

## Policy – Graduate Academic Performance

**Policy Number :**

**Policy Category : General Administrative**

**Policy Owner : Vice President/Vice Dean for  
Graduate Education**

**Policy Audience : Graduate Student Council**

### 1. Definitions:

### 2. Board Committee Review:

Academic Affairs

### 3. Purpose:

Review of academic performance of all graduate and certificate students must be conducted on a regular basis to assure progress and achievement of all academic requirements and standards.

### 4. Governance and Enforcement:

Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs

### 5. Policy:

#### ***Section I: General Overview***

Graduate student academic performance is evaluated by written and/or oral examination and through observation in all academic settings. Course faculty must provide appropriate early opportunities for students to receive formative feedback on their academic performance. Grades issued by the faculty are based on all requirements for graduate degree and certificate programs. These evaluations and grades, therefore, reflect the faculty's judgment about the student's academic performance and progress in their graduate or certificate program curriculum.

Performance in graduate and certificate courses is described by:

- Grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F or P or I or W) entered on the official grade transcript. Grades are part of the student's permanent record maintained in the Office of the Registrar.
- The assignment of the grade Incomplete (I) is at the discretion of the course director. If the student does not complete all required course work by the deadline on the approved Incomplete Grade Request Form, a grade of F will be posted by the Registrar.

- A grade of W represents an official withdrawal from the course. Any tuition refund will be in accordance with the refund schedule for that term.

## Section II: Academic Good Standing

Academic performance of all graduate degree and certificate candidates is reviewed at regular intervals and at the close of each term by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. All graduate degree and certificate candidates are required to maintain a minimum average GPA of 2.25 at any review interval to remain in good academic standing and progress to the next academic term.

## Section III: Failure to Maintain Good Academic Standing

Any graduate degree or certificate candidate at risk of failing to or has failed to maintain good academic standing upon review by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs will be notified in writing of all academic deficiencies as well as changes in academic status. Determination of academic status for at risk students or students that have failed to maintain good academic standing follows the criteria below.

Academic Status	Earned Average GPA	Status Becomes
Good	2.5 – 2.25	Academic Warning
Good	2.24 – 2.0	Academic Probation
Academic Warning	<2.25	Academic Probation
Academic Probation	<2.25	Dismissal
Any	<2.0	Dismissal

*Academic Warning:* The student will receive a written warning that future failure to maintain good academic standing may result in additional consequences including dismissal from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine.

*Academic Probation:* The imposition of academic probation will require satisfactory completion of all requirements defining the terms of the academic probation as determined by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. The length of time for academic probationary status is at the discretion of the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. All periods of academic probation must be accompanied by a description of the actions that will result if the requirements of academic probation are not met. Continued failure to maintain good academic standing during this time may result in more serious sanctions including dismissal from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. Academic probation is reportable and will be included as a permanent part of the student's academic record (transcript).

All students placed on academic probation will be followed by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. With successful completion of the requirements of academic probation, the student will be reviewed by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs regarding the probationary status of the student.

While on academic probation, students cannot participate in, hold, or run for elected office in student organizations or represent Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine at external

meetings. The student may not participate in activities that would entail absence from required classes.

*Dismissal:* Dismissal is the permanent termination of student status at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, which includes the loss of any right to continue in the graduate curriculum, the loss of all instructional credit toward the graduate degree, exclusion from any Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine property, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine-sponsored or -affiliated events. A person dismissed from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is denied the rights and privileges of inclusion in the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine community both as a student and as an alumnus.

#### **Section IV: Appeal of Change in Academic Status**

A student may appeal a decision of dismissal by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs that they deem adverse to the Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education within ten (10) business days of the date of student notification of the decision reached by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. The written appeal may be submitted only if the procedures set forth in this Policy were not followed.

Appeals must be in writing and submitted to the Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education within ten (10) business days from when the student receives notification of imposed sanctions. The written appeal shall consist of a plain, concise and complete statement with specific delineations of the grounds for the appeal and supporting facts/documentation.

Upon receipt of such a report, the Vice Dean reviews the situation and the decision rendered by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs with the student and may then call into session an Ad Hoc Academic Standards Committee to review the facts and make a recommendation for Action to the Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education. The Ad Hoc Academic Standards Committee will be appointed by the Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education. The Committee is composed of three (3) faculty members. The Committee will conduct its inquiry with fairness and with respect for confidentiality.

Students may request that a non-participating administrator or faculty advocate accompany the student at the Committee meeting. The Committee's findings will be presented as a recommendation to the Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education within ten (10) days of the Committee meeting. The Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education will render a decision that will be provided in writing to the student within ten (10) days of receipt of the Committee's recommendation.

#### **Section V: Time to Degree Completion**

Graduate degree programs (master and/or certificate) must be completed within 5 years of initial enrollment. A student may request an extension beyond 5 years in writing to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs; however, courses older than 5 years will not be counted toward the degree. After consultation with the student's Academic Advisor and Program Director, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs may grant the extension upon review of the student's academic and professional performance, special circumstances, and expected time to complete remaining

degree requirements. The granting or denial of a requested extension is at the sole discretion of the Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs.

## **Section VI: Requirements for Graduation**

Graduate degrees and certificates will be conferred by Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine on students who have complied with the following requirements:

- Completion of the required credit hours of coursework with a minimum average GPA of 2.25;
- Attain a level of judgment and skills that warrants the faculty's confidence in the student's ability to perform in an independent manner compliant with the Graduate Student Code of Conduct;
- Discharge all financial obligations to Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine.

## **VII: Student Records and Confidentiality**

All proceedings described in this policy are conducted in compliance with the requirements of FERPA and Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine policy. No information shall be released from such proceedings except as required or permitted by law and Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine policy. It is generally the policy of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine to obtain consent from a student before releasing information from a student's education record. However, where in the judgment of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, the release of such information is appropriate and is not otherwise prohibited by FERPA or other applicable laws, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine reserves the right to release information without student consent. The complete Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine FERPA policy may be found in the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Graduate Education Student Handbook.

### **6. Key Stakeholders :**

Student Council, Assistant Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs, Vice President/Vice Dean for Graduate Education