conflicts of interest, as specified in Article VI.K of the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson, the membership excludes the following from serving on the SPC: “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 academic conflicts of interest, SPC members who perceive a conflict of interest or are clinical faculty and provided health care to a student under review must recuse themselves from participating in the proceedings by notifying the SPC Chair.
 - 2) A Committee member must recuse themselves from voting on a student matter if they have previously submitted a failing grade about the student, whether it was in their capacity as a course director or as an individual assessor; or if they perceive that they have any other basis for a conflict of interest (for example, they serve as the student’s advisor).
 - 3) All members must abide by the Committee’s Conflict of Interest policy.
- G. Members may resign from the Committee by sending notice in writing (including email) to the Committee Chair. In the case of a faculty-member vacancy, the vacancy will be filled as specified in the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson. A student member placed on Academic Probation is not permitted to serve on the SPC or permitted to return to the Committee at the end of their probationary period. In the case of a student vacancy, the SPC Chair will notify the Student Government so that a replacement will be elected promptly.

III. Student Promotion to the Next Phase of the Program

- A. Academic Progress Review
 - 1) The SPC will review the academic performance of medical students at minimum annually in March (Year 2 to 3; Year 3 to 4 transitions), July (Year 1 to 2 transition), early April (graduation list), and more frequently as needed for adjusted class lists.
 - 2) The Office of Student Affairs will provide a class list to the SPC for review. The class list will clearly note all students who have made satisfactory academic progress to promote to the next phase of the program. Satisfactory academic progress for students in the COM-T is defined as the successful completion of all requirements necessary for the advancement from one phase to the next. These requirements are outlined in the [Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#).
 - 3) Students may be conditionally enrolled in a subsequent year of the program pending receipt of requirements for advancement, such as score reports for USMLE or grade reports for courses or clerkships that end immediately prior to the next academic year.
 - 4) Upon approval of the class list provided in section III.A.2, the SPC determines which students have made satisfactory academic progress and should be promoted. Once decided, the SPC forwards the approved class list to both the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

- 5) Recommendation for graduation: The Office of Student Affairs provides a class list to the SPC of all students who have satisfied all the academic requirements of the COM-T and met standards of professional behavior as outlined in the [Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#). After review and approval by the SPC, the SPC sends the approved list to the Vice Dean, Medical Education, who submits the list to General Faculty Council for final approval.

IV. Key Aspects of Procedure

- A. Decisions by the committee for dismissal, repeating the academic year, or promotion shall be passed by simple majority of the members of the committee present in voting.
- B. The SPC is required to meet and review any student who meets the criteria for dismissal or repeating an academic year within 45 days of the SPC being notified by student affairs that the student meets the criteria for dismissal or needing to repeat an academic year.
- C. Attendance will be recorded as part of the minutes.
- D. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their designee, will provide a list of students needing to be discussed at an upcoming SPC meeting to the SPC Chair. They will include the students' educational records pertinent to their progress in the program. The Chair determines the final agenda and schedules student appearances. The Chair provides a summary of student performance and reasons for SPC's review. This summary is provided at the time of the meetings and wherever possible prior to the meeting to assist them in making decisions.

V. Review of Unsatisfactory Student Performance

- A. When a student has an academic deficiency in accordance with the [Grading and Progression Policy](#) and/or the [Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#), the student will first be notified of the deficiency or unsatisfactory performance through the usual grade reporting channels. A representative of the block, course or clerkship will communicate with the student about the deficiency. The deficiency will be reported to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA), and the ADSA, or his designee, will coordinate with the chair of the Progress Committee to add the student to the agenda for an upcoming SPC meeting.
- B. Students to be discussed at any Student Progress Committee meeting, for whatever reason (other than routine promotion to the next year or recommendation for graduation), must be notified by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or his designee.
- C. If the nature of the deficiency is such that the course or clerkship director has recommended that the student complete a remediation plan without the need for repeating a year or other adverse action, the student will be discussed at the meeting. The student will be notified in advance that they are going to be discussed, but they are not invited to be present at the meeting. The student will be notified in writing about the outcome of the discussion.
- D. If the nature of the deficiency, in the context of all other factors in the student's academic history at COM-T, suggests that the Committee may consider an adverse action, such as repeating a year or dismissal, the ADSA will inform the student of this possibility and notify the SPC chair. The SPC Chair will invite the student to attend an upcoming SPC meeting. The student may submit a letter to the committee prior to the meeting (which will be circulated to the members) and/or they may appear at the meeting to support their case.

VI. Procedures Regarding Student Appearance at Student Progress Committee Meetings

A. Meeting Attendance

- 1) When the SPC Chair is informed of academic, progression, professionalism, or other issues regarding a student, the Chair will determine if the student will be invited to the SPC meeting where the student will be discussed and/or submit a written statement.
- 2) The Chair will provide written notice to the student of the time and location of the meeting no less than 5 business days before the meeting. The Notice will describe the concern and any decision before the Committee.
- 3) Should a student decide against submitting a written statement and/or attending a SPC meeting at which the student was invited to be present, the Committee is authorized to proceed in the student's absence, unless the student timely provides the SPC Chair good cause for not appearing and the Chair grants an exception in advance of the meeting.

B. Meeting Process

- 1) A student may be assisted at a meeting by one advisor. If a student intends to bring an advisor to a meeting, the student will notify the SPC Chair of the advisor's name prior to the meeting. No other individuals will be permitted to accompany the student to a meeting unless requested to attend by the SPC. The student may submit a written statement as an alternative to appearing in person, or in addition to appearing in person.
- 2) At the meeting, the Committee may receive information from a dean, faculty member, or other administrator about the subject matter of the meeting. The Committee will hear directly from the student. The Committee may request that further information be submitted to the Chair following the meeting. The Committee may ask questions of all individuals who appear at a meeting before determining what appropriate action it will take.
- 3) Following the meeting, the Chair of the SPC will prepare a letter to the student regarding the course of action prescribed and will notify the student in writing of its action no later than 10 business days following the meeting. The Associate Dean, Student Affairs and Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs will be copied on all such letters. Other College administrators may be copied as indicated by the required or recommended actions.

VII. Student Progress Committee Procedures Regarding Dismissal

A. Academic Dismissals

- 1) The SPC makes a determination to dismiss a student for failure to progress through the curriculum, failure to meet academic or programmatic requirements, failure to satisfy the professionalism component of an academic course, or failure to adhere to the [Grading and Progression Policy](#).
- 2) The SPC Chair will give the student Notice of the decision within 5 business days of SPC's determination.
- 3) In cases of Academic Dismissal, the Notice will clearly state the reasons for dismissal, specify the deadline for submitting an appeal to the Student Appeals Committee (SAC),

and indicate the effective date of dismissal if the appeal is not filed by the given deadline.

- 4) If the student chooses to appeal the dismissal, the appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice of Dismissal. Appeals must follow the parameters outlined in the [Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#).
- 5) Students determined for academic dismissal are not permitted to continue participating in the curriculum.
- 6) Should a student submit an appeal to the Student Appeals Committee (SAC) they are permitted to continue to participate in the curriculum while awaiting the final decision from the SAC.

B. Conduct Dismissals

- 1) Incidents concerning Conduct Dismissal will be reviewed by the SPC. The SPC will make the final determination regarding Conduct Dismissals.
- 2) Incidents concerning academic integrity, cheating, or violations of the Honor Code Policy will be referred to and addressed by the Honor Code Committee (HCC) for a hearing and recommendation. See the [Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#).
- 3) Incidents concerning unprofessional behavior in extracurricular activities or interactions, violation of clinical site policies (including HIPAA), or other violations of ABOR policy that are not otherwise addressed by the main campus Dean of Students Office will be referred to the SPC for a hearing and determination.
- 4) If a student is suspended or expelled from the University of Arizona under the procedures of the main campus Dean of Students Office, the student will receive a Notice from the Vice Dean, Medical Education confirming dismissal from the College of Medicine. The student is not entitled to a hearing or appeal within the College.
- 5) Students determined for conduct dismissal are not permitted to continue participating in the curriculum.
- 6) A student who appeals a conduct dismissal to the SAC is permitted to continue to participate in the curriculum while awaiting the final decision from the SAC, unless the College reasonably determines that the student poses an imminent or ongoing threat of harm or a risk of substantial disruption to the University community and/or poses a threat to the safety or health of affiliated third parties (including patients and/or employees of affiliates).

C. Conduct Dismissal Pre-Hearing Procedures

- 1) If the SPC is considering a student for a Conduct Dismissal, the student will receive a Notice that includes: (1) the date, place, and time of the hearing; (2) a statement of the issue before the Committee; (3) the student's right to have an Advisor present; (4) the names of the members of the SPC who will be hearing the matter; (5) the name of the administrator who will present on behalf of the College; (6) the date on which documents must be provided to the Committee for review; and (7) a link to these procedures on the COM-T website.
- 2) A student is entitled to no less than 10 business days' notice of the hearing date. The notice period may be shortened at the student's request.

- 3) A student may challenge the participation of any member of the SPC on the grounds of personal bias or conflict by submitting a written statement to the Chair no less than 5 business days before the hearing. The SPC Chair will make a determination regarding that member's participation. The decision is final.
- 4) By the date identified in the hearing Notice letter, the student and the College must provide the SPC Chair with any documents or other materials to be considered by the Committee during the hearing process. These materials may include a written statement from the student, letters of support, or other relevant documents. The SPC Chair may exclude any document the Chair determines is irrelevant or repetitious.
- 5) By the date identified in the hearing Notice letter, the student and the College must provide the SPC Chair with the names of any person who will appear as a witness at a hearing and a short description of the information the witness will provide to the Committee. The student and the College are each limited to three total witnesses. The SPC Chair may exclude irrelevant or repetitive witnesses or request that witnesses who will provide only general character statements about the student provide a written statement in lieu of appearing.
- 6) At least one day prior to the hearing, the SPC Chair will provide the student and the administrator representing the College with all documents the Committee will consider in making its determination. These documents may include the documents submitted by the student or the College, the student's entire academic record as provided by the Registrar, and written statements from unavailable witnesses.
- 7) If the student intends to have an Advisor present, the student must inform the SPC Chair of the name of the Advisor no less than 5 business days before the hearing. If the Advisor is an attorney, the administrator representing the College may also be represented by an attorney selected by the University's Office of the General Counsel.
- 8) A representative of the University's Office of the General Counsel may attend the hearing and advise the SPC on procedural matters.
- 9) If the student does not appear for the hearing, the SPC will make a determination based on the available information.
- 10) Any matter referred for a hearing may be resolved by agreement with the student who is the subject of the complaint, including a voluntary withdrawal from the College.
- 11) If the student voluntarily withdraws from the College by giving written notice to a student affairs dean, the Vice Dean, Medical Education, or the Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs, the student will be withdrawn from the College and all rights under these Procedures will terminate immediately.

D. Conduct Dismissal Hearing Process

- 1) These proceedings are confidential. Hearings before the SPC are closed to everyone except the student, the College representative, the SPC voting members, the SPC support staff, the Associate Dean, Student Affairs (or designee), the student's House Dean, approved Advisors, and counsel to the Committee. All other SPC resource members or non-voting SPC members will not attend hearings. Witnesses will wait outside and be present only for their statement to the Committee.

- 2) The rules of court, administrative law procedures, and open meeting laws do not apply to SPC hearings. Immaterial deviations from these Procedures will not render a decision moot.
 - 3) All students and hearing participants will be reminded that it is a violation of Arizona Board of Regents policies to provide false information to the University, including the SPC.
 - 4) The Chair will set reasonable and equal time limits on the student and the administrator presenting on behalf of the College. At any time, the Chair may restrict the presentation of information that is irrelevant or overly repetitious.
 - 5) The audio of the hearing will be recorded but transcribed only upon request.
 - 6) The College has the burden of establishing that dismissal is appropriate under the circumstances.
 - 7) The Chair will ask the administrator representing the College to present the basis for the Conduct Dismissal. At this time, the administrator may make a statement, reference documents, or call witnesses. At the end of any witness statement, the student may ask questions of that witness. At the end of the administrator's presentation, the student may ask questions of the administrator.
 - 8) The Chair will then ask the student to present the basis for allowing the student to remain enrolled at the College. At this time, the student may make a statement, reference documents, or call witnesses. At the end of any witness statement, the administrator may ask questions of that witness. At the end of the student's presentation, the administrator may ask questions of the student.
 - 9) At any time, SPC members may ask questions of the student, the administrator presenting for the College, the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, the student's House Dean, or any witnesses.
 - 10) At the conclusion, the SPC Chair will ask the student and the College administrator for any summary remarks.
- E. Conduct Dismissal Hearing Deliberations and Decision by Student Progress Committee
- 1) The student, the administrator representing the College, and any advisors (with the exception of legal counsel and support staff) will be excused from the hearing and the audio recording will stop. The SPC will then discuss the information provided and determine whether to dismiss the student or whether other action is more appropriate.
 - 2) Any decision under this section requires that a quorum of the SPC voting-members be present. Decisions require a majority of that quorum.
 - 3) The SPC will issue a written decision within 1 week of the date of the hearing. The decision will be based only on information presented at the hearing and must include a summary of the information the decision is based on, the conclusions of the Committee, and a statement that the decision is supported by a "preponderance of the evidence."
 - 4) The SPC Chair will sign the decision on behalf of the SPC and will provide a copy of the decision to the student, the Vice Dean, Medical Education, the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, the Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs, and the attorneys representing the parties (if any).
- F. Conduct Dismissal Decision by Student Progress Committee

- 1) On behalf of the SPC, the SPC chair will send a Notice of dismissal to the student. The Notice will include the basis for the dismissal, the date by which the student may appeal to the SAC, and the effective date of dismissal if the appeal is not filed by the given deadline.
- 2) If the student chooses to appeal the dismissal, the appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice of Dismissal from the SPC Chair. Appeals must follow the parameters outlined in the [Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#).

VIII. Student Appeal of SPC Decisions

- A. If the SPC determines that a student must repeat an academic year, the SPC will issue a Notice informing the student of this decision. The Notice will include the basis for the decision, and the date by which the student may appeal to the SAC. In the case of a decision to require the student to repeat a year, the Notice will also include the student's academic plan.
- B. If the SPC dismisses a student, the SPC will issue a Notice informing the student of this decision. The Notice will include the basis for the decision and the date by which the student may appeal to the SAC. The notice will also include the effective date of dismissal if the appeal is not filed by the given deadline.
- C. If the student chooses to appeal an SPC decision, the appeal must be submitted within 5 business days of the Notice from the SPC. Appeals must follow the parameters outlined in the [Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#).

Related Information

Policies and Documents

- [COM-T Policy 1-101: Grading and Progression Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-107: Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-110: Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#)
- [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](#)
- [Arizona Board of Regents \(ABOR\) Policy 5-308: Student Code of Conduct](#)

Revision History

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

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