



MEDICAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

MD / PhD

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

*As of May 13, 2009*



## **SEQUENCE OF STUDIES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

(Approved by the MSP Steering Committee on May 13, 2009)

The Medical Scholars Program provides an academic environment for integration of graduate and medical education and expects students to proceed at an appropriate pace through their dual degree studies. The time schedule for meeting the various milestones (preliminary examinations, course requirements, qualifying examinations, National Board examinations, and the like) will be based on established guidelines in consultation with the student and their graduate advisor. It is recognized that individual programs of study may vary greatly with respect to sequence due to factors such as differences in requirements among graduate programs, funding considerations, and the nature of the research. Consequently, petitions for exceptions to the policy may be approved by the Director of the Medical Scholars Program.

In order to assure both integration and reasonable academic progress:

1. All MSP students begin their studies in full-time graduate course work and/or research. Exceptions are granted for students already enrolled in medical studies and may be granted for students already enrolled in graduate study in the department in which they intend to do their PhD at the time of admission to the MSP. Students are encouraged to take M1 classes while completing their graduate program requirements.
2. Students are expected to complete the Ph.D. requirements prior to initiating the second year (M2) of the medical curriculum. Exceptions to this policy require explicit permission from the graduate thesis advisor and the MSP Director. The graduate advisor might also wish to consult with the student's thesis committee.
3. M.D./Ph.D. students granted exceptions to policy 2 above must progress to Stage III of their graduate program prior to participating in more than one clerkship rotation in the medical curriculum.
4. As per COM policy, MSP students must pass all M-1 courses taken during each academic year including summer makeup examinations(s). Students must repeat all M-1 courses taken to date if students fail any component of the M-1 curriculum.



## **ADVISORY CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL PLAN OF STUDY**

1. Entering students are required to schedule an initial advisory conference with the MSP Director (or designee) during the first semester of enrollment in the MSP. Only the student need attend this initial meeting. Thereafter, students are required to schedule an advisory conference on an annual basis in the spring semester with their graduate (or law school) advisor or another representative of their graduate or professional program.
2. Students who cannot schedule the advisory conference within the time period provided by the MSP are required to notify program administration of the reason for postponement.
3. Failure to schedule an advisory conference will result in consultation between the MSP Director and the student's advisor(s) to prepare recommendations regarding the students' program of studies.
4. Following the MSP advisory conference each year there should be a formal document containing the agreed upon plan for the student for the next year.
5. Whenever it is determined by the College of Medicine or a graduate program that a student in the MSP is in academic difficulty, the MSP office will be notified and will, in turn, notify the other academic unit and the student's graduate advisor.



## **STUDENTS WITHDRAWING FROM OR CHANGING THEIR GRADUATE PROGRAM**

(Approved by the Medical Scholars Program Steering Committee on May 4, 1993; Revisions approved by MSP Steering Committee on November 6, 2006.)

### **A) Responsibility to the Program**

The Medical Scholars Program (MSP) enables students to combine the study of medicine with graduate or professional study in a relevant, recognized second discipline leading to the MD and a second advanced degree, usually the PhD. Students are admitted to pursue the dual degree program in an integrated manner, and they have an equal responsibility to fulfill the commitments to both the College of Medicine and the graduate program.

### **B) Request to Change Graduate Programs**

If an MSP student wishes to change graduate programs, the student must receive permission from the MSP Director. Major changes in training (e.g. from PhD to JD or MBA) will require the student to:

1. Submit a letter to the MSP Director detailing the rationale for the proposed degree change.
2. Submit at least one current letter of recommendation, including one from the student's current graduate advisor.
3. Re-interview as for admission to the MSP.

If the MSP Subcommittee on Admissions denies the request to change graduate programs, the student can pursue the original graduate plan or must agree to withdraw from the MSP.

### **C) Failure to Complete Graduate Degree Program**

If a Medical Scholars Program student decides not to pursue the originally agreed upon graduate, JD, or MBA degree or fails to make satisfactory progress in pursuing that degree, as defined by the responsible academic unit, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the Medical Scholars Program.

### **D) Continuation or Matriculation in the College of Medicine of Students after Withdrawing from the Medical Scholars Program**

Students who withdraw or are withdrawn from the MSP and who wish to commence or continue in the College of Medicine must request approval by means of the following procedures:

1. The student, after consultation with the MSP Director and either the student's graduate advisor or a designated representative of the graduate program, submits a petition to the MSP Director, stating the reasons for withdrawal from the graduate program and requesting approval to continue his/her studies in the College of Medicine.
2. The MSP Director refers the matter to the COM-UC Associate Dean for Student Affairs with an accompanying letter stating the recommendation of the Medical Scholars Program. This



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recommendation will be based upon the record of the student, including input from the graduate advisor or another representative of the graduate program and the clinical advisor, where appropriate.

3. If the student is: (1) in good academic standing as determined by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and (2) the recommendation from the Director of the Medical Scholars Program supports the student's petition, and (3) if no other reason for denial is evident, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will ordinarily recommend to the COM-UC Student Progress and Promotions Committee the continued matriculation of the student in the COM-UC.
  4. Students have the right to appeal an adverse decision of the COM-UC Student Progress and Promotions Committee to the Executive Committee as well as to the College Committee on Student Promotions if the Executive Committee upholds the decision of the SPPC and the SPPC makes no further adverse recommendation.
- E) Both graduates and former students will be considered alumni of the Medical Scholars Program.**



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## **CLERKSHIP CREDIT FOR STUDENTS WITHDRAWING FROM THE MEDICAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

(Approved by the Medical Scholars Program Steering Committee on November 28, 2005)

When an MD/PhD student withdraws from the Medical Scholars Program and is allowed to continue as a traditional medical student, the student potentially can be eligible to receive partial elective clerkship credit for his/her graduate studies/research. The general guideline is that a student, who is in good academic standing in his/her graduate program, will be eligible to receive 3 weeks of elective clerkship credit (up to a maximum of 16 weeks) for every year spent enrolled as a full-time graduate student (meaning that each semester he/she was enrolled for at least 12 hours of graduate credit and less than 7 hours of College of Medicine classes). At the time the student withdraws from the MSP, the Director of the Medical Scholars Program and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Medical Scholars Program will jointly decide how many weeks of elective clerkship credit the student will receive.



## **DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS FROM THE MEDICAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

(Approved by the Medical Scholars Program Steering Committee on April 18, 1988; modified May 13, 2009)

Students who are technically in good academic standing may be dismissed from the Medical Scholars Program for reasonable cause by the MSP Director without dismissal from either of their two degree programs. The following procedures will apply in these situations.

1. Problems pertaining to a student in the Medical Scholars Program which could result in that student's dismissal from the program and which do not fall directly within the province of an academic deficiency in either the College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign or the Graduate College on the Urbana-Champaign campus will be reviewed by the Director of the Medical Scholars Program and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Medical Scholars Program.
2. If the Director and Associate Dean feel that dismissal is warranted, they will make a recommendation to an ad-hoc sub-committee of the Medical Scholars Program Steering Committee. This committee will be comprised of four faculty members currently serving on the Steering Committee. At least one of these faculty should be in the COM-UC and at least one should be affiliated with the student's current graduate program or a academically related program. The Deans of the COM-UC and the UIUC Graduate College, as well as the student's thesis advisor (if they are a member of the steering committee) are excluded. The subcommittee will choose a chair and will appoint a member of the MSP student body to serve on the subcommittee (with vote). The subcommittee will review all pertinent information pertaining to the student's situation, and will confirm, deny, or alter the original recommendation. The student will be notified of the committee's recommendation in writing by the MSP Director and Chair of the subcommittee.
3. In the event that a student wishes to appeal the recommendation of the subcommittee, members of the Medical Scholars Program Steering Committee who did not serve on the ad-hoc subcommittee will act as the appeals committee. The student representative on the Steering Committee will be included as a member of the appeals committee. The Deans of the COM-UC and the Graduate College, as well as the student's thesis advisor (if they are a member of the steering committee) are excluded from the appeals process. The committee will choose an acting Chairman for the appeals process. The MSP Director and Chair of the subcommittee will present their findings. The student will have the right to appear in person at that appeal. The student will be notified of the committee's decision in writing by the MSP Director and Acting Chair of the Committee.
4. Should the student wish to grieve the decision, they will be advised of the appropriate grievance policies applicable to their situation. The grievance procedure could follow either UIUC or UIC policies depending on the nature of the problem that initiated the dismissal decision and/or the recommendations of the committee.



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## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Students are expected to participate in MSP sponsored activities both by regular attendance and by service on planning committees associated with these activities and/or the MSP Advisory Committee (MSPAC).
2. If a student is unable to attend the annual Fall Retreat, it is expected that an explanation will be provided in advance to the MSP Director in writing or by e-mail.
3. Students are encouraged to organize interest groups with the Medical Scholars Program to provide forums for the exchange of knowledge and viewpoints on medicine and health care from the student body's diverse disciplinary perspectives and to foster professional and social interaction.





## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

1. Financial support is vital for students enrolled in dual degree programs in medicine. Although MSP resources are not sufficient at present to enable the program to guarantee financial support to students throughout their program of studies, the program seeks to assist enrolled students in securing financial support in the form of teaching or research assistantships and/or fellowships each year of enrollment in the program.
2. An offer of financial support from the graduate department for the first year of studies is a prerequisite for admission of applicants for the MD/PhD degrees. It is anticipated that MD/PhD students will be given the same consideration for continued financial support from their graduate program as given to regular PhD students in their departments. Decisions concerning financial support as a prerequisite of admission for applicants seeking the MD/JD or the MD/MBA are made on an individual basis.
3. Funds available to the MSP for assistantships or fellowships are awarded at the discretion of the MSP Director. Priority is given to MD/PhD students in excellent academic standing who have completed the PhD, who have only the M3 and M4 clinical curriculum to complete for the MD degree, and for whom no other usual source of funding is available. Other criteria include participation in and leadership in MSP or campus programs and activities.

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## **TUITION AND FEE WAIVER ELIGIBILITY (A policy of the College of Medicine)**

1. Medical Scholars Program students who hold assistantship appointments of 10 or more hours per week (25%) are eligible to receive the associated stipend and a waiver of College of Medicine tuition. A student must be in good academic standing to hold an assistantship.
2. Students who withdraw from the Medical Scholars Program for any reason are excluded from this form of eligibility and are subject to the College of Medicine Tuition Waiver Policy.