

College of Dentistry
The University of Tennessee, Memphis

Student Status Committee

Policy Governing Student Standing

I. PROMOTION AND GRADUATION: GENERAL POLICY

Promotion and graduation result from positive action taken by the Dean of the College of Dentistry. The Dean receives recommendations regarding student standing from the Student Status Committee based on its review of each individual student's progress toward satisfying the academic, professional and personal requirements established by the College and University. Following procedures established by the University, action taken by the Dean is subject to review by the Chancellor and the President.

II. THE STUDENT STATUS COMMITTEE: CHARGE AND STRUCTURE

The Student Status Committee is charged by the Dean of the College of Dentistry with monitoring student academic progress, professional and personal conduct, and making recommendations on student standing. The Committee is composed of a minimum of ten (10) voting members and an undetermined number of ex officio members. All voting and ex-officio members are appointed by the Dean of the College of Dentistry; the Dean also appoints a Committee Chairperson from the Committee membership.

III. THE STUDENT STATUS COMMITTEE: GENERAL OPERATION

Although passing grades are required, they are not the sole criterion used in determining whether or not a student is recommended for continuation, promotion or graduation. Other factors, including personal and professional conduct, are also considered. Each student is evaluated individually; extenuating circumstances affecting student performance may suggest modification of the usual actions of the Committee. Information bearing on student progress may be provided by the Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Clinical Affairs, Office of Student Affairs, department chairpersons, course directors, student advisors, students, and other sources. Faculty not appointed to the Committee may be invited to attend the meetings of the Student Status Committee; even though they may not vote, they may be asked for input regarding student progress.

If, in its deliberations, the Committee determines that the available information is insufficient to make a recommendation, the Committee may request that the student appear before the Committee. If called before the Student Status Committee, the student must be prepared to submit additional information that will reflect on his/her status. The student may be asked to bring other persons who may be able to contribute to the Committee meeting; however, neither the student nor Committee may have legal counsel present.

The Committee meets at the end of the first semester during the academic year, to determine whether student progress merits a recommendation for continuation and at the end of the academic year to determine whether student progress merits a recommendation for promotion or graduation. The Committee may meet at other times as necessary to conduct the business of the Committee.

The following criteria serve to guide the Committee in its deliberations; the Committee is not, however, literally bound to the criteria that follow and may make alternate recommendations as situations warrant.

IV. CRITERIA FOR CONTINUATION OR PROMOTION

Each student who has fulfilled the didactic, clinical, personal and professional requirements of the College of Dentistry will be recommended for continuation or promotion. Otherwise, the following apply:

1. Course Performance

To evaluate inadequate or poor performance in a course, input from the course director is vital to the consideration by the Committee. Each course director is responsible for the evaluation of students and the assignment of grades. The course director will also supply any information requested by the Committee that will help document student performance and the manner by which the student was evaluated. Any course director who submits a failing grade (F) for a student must also indicate if remediation is possible and recommended; if so, a plan approved by the chair of the department in which the course is based, must also be submitted to the Committee. Course directors who submit an incomplete grade (i.e., "I" or "G" grades) must be aware, as should students, that it is UT Policy that such grades must be replaced with a permanent grade within a specified period of time not to exceed the next academic period; a deadline for completion of all incomplete work will be established by the department.

- a. Students who receive "G" or "I" grades during the first semester of an academic year may be allowed to continue into the second semester, but will be informed of the specific date when those grades must be replaced with a permanent grade.
- b. At the end of the academic year, students with "G" or "I" grades will not be recommended for promotion until those grades are replaced with a permanent grade.
- c. Students who receive multiple "D" grades in any academic year will be carefully reviewed by the Student Status Committee. A recommendation will be made for either continuation of the student, repetition of courses, repetition of the academic year, or dismissal from the College.
- d. Students who receive any "D" grades in combination with one or more "F" grades in any semester will be carefully reviewed by the Student Status Committee. A recommendation will be made as to repetition of courses, repetition of the academic year, or dismissal from the College. If retained in the College, the student will be placed on academic probation.
- e. Students who receive a single "F" grade with no other grades below a "C" during the first semester of an academic year may be allowed to continue into the second semester, but will be placed on scholastic probation and required to repeat the course by a specified date.
- f. Students with a single "F" grade with no other grades below a "C" during the second semester will be placed on scholastic probation, required to repeat the course by a specified date and not recommended for promotion until that course is successfully repeated.
- g. Students with multiple "F" grades in one semester or in consecutive semesters during an academic year will not be recommended for continuation or promotion. The student will either be required to repeat the academic year or be dismissed. If required to repeat the year, the student will be placed on scholastic probation.

2. National Board Performance

All students are required to pass Part I of the National Board Examination as a condition for promotion to the third (D-3) year.

- a. Part I of the National Board Examination must be taken in spring of the second (D-2) year

during the week designated by the college unless exceptional personal circumstances prevent the student from taking the examination (e.g. death in the immediate family, severe illness or serious accident, etc). Students must notify the Office of Academic Affairs as soon as reasonably possible if the student cannot take the examination.

- b. Students who took the Part I of the National Board Examination in spring and did not pass will be placed on academic probation and must retake the examination on computer at a Prometric Test Center no later than June 30.
- c. Students who took the examination in the spring and were unsuccessful can be conditionally promoted to the D3 year, pending receipt of the results of their June scores. In the interim, such students will not be allowed to engage in any direct patient care activities (except assisting) that require a patient portfolio.
- d. If the student has not passed Part I by the end of July, the student will be dismissed from the College. Such dismissal cannot be appealed.
- e. Students dismissed from the College for failure to pass Part I of the National Board Examination may petition the Dean for special permission to retake Part I. If the student passes Part I of the National Board Examination, he/she may petition the Dean for re-admission into the D-3 year effective at the beginning of the next academic year.

3. Scholastic Probation and Minimum Grade Point Average

To be placed on scholastic probation is intended to signal the student that his/her performance is unacceptable and cannot continue as such. As indicated above, students are placed on scholastic probation when their performance in a course or courses is unsatisfactory (i.e., multiple "D" grades or an "F" grade is received). In addition:

- a. The Committee reserves the right to place a student on scholastic probation based on unacceptable academic performance.
- b. If the student's cumulative grade point average for all courses falls below 2.00, the student will be placed on scholastic probation.
- c. If a student remains on scholastic probation for three (3) consecutive semesters, the student will be recommended to either repeat an academic year or be dismissed.

4. Repetition of a Course or an Academic Year

Students who receive an "F" grade will be required to repeat the course in which the grade was received. Ordinarily, students who fail a course will be required to complete work deemed equivalent to the original course by the course director, department chair, and Dean. Students who receive multiple "F" grades or whose overall performance is inadequate may be required to repeat an academic year or be dismissed from the College. Under these conditions:

- a. If a student fails a repeated course, the student will either repeat an academic year or be dismissed from the College.
- b. A student who is required to repeat an academic year must repeat all courses associated with that academic year. The Committee, however, may make recommendations regarding the modification of the course of study.
- c. When a student is repeating an academic year, an adjusted GPA, based on the grades obtained in the repeated courses, will be used by the Committee to evaluate student progress. However, the student is still held to the overall requirement of a minimum GPA of 2.00 required for graduation, calculated on the basis of all course work (i.e., original and repeated courses are used in the calculation).
- d. If a student fails a course or courses while repeating an academic year, the student will be considered for dismissal from the College.
- e. If a student fails a preclinical laboratory course while passing the complementary lecture course,

the Committee can require the student to repeat both the laboratory course and the complementary lecture course if so recommended by the course director(s).

V. CRITERIA FOR GRADUATION

At the end of the fourth year of study, each student who has fulfilled the didactic, clinical, residency, personal, and professional requirements will be recommended for graduation. Therefore, to qualify for the Doctor of Dental Surgery degree, the student must:

- a. Satisfactorily complete all required courses of the curriculum with an overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.00.
- b. Discharge all responsibility for patient care according to College policy.
- c. Discharge all financial and administrative obligations to the College and University.
- d. Demonstrate acceptable professional standards and personal conduct.
- e. Pass Part I of the National Board Examination.

If the student cannot fulfill these requirements, the following apply:

1. Course Performance

As described in IV. Criteria for Continuation and Promotion

2. Scholastic Probation and Minimum Grade Point Average

No student will be recommended for graduation if he/she is on scholastic probation and/or has a failing grade in a required course. An overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 for all course work is required for graduation

3. Repetition of a Course or an Academic Year

Students who receive an "F" grade in the fourth year will be required to repeat the course in which the grade was received. Ordinarily, students who fail a course will be required to complete work deemed equivalent to the original course by the course director, department chair, and Dean. Students who receive multiple "F" grades in the fourth year or whose overall performance is inadequate may be required to repeat an academic year or may be dismissed from the College.

Under these conditions:

- a. If a student fails a repeated course in the fourth year, the student will be considered for either repetition of the fourth year or dismissal from the College.
- b. A student who is required to repeat an academic year must repeat all courses associated with that academic year. The Committee, however, may make recommendations regarding the modification of the course of study.
- c. When a student is repeating an academic year, an adjusted GPA based on the grades obtained in the repeated courses will be used by the committee to evaluate student progress. However, the student is still held to the overall requirement of a minimum GPA of 2.00 required for graduation calculated on the basis of all course work (i.e., original and repeated courses are used in the calculation).

VI. CRITERIA FOR GRADUATION WITH HONORS

Students who have fulfilled the didactic, clinical, personal, and professional standards will be recommended for graduation and may be considered for graduation with honorable distinctions. Due to the requirement that the list of students who have earned honorable distinction be provided to the registrar during the spring of the D-4 year, graduation with honorable distinction is determined based on the GPA of the student at the end of the D-4 summer-fall semester. The criteria for honors include:

- a. The student whose overall GPA is the highest in the graduating class is recommended to receive the DENTAL FACULTY AWARD.
- b. Those students whose overall GPA is in the highest 2.5% of the class are recommended for graduation with "highest honors."
- c. Those students whose overall GPA is in the next highest 5% are recommended for graduation with "high honors."
- d. Those students whose overall GPA is in the next highest 10% but above a minimum of 3.40 are recommended for graduation with "honors."

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEAN

The Student Status Committee is advisory to the Dean; the Dean may accept, modify, or reject the recommendations of the Committee. The Dean may also request that the Student Status Committee reconsider their recommendations, or request that the Appeals Committee review the recommendations and/or hear a student appeal. Recommendations by the Student Status Committee to the Dean typically include, but are not limited to:

- a. Graduate with an honorable distinction
- b. Graduate
- c. Promote in good standing
- d. Promote on scholastic probation
- e. Defer promotion or graduation pending satisfactory removal of I or G grades and/or repetition of courses with F grades
- f. Repetition of an academic year with or without exemptions
- g. Scholastic probation.
- h. Disciplinary reprimand or probation.
- i. Dismissal from the College

VIII. COLLEGE APPEALS PROCESS

The student has the right to appeal the action taken by the Dean regarding continuation, promotion, disciplinary, and graduation decisions, (except in the case of dismissal due to failure to pass Part I of the National Board Examination, which can not be appealed as described in section IV, 4, d). The student may initiate an appeal by submitting to the Dean a written request for reconsideration. The written request must state the basis of the appeal and must be received by the Dean within five (5) working days after the student receives notification of the Dean's original decision. Appeal hearings may be granted if (1) circumstances existed at the time of the Committee's deliberations that were not known by the Student Status Committee and that evidence or information, if known by the Committee, would have influenced the Committee's recommendation regarding the student's academic and professional performance; (2) an error existed in the student's record that was used in reaching the adverse recommendation; or (3) the recommendation created unequal treatment for the student compared to the same or similar circumstances among the student's peers. When a written appeal is received, the Dean will determine whether or not the appeal will be heard based on the above criteria. Failure to provide a concrete basis for an appeal will result in rejection of the appeal request. In general, explanations of circumstances that led to poor academic performance will not constitute sufficient grounds for an appeals hearing unless such explanations put in question the validity of the original decision.

IX. APPEALS HEARD BY AN APPEALS COMMITTEE

Typically, the Dean decides whether an appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee. The Appeals

Committee is a standing committee which is appointed yearly by the Dean and includes the Chair of the Student Status Committee as an ex-officio member among others. The student will meet with the Appeals Committee, provide information pertinent to the situation, and may be accompanied by individuals who can contribute to the presentation. However, neither the student nor the Appeals Committee may have legal counsel present. After the Appeals Committee has heard the appeal, the Appeals Committee may move to recommend to the Dean that the original action be upheld or modified. After the Dean has considered the recommendation of all committees, the student will be notified of the decision. The student may appeal the decision of the Dean to the Chancellor and ultimately to the President of the University. In doing so, the student must follow University procedures.

X. PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL CONDUCT

In addition to academic performance, personal and professional conduct is also considered when evaluating student activity in a professional school. In this regard, failure to maintain appropriate standards of conduct or integrity in following policies and procedures, violation of College or University rules, and failure to discharge responsibilities to the College and University can lead to reprimand, suspension or dismissal. Further, failure to comply with the Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct of the American Dental Association or the commission of an illegal act concerning the practice of dentistry may constitute grounds for dismissal from the College. Similarly, conviction of a violation of State or Federal law will result in suspension and/or dismissal.

(Approved by UT College of Dentistry Administrative Council 7/12/93)
(Revisions made to document 3/28/94, 3/13/96, 02/02/04, and 12/1/04)
(This revised policy takes effect on January 1, 2005)