General Policies

Presented in the following pages are the academic policies, procedures, and requirements that first year (M-1) students must follow and meet to maintain progress and be eligible for promotion to the second year of medical school. These policies complement the UIC College of Medicine Student Academic Promotion Guidelines.

Application of Academic Policies

Each student's entire academic record will be reviewed regularly by the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC). The SPPC will make preliminary recommendations regarding the student's progress and promotion and forward them to the College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign Executive Committee. In turn, after reviewing these preliminary recommendations and acting on them, the Executive Committee will forward them to the College Committee on Student Promotions for final action. Although students will be considered individually on the basis of the merits of their circumstances, policies will be applied strictly. Departure from policies will be based only on documented compelling extenuating circumstances. Students who experience compelling extenuating circumstances that adversely affect their ability to study and focus on their medical education are advised to discuss them with and seek guidance from the COM-UC student affairs officers before they lead to academic failures.

Appeals

Students anticipating adverse recommendations may supply written petitions and documentation to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC). Students may not appear in person at the SPPC. As described above, recommendations from the SPPC are forwarded to the College of Medicine at Urbana Executive Committee. Adverse recommendations from the SPPC may be appealed in writing and/or in person to the COM Urbana Executive Committee.

All adverse actions of the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign Executive Committee that affect a student's progress may be appealed to the College Committee on Student Promotions. If the College Committee on Student Promotions recommends the student to be dropped, the appeal may be written and/or in person. Information about appeals is available from the COM-UC Office of Student Affairs.

A student may request an advisor to accompany him or her to the committee. Only a UIUC or UICOM faculty advisor may speak to the committee on the student's behalf. If the student plans to bring an attorney, he or she must notify the Office of Student Affairs/Medical Scholars Program at least one week in advance.

Definition of Terms

**Academic Year**: An academic year consists of the Fall semester, the Spring semester and the Summer term consecutively. Thus, for example, AY 2009-2010 consists of the Fall 2009 semester, the Spring 2010 semester, and the Summer 2010 terms.

**Repeat Year**: A repeat year permits students to participate for a second time in an academic year; the student's previous participation in that year counts as the first opportunity. Students may be granted a repeat year of the curriculum if the requirements for promotion to the next year have not been fulfilled and if approval has been given by the appropriate committees. Students are allowed only one repeat year during their undergraduate medical education.
**Restart Year:** A restart year allows students who experience documented compelling circumstances to begin an academic year anew as if the year constitutes their first opportunity to participate (in the year):

First year students and students in year one of the Decompressed Program are eligible for a restart year if they:

1. experience documented compelling extenuating circumstances;
2. petition for a restart year before any progress examinations have been taken;
3. are approved by the appropriate COM-UC committees and College Committee on Student Promotions to restart the year; and
4. have not previously restarted a year (that is, students are allowed only one restart year during their undergraduate medical education).

**Certifying and Promotional Examinations:** The College of Medicine defines the College of Medicine Basic Sciences Comprehensive Examinations, United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1, and Step 2 as certifying and promotional examinations; that is, they must be taken and passed to permit progress, thus allowing the student to become eligible for graduation. For example, students must pass the Basic Sciences Comprehensive Examinations to be eligible for promotion to the M-2 year.

**Delayed in Class:** A delay in class occurs when a student's expected graduation date is postponed. A delay in class may be recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by the Committee on Student Promotions for a variety of reasons, such as a Leave of Absence (refer to "Policy and Procedure Regarding Leaves of Absence for Students of the College of Medicine" for details), an extended period of remedial study, a restart year, or a repeat year.

**Passing Grade:** For the M-1 year, a passing grade is defined as a grade of Outstanding, Satisfactory or Proficient.

**Absences from Examinations**

Students are required to take examinations at their regularly scheduled times. Permission for an absence from a required examination must be obtained from the Assistant or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to the examination. The only generally accepted reasons for absences are (a) serious illness or injury requiring medical attention (b) death, serious injury, or serious illness in the immediate family, or c) presenting at professional or academic conferences. In the event that prior permission for an absence has not been obtained or documentation has not been provided to the satisfaction of the Assistant or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs within seven calendar days of the date of the examination, a failing grade (zero) will be assigned for the missed examination; the missed examination will be counted as an attempt. Further, if a student begins an examination and withdraws without injury or illness, it will be counted as an attempt and a failure.

**Dropping Courses**

Students who want to drop a medical school course must present a petition to the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs no later than five days after the time examination results are released to students (second examination in the fall and March examinations in the spring). The petition must be approved by the student's advisor and, if applicable, the Medical Scholars Program office. The Assistant or Associate Dean for Student will determine whether or not a student's request to drop a medical school course will be granted.

**Continuing Status**

Students who withdraw from the curriculum on leaves of absence prior to completing the M-1 or M-2 year will have their status converted to Continuing when appropriate documentation is received that the student is ready to return and approved by the Associate or Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Students on Continuing Status will return at the beginning of the semester (i.e. fall or spring) in which the leave occurred. The academic record accrued to the time of re-entry will be in effect as the student's current record.
A Continuing student who takes a leave during the spring semester after having completed the fall, will have the option of auditing fall courses. Students will be allowed to complete the year to determine their status: 1) promotion to the next year; 2) qualify for a repeat year; or 3) dropped for poor scholarship.

**M-1 Decompressed Program**

First year students who elect to request to participate in the Decompressed Program have until **no later than five working days after the time the second examination results are distributed in the fall semester** to file their petitions for admission to the program with the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Refer to separate policy statements for additional information about the Decompressed Program.

**Course Grades**

Courses in the M-1 year are graded on a three-point scale: Outstanding (O), Satisfactory (S), and Unsatisfactory (U). The grade of Proficiency (P) is assigned to students who are excused from taking a required course by virtue of having passed a proficiency examination (refer to policies for proficiency examinations). Some courses are graded on a semester basis and others are graded over both the Fall and Spring semesters.

**Course Requirements**

Students must earn a grade of Satisfactory, Outstanding or Proficiency in all required courses to be promoted to the second (M-2) year. Students who receive a grade of Unsatisfactory in one or more required courses will be required to take written makeup examinations or Discipline Coordinator approved makeup courses in these disciplines during the Summer term immediately following the M-1 year. If the remediation is successful, the course grade will be changed from Unsatisfactory to Satisfactory. The grade of Outstanding cannot be earned on makeup examinations.

**Fall Semester Only Courses:** Courses taught and graded during the Fall semester only are Medical Genetics, Embryology, and Medical Statistics.

**Spring Semester Only Courses:** The following courses are taught and graded only during the Spring semester: Behavioral Science and Neuroscience.

**Fall and Spring Courses:** Anatomy, Biochemistry (1.5 semesters), Histology, Introduction to Human Disease, Microbiology/Immunology and Physiology continue throughout both the Fall and Spring semesters and are graded over both semesters, that is, the course grade is awarded at the conclusion of the Spring semester.

**Makeup Examinations:** All Progress makeup examinations are given during a regularly scheduled period during the Summer term immediately following the M-1 year. Students who earn the grade of Unsatisfactory in a course graded on a semester basis are required to take a makeup examination in the failed course. Students who earn the grade of Unsatisfactory in a course graded over the Fall and Spring semesters are required to take a makeup examination covering the material presented in each of the semesters in which they were deficient. For example, if the combined fall and spring two semester discipline resulted in an overall failure but one of the semesters was passed, students will participate in a makeup examination only for the failed semester. The makeup semester score will then be combined with the passed semester score. In the case of Biochemistry, the makeup examination is comprehensive and will cover material presented during the entire 1.5 semesters. **Students who have had to retake examinations are not eligible to receive an Outstanding Final Grade.**

**Laboratory Skills Examinations**

Laboratory skills examinations are required in Anatomy, Histology, Microbiology, and Immunology. All skills examinations must be passed or a failing grade for the course will be awarded. Skills examinations must be taken at the regularly scheduled time unless a student has made **prior arrangements with the faculty member responsible for a given examination.** Students who seek an excused absence from a laboratory skills examination and obtain approval in advance will ordinarily be required to take the examination at its next regularly scheduled administration. An unexcused absence will be treated as a failure to pass the examination. **Students should become familiar with the skills examination policies in each of the specific disciplines noted above.**
**Clinical Preceptor Program**

Participation in the CPP program is **recommended but optional**. However, students who elect to participate must complete satisfactorily the requirements of the program. The specific requirements for successful completion of the program are available from the program director.

**Student Participation**

Although the M-1 program at Urbana-Champaign offers students some flexibility, students should understand that it is not an independent study program. Lectures, laboratories & seminars are integral program components. **Participation in laboratories is required. Participation in other activities is expected and believed necessary for success in the program. Specific lectures will require participation (i.e. Universal Precautions). Faculty will notify students when attendance at particular lectures is required.**

**Academic Requirements for Medical Scholars Program Students Participating In A Full or Partial M-1 Curriculum**

1. **Participation in full M-1 curriculum:** Medical Scholars Program students who are participating in a full M-1 curriculum and intend to complete it in a single academic year are governed by the promotion policies outlined in the preceding section (Requirements for Promotion to the M-2 Year).

2. **Medical Scholars Program students participating in partial M-1 courses and graduate studies:** Medical Scholars Program students who do not intend to complete the M-1 curriculum in a single academic year are required to pass all M-1 courses taken during each academic year, including the summer makeup examination(s). Failure to pass all courses will result in one of the following recommendations:
   
   A. The student will be dropped from the College of Medicine, or
   
   B. The student will be required to repeat all courses taken up to that time.

**Academic Requirements For Students In The Decompressed Program**

Students in the COM-UC Decompressed Program (M-1 Year) will be allowed only one repeat year. To qualify for the repeat year, students must pass all but one course, having passed all previous courses, including the summer makeup examinations. If a student fails one discipline in Year 1A they qualify for a repeat year - retake all 1A courses. A failure in Year 1B of the Decompressed Program will require a repeat of the entire M-1 year (all courses in year 1A and 1B Students who fail more than one course after the makeup opportunity will be recommended to be dropped from the College.

Students are referred to the specific Decompressed Program policy for further details regarding the program.