

**Policy Number: 301.1022.101**

**Policy Revision Date: 05-10-2022**

**Policy Category: Academic**

**Policy Owner: Vice Dean for Medical Education**

**Policy Audience: Students, Faculty and  
Administration**

### **1. Definitions:**

### **2. Medical Curriculum Committee Review:**

May 10, 2022

### **3. Introduction / Purpose:**

The academic requirements for the MD degree include the satisfactory completion of the MD curriculum at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. The progress of each student is monitored annually by the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS) and Vice Dean to ensure that students meet the overall requirements to move from one level of instruction to another, via the Policy on Academic Professional Standards governing the MD Program.

Federal law and regulations require that all students receiving financial assistance maintain satisfactory academic progress (Refer to Financial Aid Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress). Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the successful completion of degree requirements according to established increments including both qualitative and quantitative standards that lead to the awarding of the degree within published time limits.

### **4. Governance and Enforcement:**

Vice Dean for Medical Education

### **5. Policy:**

#### **Qualitative Measures of SAP**

Each student at Geisinger Commonwealth is required to successfully complete all of GCSOM's required course work, examinations, and mandatory academic exercises in order to graduate with an MD degree, as defined by the program. GCSOM does not measure academic progress by means of a cumulative grade point average but rather with grades of Pass or Fail in Phase 1 of the curriculum and with grades of Honors, High Pass, Pass or Fail in Phases 2 and 3 of the curriculum. Specifically, all courses in Phase 1 must be completed with a grade of Pass for progression to phase 2 of the curriculum, and all courses in phase 2 must be completed with a grade of Pass for progression to phase 3 of the curriculum. In phase 3 of the curriculum, students must complete all courses, clerkships or approved activities with a minimum grade of Pass.

Students must pass each segment of the curriculum to the satisfaction of the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS) before advancing to the next segment and must complete all requirements of the curriculum to the satisfaction of CAPS in order to graduate. Students must maintain academic standing consistent with GCSOM's graduation requirements, as outlined in Policy for Graduation. Students are considered to have academic standing consistent with GCSOM's graduation requirements if they are progressing through the curriculum to the satisfaction of CAPS.

As outlined in the Academic and Professional Performance Policies, students who fail any course, clerkship, or rotation may request a formal plan to remove those deficiencies from the course/clerkship director, which may include repeating the course(s), clerkship or rotation, this plan is then reviewed by CAPS. A student removing deficiencies in Phase 1, 2, or 3 with the approval of CAPS is considered to have an academic standing consistent with GCSOM's standards for graduation and, therefore, to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress, provided they continue to meet the quantitative standards.

Students who fail to meet the qualitative standards are dismissed from GCSOM.

### **Quantitative Standards**

The maximum time frame to earn the M.D. is six years, including leaves of absence granted by GCSOM. Except as noted below, students shall not remain enrolled as candidates for the MD degree, beyond six academic years from their matriculation to GCSOM. Note that applicants officially become students of GCSOM on the first day of classes in the MD program.

The GCSOM curriculum is comprised of three segments: Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3. The standard lengths of these curricular segments are as follows:

1. Phase 1 Pre-clinical – 18 months
2. Phase 2 Clerkship Level – 12 months
3. Phase 3 Advanced – 14 months

In order to ensure timely progress toward their degrees and maintain satisfactory academic standing, students must:

1. Complete Phase 1 within three years of matriculation to GCSOM
2. Complete Phase 2 within two years; students who take more than the standard 18 months to complete Phase 1 must plan for completion of Phase 2 on a schedule that ensures completion of the full M.D. program, including the Phase 3, by the end of the sixth academic year from GCSOM matriculation date.
3. Complete Phase 3 within two years OR by the end of the sixth academic year following their GCSOM matriculation date, whichever is sooner.

Students granted leaves of absence from the GCSOM MD program in order to pursue additional degrees (e.g., Master's in Public Health) at a Title IV approved institution must meet the standards outlined in (1), (2) and (3) above and may not take more than six cumulative years to earn the MD degree. The period of time during which students are on leaves of absence to pursue additional degrees is excluded from the six-year cumulative maximum time frame.

The quantitative standards are monitored by the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards. Students who fail to meet the quantitative standards should refer to the Financial Aid Policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress for additional details.

### **Repeated Coursework**

A student repeating a course, clerkship or rotation with the approval of CAPS is considered to be making Satisfactory Academic Progress provided they continue to meet the quantitative and qualitative standards.

### **Grades of Incomplete and Course Withdrawals**

Grades of Incomplete and Course Withdrawal may be made up with the permission of CAPS. A student completing a plan to address a grade of Incomplete or Course Withdrawal, with the approval of CAPS, is considered to have an academic standing consistent with GCSOM's graduation requirements and therefore to be maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress, provided they continue to meet the quantitative standards.

### **Incomplete**

An Incomplete is a temporary grade, recorded by the Course Director when the student must complete a finite amount of work in order to satisfy the learning objectives without re-enrolling in the course.

A grade of Incomplete may be recorded on a student's transcript in the following circumstances:

1. Any level:
  - a. An examination delay.
  - b. Failure to meet goals, requirements, and objectives of the course with approved absence.
  
2. Phase 2:
  - a. Failure to pass the assessment of medical knowledge on the first attempt but passing all other graded components of the clerkship and completing all clerkship assignments.
  - b. Failure to pass the OSCE on the first attempt but passing all other graded components of the clerkship and completing all clerkship assignments.

For the Clerkship Level, a grade of Incomplete may be removed by successful retake of either the cognitive exam or the assessment of clinical skills examination (whichever applies).

When entering a grade of Incomplete to a student's record, the Course/Clerkship Director may specify a deadline for the student to address the Incomplete not to exceed one calendar year from the end date of the original course/rotation and an alternate grade to be recorded if the grade of Incomplete has not been addressed by the stated deadline. In the absence of an alternate deadline, as established by the Director, and in the absence of a final grade, all grades of Incomplete will be automatically updated to a final grade of Fail effective one year from date the grade of Incomplete was originally posted to the student electronic records system.

## **Course Withdrawals**

A final course grade of Withdrawal may be recorded on a student's transcript in the following circumstances: Refer to Course Withdrawal Policy

- Any level: An important distinction, especially if considering a leave of absence, a final course grade of Withdrawal will be recorded if a student wishes to “step out of” a learning activity after the first meeting of the course, clerkship, or clinical rotation. A grade of Incomplete may be recorded only if the criteria noted under the Incomplete section of this policy is met.
- Phase 1: A student may withdraw from a pre-clinical course following the review and approval of a request submitted in writing. Requests to withdraw must be approved by the Associate/Assistant Dean for Students in consultation with the Course Director. The request must be made prior to the onset of the final examination in the course. The transcript grade for such a course will be recorded as Withdrawn unless the student's cumulative grade in the course is failing at the time of withdrawal. In that event, a grade of Fail will be recorded. A student must enroll in a remediation or full future delivery of the course or equivalent of the course if/when the course no longer exists in order to complete the course requirements. All plans for course remediation must be submitted to and reviewed by CAPS prior to enrolling in the course and/or remediation. Requests to return to the curriculum following course withdrawals will be reviewed by CAPS.
- Phase 2 and Phase 3: A student may withdraw from a clerkship/rotation/elective following the review and approval of a request submitted in writing. Requests for withdrawal must be approved by the Associate/Assistant Dean for Students in consultation with the Clerkship/Course Director. The request must be made prior to the final day of the rotation. The transcript grade of Withdrawn will be recorded for such a rotation. A narrative of the student's performance prior to the withdrawal will be submitted for incorporation in the student's permanent record. All plans for clerkship/rotation/elective remediation must be submitted to and reviewed by CAPS prior to enrolling in the course and/or remediation. Requests to return to the curriculum following Phase 2 Clerkship/Phase 3 Level withdrawals will be reviewed by the CAPS.

Medical students who wish to permanently withdraw from the College should refer to Policy on Withdrawing from GCSOM.

## **Academic Amnesty**

All coursework completed as part of a student's MD program at GCSOM shall be evaluated when determining whether the student is making satisfactory academic progress. Academic records are never altered or expunged after students remediate or retake courses and degree requirements.

## **6. Key Stakeholders:**

Students, Faculty and Administration