

Policy: Student Progression and Performance

Applicability: All PharmD Courses

Persons Affected: Students, Faculty, Support Staff

Initiated By: Student Affairs Committee

Responsibility: Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Effective: Spring 2013

Last Revision: March 7th, 2017

I. Definitions

- A. “associate dean” refers to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs
- B. “chair” refers to the Student Affairs Committee Chair
- C. “committee” refers to the Student Affairs Committee
- D. “dean” refers to the Dean of the School of Pharmacy

II. General

A. Grading Policies

- 1. As per university policy, the School of Pharmacy uses the following grading system:

GRADE	INTERPRETATION	GPA POINT VALUE
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Fair	2
D	Weak but Passing	1
P	Pass	NA
F	Failure	0
I	Incomplete (1 year to remove)	NA
NM	No Mark	NA
WD	Withdraw from program	NA

- 2. Use of “NM” and “I” Grades.

- a. An Incomplete (“I”) grade at the end of the grading period indicates that (a) a student has not completed all elements of a particular course that are calculated into the final grade for that course, and (b) the student has received permission from faculty to continue to work on these elements. If the student has not made arrangements with faculty for an extension beyond the semester, a failing grade must be recorded. When an “I” is awarded, the faculty and student must complete a Plan of Action form (see appendix) that outlines the steps to be taken to remove the “I.” Incomplete grades must be resolved within one year following the date the original grade was awarded. Extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances.

- b. A No Mark (“NM”) is the default grade that is given when faculty members cannot award letter grades at the end of the grading period. Reasons for “NM” grades include: course content did not conclude during that semester; faculty were unable to calculate final grades; or final assessments were not completed at the time grades were due.
 - c. In summary, “I” grades reflect issues involving student ability to complete course requirements, while “NM” grades indicate that faculty are unable to record letter grades at the end of the grading period due to course related issues. Both students and faculty are responsible for resolving grading issues as soon as possible.
 - B. Extended Absences. The school’s goal is to provide a climate conducive to learning for all students and to maintain a rigorous academic program while assuring professional responsibility, equity, and respect for the needs of individuals. Granting extended excused absences are made on an individual basis in consultation with the Student Affairs Office, faculty advisors, and each course manager.
 - 1. Refer to the school’s attendance policy for absences lasting 5 days or less.
 - 2. Students missing more than 5 consecutive days should consider a leave of absence from the program. This consideration should be discussed with the student’s advisor and the Office of Student Affairs. A leave of absence must be requested in writing from the Student Affairs Office. If granted, the students will prepare a Plan of Action (Appendix) documenting their future plans including when they intend to return to the school. Students must also contact individual course managers and their academic advisors when their leave is approved. A copy of the leave approval will be retained in the student’s file.
 - 3. If course work cannot be completed by the end of the semester, the student will receive an “I” grade and will make arrangements with faculty to resolve remaining academic issues.
 - C. Withdrawal from Program. Students may choose to withdraw from the program for a variety of reasons. Requests of withdrawal must be in writing to the Student Affairs Office. The office will notify university officials, academic advisors, and other faculty members. Notation of the withdrawal will be retained in the student’s file. Students may receive partial refunds from the university based on campus policies. Students who fail to complete an official request for withdrawal will receive failing grades in all courses.
- III. Academic Review Process. Students are responsible for their own academic progress. Thus, they must take the initiative to consult with the appropriate parties (course managers, academic advisors, and/or the Student Affairs Office) when academic problems arise. The sooner students address academic problems, the sooner they may be resolved. Faculty members, especially course managers, have a responsibility to make available scores or feedback pertaining to assessment activities in a timely and specific manner.

A. Academic Progression

1. Students must successfully complete all required first and second year courses before advancing to the third year, and must successfully complete all third year courses before advancing to the fourth year.
2. Prerequisite requirements must be met prior to course matriculation.

B. Unacceptable Academic Performance.

1. Letter of Academic Warning: The Student Affairs Office will send the letter to a student who earns a semester grade point average (GPA) of less than 2.0 but has a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater
2. Appear before the committee but not eligible for academic dismissal:
 - a. A student who receives more than one D grade in required courses in one semester but is not otherwise eligible for academic dismissal
 - b. A student who performs in the bottom 10% of their class on more than one OSCE
3. Eligible for Academic Dismissal or Academic Dismissal:
 - a. A student whose cumulative GPA in required courses falls below 2.0 at the end of any semester
 - b. A student who accumulates four or more D grades in required didactic courses
 - c. A student earning a failing grade in any required or elective didactic or experiential course
4. Academic Dismissal: A student earning two or more failing grades as recorded on the student's transcript in required didactic courses

C. Review Process for Unacceptable Academic Performance

1. At the end of each semester, the associate dean and the chair will review the academic status of all students enrolled in the Doctor of Pharmacy program. They will identify all with failing grades and/or GPA < 2.0 in required courses. They will send both e-mail and post-mail letters to each student indicating the time and place for an academic review hearing with the committee (typically within 5 calendar days of the letter's date). The Student Affairs Office will make attempts to personally contact each student if a response to the letter is not received within 48 hours. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's academic advisor, and a copy will be retained in the student's file. Students will be directed to the appropriate documents on the web describing the academic review process. A student earning two or more failing grades as recorded on the student's transcript in required didactic courses will be dismissed without the need for committee action.
2. Students eligible for academic dismissal have the right to appeal to the committee. Students may present their case in person before the committee or submit a written appeal. As part of

their appeal, students may submit any other documents that they deem pertinent. Individuals from outside the school may make a brief statement on behalf of the student, but are not allowed to remain in the hearing due to the confidential nature of the meeting. Academic advisors and other faculty members may attend academic review hearings and present pertinent information. In their appeal, students should focus on the circumstances leading to their weak academic performance and strategies they will use to assure future success. The committee will consider pre-pharmacy grades, prior academic performance in the school, and personal issues in its deliberations. Students who do not appeal will be academically dismissed from the school. In the rare instance that a student does not receive notification of the hearing despite the efforts outlined previously, and upon discovery of such information, the committee will reverse the dismissal and reassign a new hearing date.

3. Prior to the committee academic review hearing (typically 5 calendar days), a confidential message from the chair will be distributed to the faculty listing all students to be reviewed. The memo will state the specific place and time of the hearing. The memo will request faculty to voluntarily provide information to the committee regarding each student's academic performance and ability. Any faculty member may provide written comments to the committee or request permission to appear at any student's hearing. The memo will stress the confidential nature of the information.
4. Possible Committee Action. At the conclusion of the academic review process, the committee will deliberate on each case and will vote on a course of action (by a simple majority of committee members present).
 - a. In situations where successful completion of the PharmD program is in doubt, the committee will academically dismiss the student.
 - b. In situations where the student shows promise of resolving issues and continuing successfully in the program, the committee will act as follows:
 - i. For failing grades in required courses or for GPA < 2.0 in required courses: The committee will place the student on academic probation. The length of the probation is typically determined by when the failing grade is removed or the required GPA improves to above a 2.0. If placed on academic probation, the student will be allowed to continue in the program but under specific guidelines as outlined by the committee, such as taking remedial courses to strengthen specific knowledge or skills.
 - ii. For failing grades in elective courses: The student will be required to take additional coursework in order to accrue the necessary number of credit hours for graduation.
 - c. In some situations, the committee may defer their decision to gather more information, contact additional individuals, or wait for additional information from

the student. If the committee decides to defer its decision, it should complete its review and make a final decision within five (5) calendar days of the original hearing.

5. Notification of Decisions. The committee will submit its decisions in writing to the dean and the student within seven (7) calendar days following the academic review hearings. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's academic advisor, and a copy will be retained in the student's file.
6. Appeal to the Dean. Students have the right to appeal the decisions made by the committee directly to the dean. Appeals must be in writing and must be based on 1) new relevant facts not produced in the hearing, 2) a claim of inadequate consideration of specific information by the committee, 3) a claim that the committee did not follow appropriate procedures, or 4) a claim that the committee's action was unduly severe. The dean's decision is final.
7. Implementation of Committee Actions.
 - a. At the conclusion of the appeals process, final decisions will be permanently recorded on the student's official transcript. The chair will also develop a report for all faculty containing the student's name, reason for appearing before the committee, and final committee decision. The report will be posted in a secure location for viewing. Specific details regarding the decision will be kept confidential, but may be disclosed to individual faculty members if deemed appropriate by the associate dean or chair.
 - b. Students on academic probation must meet with their academic advisor, the associate dean, and the course manager of each failed course to develop a Plan of Action (see appendix) to resolve all pertinent academic issues. A copy of this plan will be sent to the student's academic advisor, to the course manager, and a copy will be retained in the student's file.
 - c. While on probation, students must earn a GPA of 2.0 or greater each semester. If a student on probation earns a semester GPA of 2.0 or greater, but the cumulative GPA or the required-course GPA remains below 2.0, the student will remain on academic probation.
 - d. Students will be removed from probation when a failing grade in a required course is removed and their cumulative GPA and required-course GPA is 2.0 or greater.
 - e. Students on probation must focus on their academic program and thus cannot hold office in a school-related organization or represent the school at outside events.

D. Review Process for more than one D-grade in required courses in one semester for a student not otherwise eligible for academic dismissal

1. At the end of each semester, the associate dean and the chair will review the academic status of all students enrolled in the Doctor of Pharmacy program. They will identify all students receiving more than one D-grade in required courses in the same semester. They will send both e-mail and post-mail letters to each student indicating the time and place for an academic review hearing with the committee (typically within 10 calendar days of the letter's date).
2. Students identified in item D1 will be given the opportunity to submit a letter and attend the identified review hearing to defend their case. Submission of a letter explaining the reason(s) for their weak academic performance and plan for academic improvement is highly recommended. Students will be given a deadline to respond with a letter and/or confirm their attendance at the meeting. If the deadline passes without receipt of a letter from the student or confirmation that they will attend the hearing, the committee will assume that the student will not attend their academic review hearing and the student forfeits the opportunity to appear before the committee and this will be documented in student's letter.
3. The purpose of the academic review hearing is to identify areas of weakness that may be leading to academic difficulty.
4. Committee action: The committee will submit written recommendations concerning ways a student could attempt to improve their academic performance to the associate dean and the student within seven (7) calendar days following the academic review hearing. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's academic advisor, and a copy will be retained in the student's file.
5. If the student becomes eligible for academic dismissal in the future the committee will have access to and consider (a) their presence at prior academic review hearings, (b) letters from the student explaining prior weak academic performance, and (c) prior committee recommendations.

E. Review Process for No Mark and Incomplete grades

1. At the end of each semester, the committee will review the academic records of students receiving "NM" or "I" grades in required didactic and experiential learning courses.
2. Student Affairs staff will contact faculty regarding the "NM" and "I" grades to discuss possible resolution. If experiential learning courses are involved, staff will contact the Experiential Learning Office for additional information. During this review time, course managers may elect to change "I" grades to failing grades if the "I" has remained on the record for longer than 1 year, and there are no extenuating circumstances preventing the student from removing the "I" grade. Course managers will submit a Change of Grade form to reflect these changes.
3. Students must complete a Plan of Action (see appendix) outlining their plans to resolve "I" grades. A copy of this plan will be sent to the student's academic advisor, to the course manager, and a copy will be retained in the student's file. If students fail to submit these plans, their registration will be cancelled.

- IV. Reinstatement Policies. Students who have to leave the school for personal leave or academic suspension have the right to request reinstatement to the Student Affairs Office. The associate dean and the chair will review and act on the request. If they feel additional faculty input is needed they may refer the request to the committee for review and action. These requests will be handled in the following manner based on the reason for leave.
- A. Academic Suspension. Students who have been academically suspended may petition for reinstatement after they have completed some form of remediation. Students may be called to meet with the associate dean, chair, and/or committee as deemed necessary. Requests for reinstatement should be made by June 1st for fall semesters and November 1st for spring semesters.
 - B. Personal Leave. Many times, students must discontinue their academic training due to personal or financial reasons. When students are ready to return to the school of pharmacy, they must request reinstatement to the associate dean who will review the request. If personal leave was due to a medical condition, medical clearance from a physician or appropriate healthcare personnel will be required before reinstatement may be granted. Based on review of reinstatement materials, students may be called to meet with the associate dean, chair, and/or committee as deemed necessary, however, requests for reinstatement following a personal leave of absence are typically not reviewed by the committee. Certain conditions may or may not be placed on students upon their return. For example, if students have been on leave for lengthy time periods, then they may need to retake specific science courses to update their knowledge base. Students may be requested to retake certain key courses which may have changed or may be key prerequisites to other courses. The key is to make sure that students are well prepared to continue their studies. Students are required to meet with course managers in relevant courses upon their return to inform them of their status. Requests for reinstatement should be made by June 1st for fall semesters and November 1st for spring semesters.
- V. Readmission Policies. Students who have been academically dismissed may apply for admission through the Office of Admissions. Students who have been academically dismissed twice are not eligible for readmission.
- VI. Program Completion Timeframe. Students must graduate from the program within seven (7) years of when they first begin coursework. Thus, requests for readmission after academic suspension, personal leave of absence, or program withdrawal will not be considered unless the student is able to re-enter the program at a point in time that allows him/her to graduate within this seven (7) year time frame. A student who reapplies for admission to re-enter the program from the beginning of the curriculum will have seven (7) years from that point to complete the program. Students may petition the Dean of the School of Pharmacy for a waiver when extenuating circumstances may exist.

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Plan of Action

To Remediate Failing or Incomplete Grades

Students who have failing or incomplete grades in required Doctor of Pharmacy courses on their official transcripts must prepare this Plan of Action to describe how they plan to remediate these grades to passing grades. This Plan of Action should be completed collaboratively with the course manager. This form must be signed by both the student and course manager and will be kept on file in the Student Affairs Office.

Name: _____ Date: _____

ID#: _____ Class of _____

Course: _____ Semester taken: _____

Course Manager: _____ Current grade: F or I

Plan to Remove Failing or Incomplete Grade: _____

To be resolved by: _____ (specific date)

Course Manager

Student

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Office Use

Date Resolved:

Student Affairs Committee Notified:

CC: Advisor