

# ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

## Honor Code

All students enrolled in the School of Medicine are members of the student body of the University of South Carolina and are, therefore, subject to the regulations found in the Carolina Community, a publication of the University's Division of Student Affairs and Department of Academic Support. The Carolina Community contains a description of the procedures for administration of the Honor Code and other University policies. Questions regarding these policies may be directed to personnel in the School of Medicine Office of Student and Career Services.

Students enrolled in the School of Medicine adhere to the University Honor Code, as follows: It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this Honor Code or who knowingly assists another to violate this Honor Code shall be subject to discipline. A violation of the Honor Code may result in suspension or dismissal from the School of Medicine.

## Student Conduct and Behavior

Students enrolled in the School of Medicine should conduct themselves in an appropriately professional manner as defined by the School of Medicine Policy on Evaluation of Personal and Professional Conduct. Conduct should be in conformity with the high moral and ethical standards of the profession as well as within the legal constraints of any law-abiding community.

## Policy on Evaluation of Personal and Professional Conduct

Medical students have the responsibility to maintain the highest levels of personal and professional integrity and to show compassion and respect for themselves, colleagues, faculty, staff, and, most important, the patients who participate in their education.

Evaluation of the personal and professional conduct of medical students will include the following general and specific considerations:

1. The student will show concern for the welfare of patients. He or she will:
  - a. display a professional attitude in obtaining medical histories and physical examinations;
  - b. act appropriately and respectfully in all verbal and nonverbal interactions with patients;
  - c. treat patients with respect and dignity, both in the presence of patients and in discussions with professional colleagues; and
  - d. display concern for the total patient.
2. The student will show concern for the rights of others. He or she will:
  - a. demonstrate a considerate manner and cooperative spirit in dealing with professional staff, colleagues, and members of the health-care team;
  - b. treat all persons encountered in a professional capacity with equality regardless of race, religion, sex, handicap, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status; and
  - c. assume an appropriate and equitable share of duties among peers and colleagues.
3. The student will show evidence of responsibility to duty. He or she will:
  - a. effectively and promptly undertake duties, follow through until their completion, and notify appropriate persons in authority of problems;
  - b. be punctual and present at rounds, conferences, and all academic and clinical obligations;
  - c. notify course and clinical clerkship directors (or other appropriate persons) of absence or inability to attend to duties;
  - d. see assigned patients regularly and, with appropriate supervision, assume responsibility for their care; and
  - e. ensure that he or she can be promptly located at all times when on duty.
4. The student will be trustworthy. He or she will:
  - a. be truthful and intellectually honest in all communications;
  - b. accept responsibility and establish priorities for meeting multiple professional demands and for completing work necessary for the optimal care of patients;
  - c. accurately discern when supervision or advice is needed before acting; and
  - d. maintain confidentiality of all patient information.
5. The student will maintain a professional demeanor. He or she will:
  - a. maintain appropriate standards of personal appearance, attire, and hygiene for the patient population served;
  - b. maintain emotional stability and equilibrium under the pressures of emergencies, fatigue, professional stress, or personal problems; and
  - c. be responsible in the use of alcohol and prescription drugs and avoid their effects while on duty.
6. The student will possess those individual characteristics required for the practice of medicine. He or she will:
  - a. be capable of making logical diagnostic and therapeutic judgments;
  - b. communicate effectively with patients, supervisors, and peers;
  - c. establish appropriate professional relationships with faculty, colleagues, and patients; and
  - d. show evidence of the ability to be perceptive, introspective, and insightful in professional relationships.

## Notification of Student Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.

A student should submit to the registrar, dean, head of the academic department, or other appropriate official, a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. The University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

A student who wishes to ask the University to amend a record should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed.

If the University decides not to amend the record as requested, the University will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the University discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The University may disclose Directory Information without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Office of the University Registrar not to release Directory Information pertaining to him or her. Students are notified annually, both in the academic bulletins and via email, of their rights under FERPA and are provided with instructions on how to request a "Confidentiality Indicator" on their academic record which prevents the disclosure of Directory Information. A Confidentiality Indicator will be placed on the release of Directory Information filed with the University Registrar, which will remain in effect until the student files a written request to remove it. A request not to disclose Directory Information applies to the entire category of such information and cannot be selective with regard to specific items defined as Directory Information. Similarly, a request not to disclose Directory Information applies to all individuals and cannot be selective with regard to specific individuals or organizations.
- The University discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom the University has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using University employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, service provider or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the University.
- To officials of other institutions in which the student seeks or intends to enroll provided that the student had previously requested a release of his/her record;
- To authorized representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Defense (Solomon Amendment), U.S. Attorney General, the Comptroller General of the United States, state education authorities, organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the University, and accrediting organizations; to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its Immigration and Customs Enforcement Bureau (ICE) in order to comply with the requirements of SEVIS.
- In connection with a student's application for, and receipt of, financial aid;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- To parents of dependent students as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, Section 152;
- To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency; or

- To the alleged victim of any crime of violence or the results of any disciplinary proceedings conducted by the University.
- The University may disclose the result of a disciplinary proceeding to a parent or guardian so long as the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the incident and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of University drug or alcohol policies, or any federal, state, or local law.
- To students currently registered in a particular class, the names and email addresses of others on the roster may be disclosed in order to participate in class discussion.

### Release of Directory Information

In accordance with section 99.7 of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the University of South Carolina provides students annual notification of their FERPA rights. The University of South Carolina has designated certain items as Directory Information. At the University of South Carolina, these items are as follows:

- Name
- Dates of Attendance
- Campus
- College or School
- Classification
- Primary Program of Study
- Full-time or Part-time Status
- Degree(s) Awarded Including Dates
- Honors and Award Including Dean's and President's List
- University Email Address
- City, State, and Zip Code Associated with a Student's Permanent Address

The University may disclose Directory Information without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Office of the University Registrar not to release Directory Information pertaining to him or her. Students are notified annually, both in the academic bulletins and via email, of their rights under FERPA and are provided with instructions on how to request a "Confidentiality Indicator" on their academic record which prevents the disclosure of Directory Information. A Confidentiality Indicator will be placed on the release of Directory Information filed with the University Registrar, which will remain in effect until the student files a written request to remove it. A request not to disclose Directory Information applies to the entire category of such information and cannot be selective with regard to specific items defined as Directory Information. Similarly, a request not to disclose Directory Information applies to all individuals and cannot be selective with regard to specific individuals or organizations.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University of South Carolina to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

## Transcripts and Other Documents

All transcripts must be requested in writing from the Office of the University Registrar. A fee of \$12 is charged for each transcript copy requested, unless the transcript is for use with a current application

to The Graduate School. <http://registrar.sc.edu/html/transcripts/default.stm>.

No transcript will be issued to/for a student who is indebted to the University.

With the exception of copies made for internal University use, no copy of a student's record will be released to anyone (including the State Department of Education) without the student's written consent.

## Medical Licensure

Each state has its own licensing board with its own medical licensure requirements. Consequently, although the Doctor of Medicine program at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine is fully accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), thereby making its graduates eligible for professional licensure in the state of South Carolina, students must complete the process and requirements for professional licensure in the state of their residency. For students who are not living and completing residency in South Carolina, the following link provides information regarding medical licensure specific to individual states throughout the U.S.

<https://www.fsmb.org/contact-a-state-medical-board> (<https://www.fsmb.org/contact-a-state-medical-board/>)

If a current student is considering relocating to another state after being admitted into the Doctor of Medicine program, the student must contact the Director of Enrollment Services to discuss how the move may impact their ability to participate in academic courses and clinical rotations in a different state.

## Medical Student Performance Evaluation

The Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) is a comprehensive assessment of a student's performance in achieving the educational objectives of the University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Columbia's medical school curriculum. It is neither a letter of recommendation nor the school's prediction of the student's future performance in a residency program. The MSPE is prepared by faculty and staff in the Office of Medical Education and Academic Affairs and transmitted to post-graduate programs to which the student is applying.

The MSPE, as an institutional assessment, is considered a component of the student's academic record, and thus students at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Columbia have the option to review the MSPE in its entirety prior to its transmission. The student is permitted to correct factual errors in the MSPE but not to revise any evaluative statements. The student may, however, appeal to the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs for changes to evaluative statements. The Associate Dean has the final authority as to the content of the MSPE.

The MSPE is required for fellowship applications and for re-applicants going back through the Match, and it will be resubmitted in its entirety for graduates who request/require its resubmission. Once submitted to residency programs, the MSPE becomes a permanent part of the medical student record and will not be updated or changed to reflect activities or accomplishments during residency.

## Appeals Regarding University Records

To ensure that records are not inaccurate or misleading, an appropriate hearing board provides students the opportunity to challenge the content of University records, and a procedure for requesting correction or

deletion of any inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise inappropriate data contained therein. Such requests should be made through the petitions committees of the individual campuses.

## Policy on Registration/Records/Diploma Holds

### Registration Hold

Every student is expected to discharge all obligations to the University as promptly as possible. Students who fail to meet their obligations to the University will not be permitted to register for classes.

### Transcript and Diploma Holds

No student or individual duly authorized by the student shall be issued a copy of the student's transcript or receive verification, oral or written, of information contained therein, or be issued a diploma if the student is indebted to the University, the School of Medicine or any affiliated training institutions or agencies and/or if a student is in arrears or default on student loans, and/or if a student fails to participate in required assessment activities. However, requests for verification of enrollment will be fulfilled in circumstances required for student loans as required for use of Title V funds.

## Evaluating the Curriculum

A realistic medical curriculum must be flexible, capable of withstanding continuous monitoring, and capable of adjustment to accommodate current changes in medical education brought about by changes in the needs of society. The Curriculum Committee, therefore, with the assistance of special subcommittees and with faculty and student input, continually monitors the curriculum in order to ensure that the goals and objectives of the curriculum and the School of Medicine are achieved.

## Academic Workload Policy for Students in the Preclinical Curriculum

The University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Columbia recognizes that the time spent in acquiring knowledge is critical to achieving a solid and sound medical education. However, in order to ensure that the learning objectives and intended learning outcomes are not complicated by scheduled contact hours in the preclinical educational experience, this policy places limitations on the weekly academic workload.

Educational engagement hours (i.e., didactic and self-directed learning) for medical students in the preclinical curriculum are not to exceed an average of 20 hours of required educational activity per week when averaged over the total semester's weekly class schedule. An additional 10 hours of scheduled group activity (e.g. laboratories, small group case-based sessions, problem based learning) is allowed per week.

The academic workload expectations for each course (i.e. the assigned period of contact hours allotted to a course each week) will correspond to the number of assigned credit hours. Each self-directed learning hour is given the same weight as a didactic hour when calculating a course's contact hours.

The monitoring of all scheduled educational activities, and thus the student academic workload, resides with the Curriculum Committee with input from respective subcommittees and assistance from the Office of Curricular Affairs. - Approved 12-10-2015

## Class Attendance

### Absences

Enrollment in the School of Medicine obligates students to complete all assigned course work promptly and to attend classes on a punctual and regular basis. Absences, whether excused or unexcused, do not absolve the student of these responsibilities.

### Grade Penalties for Excessive Absences

Students are expected to attend all regular class sessions. The course or clerkship director has the prerogative to exact a grade penalty for excessive absences. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason for the instructor to refer to the Student Promotions Committee for consideration in the promotion process.

### Notification of the Office of Student and Career Services

Any student who finds it necessary to be absent from a quiz, examination, or other required academic experience due to an emergency situation, illness, or hospitalization, is required to notify the Office of Student and Career Services and the affected course/clerkship director(s) of the reason for the absence prior to the absence or as soon as possible thereafter. Notification should be in the form of a phone call, voice message, or email to both the Office of Student and Career Services and the course/clerkship director(s). When requested, the student will provide written verification of the reason for the absence from the treating physician or other professional to the assistant dean for student affairs. Within the guidelines of University of South Carolina policy, the course/clerkship director will determine whether or not an absence from class shall be excused. Under these guideline, absences from examinations, structured laboratory assignments, or other academic requirements may be made up at the discretion of the course or clerkship director.

### Lack of Notification

Any student who does not provide appropriate notification to the Office of Student and Career Services and/or who does not provide written verification of the reason for the absence when requested to do so may forfeit the opportunity to make up missed examinations and/or other academic experiences.

### Inclement Weather Policies for M-I and M-II Students

School of Medicine M-I and M-II classes are canceled when University of South Carolina classes are canceled in times of inclement weather. School of Medicine M-I and M-II classes begin on a delayed schedule when University of South Carolina classes begin on a delayed schedule in times of inclement weather.

### Inclement Weather and Holiday Policies for M-III and M-IV Students

The inclement weather and holiday policies that have been developed and approved for M-III and M-IV students are discussed in the Student Handbook to Clinical Rotations and in the Clerkship Director Handbook, both of which may be accessed through the Office of Curricular Affairs Webpage.

## Grading System

### Credit Grades

The grade point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total grade points earned by the hours attempted for credit.

Description	Letter Grade	GPA	Numerical Grade <sup>1</sup>
Superior	A	4.0	90-100
Above Average	B+	3.5	85-89
Average	B	3.0	80-84
Satisfactory	C+	2.5	75-79
Marginal	C	2.0	70-74
Poor	D	1.0	65-69
Failure	F	0.0	below 65

Course grades of D or lower cannot be accepted for degree requirements.

<sup>1</sup> Any final numeric grade in a course or clerkship whose first decimal place is calculated to be .5 to .9 shall be rounded to the next whole number, while grades whose first decimal place is calculated to be .0 to .4 should be rounded down to the lower number.

### Other Symbols

Other symbols used in the grading system are defined below. These grades do not carry grade points.

**S** - Satisfactory or passing to be used in evaluating work done on a Pass-Fail basis

**U** - Unsatisfactory or failure to be used in evaluating work done on a Pass-Fail basis

**W** - Withdrawal passing, or without penalty, from a course or clerkship

**WF** - Withdrawal failing, or with penalty, from a course or clerkship

**AUD** - Course or clerkship was carried on an audit basis

**I** - Incomplete failure to complete some portion of the assigned work in a completed course or clerkship

**NR** - No report to be used in the absence of any of the above grades; a temporary mark, to be replaced subsequently by a regular grade, which can be used only when no grade has been assigned

The faculty of the School of Medicine is committed to the philosophy that satisfactory performance is expected of all students. No single course or clerkship or area of study is deemed to be more important than any other. The required courses and clerkships of the curriculum are all essential for the practice of medicine, regardless of the student's future specialty choice.

## GPA/Honors/Class Rank

At the conclusion of each academic semester and academic year, the class rank for each student is calculated on the basis of cumulative GPA. The GPA for a student who has repeated a semester/year includes all hours attempted and grades earned. For purposes of promotion only under the minimum 2.000 GPA rule, hours and grades earned during the original year are not considered in GPA calculation.

Graduation honors are based on the cumulative GPA at the end of the fourth year. Honors are noted on the student's diploma and transcript as follows: cum laude 3.500 - 3.749; magna cum laude 3.750 - 3.999; summa cum laude 4.000. Transfer students from schools which assign grades on a pass/fail basis or which do not award grade points are not eligible for graduation honors. To be eligible for honors, transfer students must earn the qualifying grade point average for all work completed at the University of South Carolina, as well as for the transfer work.

## Student Appeal of Grades

The procedures herein shall not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the grade or evaluation of his/her work. Such matters shall be discussed by a student and his/her instructor; final authority shall remain with the instructor. Students have the right to be graded in an equitable manner, free from arbitrary bias or capriciousness on the part of faculty members. The basis of a student grievance shall be a violation of Teaching Responsibility policies contained in the Faculty Manual ([http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/Faculty\\_Manual\\_Columbia.pdf](http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/Faculty_Manual_Columbia.pdf)); or a violation of the policies on Protection of Freedom of Expression or Protection against Improper Disclosure, as stated in the Carolina Community.

Students who believe they have the right to grieve under this policy should, within 30 calendar days of receiving a grade, contact the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs to review the appeals process.

1. *Appeal of a Course Grade and/or Written Evaluation*
  - a. Initiating an Appeal
    - i. Students must submit all appeals in writing to the course/ clerkship director.
    - ii. Students must send copies of the appeal to the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs.
    - iii. The written appeal must clearly state the grievance.
    - iv. Students must initiate an appeal within 30 calendar days of notification of the grade or evaluation.
  - b. Appeal to the Course or Clerkship Director Level One
    - i. The first level of appeal of a course grade and/or written evaluation is to the course or clerkship director.
    - ii. Should the course or clerkship director determine that there is a reason to change the course grade or evaluation in the student's favor, the director will send a request for revision to School of Medicine Registrar, who will in turn take the request to the Grade Change Subcommittee. If no reason for change is found, the course or clerkship director will inform the student that the grade or evaluation stands. In either event, the student must receive written notification of the course or clerkship director's decision within ten working days of the student's appeal.
  - c. *Appeal to the Department Chair Level Two*
    - i. If the course or clerkship director's decision is not favorable to the student, the student's clerkship director's decision.
      1. For departmentally based courses, the student may appeal the course or clerkship director's decision to the department chair.
      2. For team-taught courses, the student may appeal the course or clerkship director's decision to the department chair responsible for management of the course.
      3. The appeal must be made within 10 days of receiving the decision from the course or clerkship director.
    - ii. After consultation with the course or clerkship director, the department chair may uphold the director's decision or support the student appeal. Should the department chair determine that there is a reason to change the course grade or evaluation in the student's favor, the department chair will send a request for revision to the School of Medicine Registrar, who will in turn take the request to the Grade Change Subcommittee. If no reason for change is found, the

chair will inform the student that the grade or evaluation stands. In either event, the student must receive written notification of the department chair's decision within ten working days of the student's appeal.

- d. *Appeal to the Grade Change Committee Level Three*
  - i. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the department chair, the student may submit a written appeal to the Grade Change Subcommittee via the School of Medicine Registrar with a copy of the appeal to the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs.
  - ii. The written appeal must state grounds for the grievance.
  - iii. The appeal must be made within 10 days of receiving the decision from the department chair.
  - iv. The Grade Change Subcommittee will then either:
    1. Rule that the appeal lacks the merit to warrant a hearing and will uphold the decision of the department chair.
    2. Rule that the appeal has the necessary merit for a hearing and will schedule a hearing on the appeal.
  - v. The Grade Change Subcommittee decision is the final decision for Course grade or Written Evaluation appeals.
2. Faculty Grievance Procedure
  - a. A faculty member who feels that he/she has been aggrieved as a result of a student appeal proceeding has the right to appear before the Faculty Grievance Committee and present his/her case of the committee.

## Curriculum Accommodations

The School of Medicine will provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students wishing to request accommodations should make application to the University's Office of Student Disability Services. Once accommodations are approved, the School of Medicine will be notified. The application must be made in a timely manner prior to any coursework for which accommodation is requested. The assistant dean for preclinical curriculum, when indicated, will advise course directors and other pertinent faculty as to the nature and extent of the accommodations to be provided. The School of Medicine, through the subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, appointed by the chair, retains the right to request additional information, including test results and diagnostic information from a qualified professional, concerning accommodations that extend beyond the following: extended time for written exams, a separate room for exams, and a note taker. Students receiving accommodations will be held to the same technical standards for graduation as other students.

The assistant dean for preclinical curriculum will also assist students in applying to the National Board of Medical Examiners for permission to take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) under nonstandard conditions.

## Leave of Absence, Administrative Leave, and Withdrawal

### I. Leave of Absence

1. Request for a Leave of Absence. For a variety of reasons, it may become temporarily impossible for a student to continue a medical education. It is appropriate under such circumstances that the student present all available information and details of the situation through the assistant dean for student affairs to the Leave of Absence Committee.

2. **Leave of Absence Committee.** The Leave of Absence Committee is composed of School of Medicine faculty members (or their faculty designees) and the assistant dean for student affairs who serves, without vote, as secretary to the committee. The committee makes recommendations to the dean regarding the granting of a leave of absence to any student who requests a leave, informs the dean regarding the academic standing of the student at the time of the student's request for a leave, and makes recommendations to the dean regarding a student's return from a leave of absence to full-time student status. According to School of Medicine regulations, a student will be considered as being in good academic standing if he or she had an overall 2.000 grade point average at the conclusion of the prior semester and had passing grades in all courses in the current semester at the time of the request for a leave of absence. A student who leaves the school in good academic standing and returns will not be considered as repeating the semester or year. A student who leaves the school not in good academic standing and returns will be considered as repeating the semester or year. Any student granted a leave of absence is assigned a grade of W in all courses or clerkships in which he or she was enrolled. In that a leave of absence relieves the student of usual academic responsibilities in the School of Medicine, the Leave of Absence Committee reserves the right to recommend to the dean that a leave of absence be granted with stated conditions, stipulations, and/or contingencies that, in the opinion of the committee, are in the best interest of the student, will serve to document the student's ability to return to full-time student status at the conclusion of the leave of absence, and/or will preserve the integrity of the School of Medicine curriculum.
3. **Procedure.** Each student who requests a leave of absence will be invited to meet with the Leave of Absence Committee and to present relevant materials for the committee's review, including such statements and professional opinions that the student believes will support a request for a leave of absence. The Leave of Absence Committee will review the statements and professional opinions presented by the student in making its recommendations to the dean about a leave of absence, but such statements or opinions presented by the student are not binding on the Leave of Absence Committee. The student may be accompanied to the committee meeting by one or two advisors of personal choice. The committee meeting is an informal, nonadversarial proceeding. The student may consult with the chosen advisor(s) at any time during the meeting, but the advisor(s) will not be permitted to speak on the student's behalf or to ask questions of committee members. The committee will inform the dean and the student, in writing, of its recommendation.
4. **Decision of the dean.** After receiving the recommendation of the Leave of Absence Committee, the dean or his/her designee will invite each student for whom the committee has recommended that a leave of absence not be granted to meet. At this informal and nonadversarial meeting, the student may discuss his or her individual situation and present relevant materials (including a personal statement of a maximum of 10 pages, double-spaced) for the dean's review. The student can be accompanied to this meeting by one or two advisors of personal choice and can consult with the advisor(s), but the advisor(s) will not be permitted to speak on the student's behalf or to ask questions of the dean. The dean will inform each student in writing within 10 working days of this meeting of the decision regarding a leave of absence and of the process of review in the dean's decision.
5. **Length of a Leave of Absence.** No leave of absence will be granted for a period of time exceeding 12 consecutive months. Any student taking a leave of absence for more than 16 weeks during the third year or fourth year of the medical curriculum will be required to complete the entire third year or fourth year in sequence upon a return to full-time student status.
6. **Number of Leaves of Absence.** Except under extraordinary circumstances, the School of Medicine will grant only one leave of absence to any student during his or her medical education.
7. **Return from Leave of Absence.** The Leave of Absence Committee reserves the right to require a meeting with a student prior to his or her return from a leave of absence in order to document the ability to resume full-time student status in the School of Medicine. At this meeting, the student may submit to the Leave of Absence Committee such statements and/or professional opinions that the student believes will support the contention that he or she is prepared to resume full-time student status. The Leave of Absence Committee will review the statements and professional opinions presented by the student in making its recommendations to the dean about the student's return from a leave of absence, but such statements or opinions presented by the student are not binding on the Leave of Absence Committee.
8. **Independent Evaluation.** The School of Medicine reserves the right to require a student to undergo an independent evaluation, at the School of Medicine's expense, by a physician mutually agreeable to the student and the School of Medicine prior to the student's return from a leave of absence to full-time student status.
9. **Review Process.** The review process for any decision made by the dean of the School of Medicine can be found in Section V of the "Student Promotions Committee" section.

## II. Administrative Leave

During the course of a student's medical education it may become necessary for the student to be placed on administrative leave. A student may be placed on administrative leave due to academic, personal, and/or professional reasons. The associate dean for medical education and academic affairs, in consultation with the chair of the Leave of Absence Committee and the dean, may place a student on administrative leave.

All policies and procedures related to a leave of absence (Section I. A.-1.) will be in effect for any administrative leave.

Any student who is unsuccessful on a first or second attempt at Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) will be placed on administrative leave according to the policies and procedures for promotion and graduation.

## III. Withdrawal

Occasionally a student may decide to withdraw from the School of Medicine without an approved leave of absence. All withdrawals will be made in accordance with University of South Carolina policies if the student is to receive a tuition refund and have the proper grades recorded on the transcript. The School of Medicine uses the University schedule for refunds for any student who is dismissed or who withdraws.

A student who withdraws from the School of Medicine and who subsequently wishes to return to school must make application through the Admissions Committee as a new applicant.

# Promotion and Graduation

## I. United States Medical Licensing Examination

1. Requirements. Students in the School of Medicine are required to pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1 and 2 prior to graduation. Students are required to pass Step 1 in order to be promoted to the third year and to progress to third-year clerkships. Students are permitted a maximum of three attempts at Step 1 and at Step 2. Failure on the third attempt at Step 1 or Step 2 will render students subject to dismissal from the School of Medicine. Students must be enrolled in the School of Medicine in order to take Step 1 or 2.

2. Timelines. Students must adhere to certain timelines and follow established application procedures in order to allow sufficient time for score reporting prior to various promotion deadlines.

- a. Step 1. Second-year students are required to complete applications for Step 1 during the second year in sufficient time to ensure a test date by the end of June and the beginning of third-year clinical clerkships. Students must take Step 1 prior to beginning any third-year clinical clerkships or electives. Second-year students must receive an equivalent passing score on the NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE) before sitting for the first attempt at Step 1. Any student not receiving an equivalent passing score on the CBSE by the start of the next academic year will sit out of the first clerkship in order to retake the CBSE and then attempt Step 1. Any student not passing the CBSE by the end of the first eight weeks of the academic year will remain out of the fall academic semester, during which time the student will be expected to continue to prepare for and successfully retake the CBSE, and then sit for Step 1 in time to receive a passing score before the start of the next academic semester.

Any second-year student who is unsuccessful on a first attempt at Step 1 and has started a clerkship will immediately be pulled from the clerkship and placed on administrative leave. The student will not earn academic credit for the clerkship and a grade of W will be received. The second attempt shall be scheduled within eight weeks of the beginning of the third year.

After completion of the second attempt the student will re-enter the third year of medical education in the next scheduled eight-week clerkship. Any student who extends preparation time beyond what is stated in this policy will need to request a leave of absence and will then be required to have a passing score reported at least two weeks before being allowed to return to educational activities. Any student placed on administrative leave for more than 16 weeks during the third or fourth year of the medical curriculum will be required to complete the entire third year or fourth year in sequence upon a return to full-time student status.

Any second-year student who is unsuccessful on a second attempt at Step 1 will immediately be placed on an administrative leave of absence for the remainder of that academic year in order to prepare for the third and final administration of Step 1 and is expected to complete an application in sufficient time to ensure a test date and score reporting by the beginning of the first third-year clerkship period of the next academic year. In the interim, the student will not be permitted to progress further in the third year of medical education. The student will not earn academic credit for the first clinical clerkship; a grade of W will replace the incomplete grade.

Any student who is successful on a third attempt at Step 1 will begin third-year clerkships in the first clerkship period of the subsequent academic year and is required to complete the entire third year in sequence.

- b. Step 2. Fourth-year students are expected to complete applications for Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) in sufficient time to ensure test dates by the end of the fall academic semester (which falls on the last day of the sixth MIV rotation block). Any student who has not completed either portion of the Step 2 examination by this deadline will be pulled from rotation(s) until such time as the examination is taken.

Any student not passing the Step 2 examination will not receive credit for the USMLE Step 2 Preparation Block (DMED D647), which in turn necessitates the student adding another elective to their fourth-year schedule.

Any fourth-year student who is unsuccessful on a first or second attempt at Step 2 CK is expected to complete an application in sufficient time to ensure a test date that will allow sufficient time for the score to be reported by May 15. This date allows time for academic reporting to be complete for the May graduation from the School of Medicine.

## II. Requirements for Promotion

1. Academic Progress. In order to be promoted to the next academic year or to be permitted to continue to the next academic semester, a student must be recommended for promotion or continuation to the dean by the Student Promotions Committee. A student should maintain at least a 2.000 grade point average in order to be promoted to the next academic year or permitted to continue to the next academic semester. A student receiving less than a 2.000 grade point average in an academic semester or academic year or less than a 2.000 cumulative grade point average is subject to dismissal.

- a. Unacceptable Progress. A student who receives a D in a course or clerkship while maintaining a 2.000 grade point average will be considered as making unacceptable progress and will be required to meet with the Academic Review Subcommittee and to repeat the course or clerkship.

A student permitted to repeat a clinical clerkship must repeat the clerkship at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine; a student permitted to repeat a preclinical course may repeat the course at another medical school approved by the course director and the assistant dean for preclinical curriculum. If the student fails to achieve a C or better grade in the repeated course or clerkship, the student will be subject to dismissal from the School of Medicine or will be required to repeat the academic year, at the discretion of the dean in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee.

Upon satisfactory completion of the repeated course or clerkship, both the original D grade and the grade received in the repeated course or clerkship will be recorded on the student's transcript. Grade points and credit hours for both grades will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average which is used for promotion decisions and in the determination of class rank. In the case of a continuing course (Biochemistry, Pathology), if a student receives a D grade in the first semester, the student will be required to attend classes in that course during the second semester and take all course examinations on a Pass-Fail basis and then repeat the entire course.

- b. Repeat of Course Failed. The grade of F is used to denote failure in a course or clerkship; a student receiving a grade of F in one or more courses or clerkships is subject to dismissal. A student

receiving an F grade in a course or clerkship may be permitted by the dean, in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee, to repeat the course or clerkship. A student permitted to repeat a clinical clerkship must repeat the clerkship at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine; a student permitted to repeat a preclinical course may repeat the course at another medical school approved by the course director and the assistant dean for preclinical curriculum. If the student fails to achieve a C or better grade in the repeated course or clerkship, the student will be subject to dismissal from the School of Medicine or will be required to repeat the academic year, at the discretion of the dean in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee.

Upon satisfactory completion of the repeated course or clerkship, both the original F grade and the grade received in the repeated course or clerkship will be recorded on the student's transcript. Grade points and credit hours for both grades will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average which is used for promotion decisions and in the determination of class rank. In the case of a continuing course (Biochemistry, Pathology), if a student receives an F grade in the first semester and the student is permitted by the dean, in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee, to continue to the next semester, the student will be required to attend classes in that course during the second semester and take all course examinations on a Pass-Fail basis and then repeat the entire course.

- c. Repeated Semester/Year. A student will not usually be permitted to repeat more than one academic semester or academic year. A student who is repeating the semester or year must receive a grade of C or better in repeated courses or clerkships in order to be promoted to the next academic year or permitted to continue to the next academic semester. A student who fails to receive a grade of C or better in repeated courses or clerkships is subject to dismissal.

If a student is required to repeat an academic semester or academic year, grade points and credit hours from the original semester or year will not be calculated into the cumulative grade point average for the purpose of promotions decisions. For all other purposes, grade points and credit hours from the original academic semester or academic year will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average.

- d. Unsatisfactory Evaluation in Personal and Professional Conduct. A student who receives an Unsatisfactory evaluation in the personal and professional conduct portion of a third- or fourth-year clerkship evaluation will receive an Incomplete grade in that clerkship. The student may or may not be permitted to continue in other clerkships. Remediation may be determined by either the clerkship director or by the Student Conduct Subcommittee, if the clerkship director chooses to refer the issue to this committee. Remediation may include repeating the clerkship or, alternately, repeating the component(s) of the clerkship identified as necessary by the clerkship director; or by completing other requirements as outlined by either the clerkship director or the Student Conduct Subcommittee.

If referral is made to the Student Conduct Subcommittee, the committee's recommendations will be referred by the associate dean for medical education and academic affairs to the Student Promotions Committee for review. The Student Promotions Committee will make recommendations to the dean regarding academic alternatives for a student who has received (an) Unsatisfactory evaluation(s) in personal and professional conduct in a third- or fourth-year clerkship.

If a second Unsatisfactory assessment is received in the personal and professional conduct portion of the professional evaluation in a repeated clerkship, then the student will be subject to dismissal. If the student receives Exemplary or Effective grades in personal and professional conduct and a C or higher letter grade in the repeat clerkship, the student will be permitted to continue in the third or fourth year. Any additional Unsatisfactory grades in personal and professional conduct during the third year or during the fourth year will render the student subject to dismissal.

2. Personal and Professional Conduct. Student progress is based upon professional performance which includes both cognitive mastery of the basic and clinical sciences and personal and professional conduct that reflects the high standards of moral and ethical behavior and judgment necessary for professional practice as a physician. Factors which could result in a student's suspension or dismissal from the School of Medicine, regardless of grades in basic science course work and clinical clerkships and electives, include, but are not limited to, violations of the School of Medicine Policy on Evaluation of Personal and Professional Conduct, violations of University regulations as described in the Carolina Community, or conviction of a criminal offense.

### III. Requirements for Graduation

Upon recommendation by the School of Medicine faculty, the University of South Carolina will confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine upon candidates who have:

1. attained the School's educational objectives as evidenced by satisfactory completion of prescribed basic science courses and clinical clerkships and electives and acquisition of all required clinical skills;
2. passed Steps 1 and 2 of the USMLE;
3. completed the clinical skills attainment document;
4. complete requirements for Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Open School Certification;
5. attended the University of South Carolina School of Medicine on a full-time basis for a minimum of two years; and
6. discharged all financial obligations to the School of Medicine and to the University.

Students enrolled in the School of Medicine will have six (6) years from the date of matriculation to complete their degree for Doctor of Medicine not including any additional time needed to complete a dual degree. If a student fails to complete his or her degree within the specified time, he or she will be recommended for dismissal by the Student Promotions Committee.

In order to graduate in the May commencement ceremony, fourth-year students must complete successfully all academic requirements by May 31.

## Student Promotions Committee

### I. Academic Review Subcommittee

The Academic Review Subcommittee, composed of the chair of the Student Promotions Committee and faculty members who are not department chairs, meets at the end of each semester and at other times, as necessary, with each student who is subject to dismissal based upon School of Medicine academic regulations. The committee develops recommendations for consideration by the Student Promotions

Committee regarding the student's continued enrollment and/or academic progress in the School of Medicine.

Each student who is subject to dismissal will be invited to meet with committee members in order to discuss his or her individual situation and to present relevant materials for the committee's review. The student may be accompanied to the committee meeting by one advisor of personal choice. The committee meeting is an informal, nonadversarial proceeding. The student may consult with the advisor at any time during the meeting, but the advisor will not be permitted to speak on the student's behalf or to ask questions of committee members. Given the confidential nature of this committee, the committee meeting and its deliberations are closed to nonmembers. Only the student appearing before the committee and his/her advisor will be allowed to attend. They will be excused during the deliberation of the committee.

Each student who is subject to dismissal has the right to submit, prior to the committee meeting, relevant materials, including copies of a personal statement (maximum 10 pages, double-spaced), for review by the Academic Review Subcommittee and the Student Promotions Committee. Recommendations from the Academic Review Subcommittee will be referred by the associate dean for medical education and academic affairs to the Student Promotions Committee.

## II. Student Promotions Committee

The Student Promotions Committee, acting for the faculty, makes recommendations to the dean regarding each student's continued enrollment and/or academic/professional progress in the School of Medicine, including continuation to the next academic semester, promotion to the next academic year, suspension, dismissal, or any variation thereof that in the opinion of the committee is appropriate. Voting members of the committee include those faculty members who are the chairs of School of Medicine departments (or their designees) and two faculty members elected by the Faculty Representation Committee. Voting committee members will elect the chair of the Student Promotions Committee at the first meeting of each academic year. The associate dean for medical education and academic affairs will serve, without vote, as executive secretary to the committee.

The Student Promotions Committee will receive information of various types, including, but not limited to, grades, evaluations, narrative comments from course and clerkship directors, and recommendations from members of the Academic Review Subcommittee, the Student Conduct Subcommittee, and/or from personnel in the Office of Medical Education and Academic Affairs, and, where indicated, opinions from other sources, including, but not limited to, faculty members, personnel at School of Medicine-affiliated hospitals, consultants, and representatives of relevant professional organizations.

The Student Promotions Committee reserves the right, in its deliberations about recommendations to the dean, to consider all relevant information that bears on a student's fitness to become a physician. All recommendations are made by the Student Promotions Committee to the dean, who will have the final decision within the School of Medicine.

The Student Promotions Committee will meet at the conclusion of each semester and, as necessary, at other times during the year. Criteria for continued enrollment and academic progress will be reviewed regularly. The committee will inform the dean and the student, in writing, of its recommendations. Given the confidential nature of this committee, the committee meeting and its deliberations are closed to nonmembers of the committee.

## III. Academic/Professional Alternatives

The Student Promotions Committee may recommend to the dean any of the following academic alternatives:

1. permitting the student to continue to the next academic semester;
2. promoting the student to the next academic year;
3. promoting the student to the next academic year, contingent upon satisfactory completion of all academic deficiencies and contingent upon re-review by the committee;
4. requiring the student to repeat successfully a course, a clerkship, an elective, the academic semester, or the academic year;
5. suspending the student from the School of Medicine for a specified period of time, up to a maximum of one calendar year;<sup>1</sup>
6. dismissing the student from the School of Medicine; or
7. a combination of any of the above-mentioned academic alternatives.
8. other sanctions/remediations deemed educationally and/or professionally beneficial to the student.

## IV. Decision of the Dean

After receiving the recommendations of the Student Promotions Committee, the dean will invite each student for whom the Student Promotions Committee has recommended any academic alternative other than A or B (above) to meet. At this informal and nonadversarial meeting, the student may discuss his or her individual situation and present relevant materials (including a personal statement of a maximum of 10 pages, double-spaced) for the dean's review. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by one advisor of personal choice and may consult with the advisor, but the advisor will not be permitted to speak on the student's behalf or to ask questions of the dean. The dean will inform each student, in writing, within 10 working days of this meeting of the dean's decision and of the process of review of the dean's decision.

In the case of the dismissal of a first- or second-year student, a first- or second-year student will be permitted to remain enrolled in first- and second-year courses during the review process, but, if the review process has not been completed by the commencement of the third year, a second-year student will not be permitted to begin the third year until the outcome of the review process has been determined.

In the case of the dismissal of a third- or fourth-year student, notwithstanding the student's right to a review of the dean's decision, the decision of the dean is effective with the date of the dean's letter informing the student of dismissal. A third- or fourth-year student who has been dismissed from the School of Medicine will not be permitted to continue to engage in patient care activities, will not be permitted to remain enrolled in clinical clerkships or electives, and will not be considered to be enrolled in the School of Medicine.

A student will not receive grades in any courses completed during the period of the review process and will receive any refund of tuition and fee payments according to the schedules published by the University of South Carolina.

## V. Review Process

A final request for review may be made to the provost of the University of South Carolina of any decision made by the dean of the School of Medicine. This request for review must be made, in writing, within 10 working days of the student's receipt of the dean's decision.

During the review process, the student will be invited to submit to the provost a personal statement (maximum 10 pages, double-spaced) in

which the grounds for the request for review are explained. There will be four possible grounds for a request for review:

1. that the decision of the dean is not supported by substantial evidence;
2. that a procedural violation has occurred that has prejudiced the dean's deliberations;
3. that, when the record is reviewed as a whole, the decision of the dean is punitive rather than academically appropriate; and/or
4. that the dean's decision is an arbitrary and capricious one.

The provost can reverse, affirm, or modify the dean's decision. Any modification of the dean's decision by the provost cannot require greater remedial effort on the part of the student than that required by the dean's original decision regarding an academic alternative.

Ideally, the outcome of the provost's review will be communicated to the student, in writing, within 30 days of the date of receipt of the request for a review. The provost's review will consist of an assessment of the student's existing record in the School of Medicine, with no new information being provided by the student or by the School of Medicine.

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the period of suspension, the student will submit to the Student Promotions Committee such statements and/or professional opinions believed to support the contention that the reasons for suspension have been resolved and that he or she is capable of returning to full-time student status. The Student Promotions Committee will review the statements and professional opinions presented in making its recommendations to the dean about the return of the student to full-time student status, but such statements or opinions presented are not binding on the Student Promotions Committee.

The School of Medicine reserves the right to require a student seeking to return to full-time student status from a period of suspension to undergo an independent evaluation, at the School of Medicine's expense, by a physician mutually agreeable to the student and to the School of Medicine. The report from this independent evaluation will be submitted to the Student Promotions Committee for its review prior to its making its recommendation to the dean about a student's return to full-time status, but the statements or opinions presented in this report are not binding on the committee. Following receipt of a recommendation from the Student Promotions Committee that a student not be permitted to return to full-time status after a period of suspension, the dean will invite the student to meet. At this informal and nonadversarial meeting, the student may discuss his or her individual situation and present relevant materials, including a personal statement (maximum 10 pages, double spaced) for the dean's review. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by one advisor of personal choice and may consult with the advisor, but the advisor will not be permitted to speak on the student's behalf or to ask questions of the dean. The dean will inform each student, in writing, within 10 working days of this meeting of the decision and of the process of review.