

## ACADEMIC STATUS POLICIES

Approved 5/6/2005

### 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. When, for any reason, students repeat courses, grades achieved in the repeated courses will replace all previous grades in the same course.

#### B. Use of “NM” and “I” Grades.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

#### C. Absences. Students are granted excused absences for documented physical and mental health issues. Granting excused absences are made on an individual basis in consultation with the Student Affairs Office, faculty advisors, and each coursemaster. 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.

1. Requests for excused absences must be in writing to each coursemaster before arrangements are made to make up missed exams and assignments. Requests must include the nature of the illness, treatment

plan, expected length of absence, a plan to make up missed assignments/exams, and documentation from the student's caregiver. The ability to return successfully after an extended absence is based on numerous factors including the type of illness, the type of treatment, when the absence occurred, the student's past academic performance, and the type of assignments/exams missed. The student's caregiver may be asked to help determine a reasonable course of action. Faculty will attempt to accommodate student needs, but must consider academic integrity and other issues when considering the request. If course work can not 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.

2. Experience has shown that it is difficult to return to school after missing 2-3 weeks of classes. Students may be better served to request a **leave of absence** from the program if their situation involves absences of greater than 3 weeks. Students must request a leave of absence in writing to the Student Affairs Office. If granted, the student will prepare a Plan of Action (see appendix) documenting their future plans including when they plan to return to the school. Students must also contact individual coursemasters and their academic advisor when their leave is approved. A copy of the leave approval will be retained in the student's file.

- D. **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.** Student performance in didactic and experiential learning courses is monitored on a continual basis. Students are responsible for their own academic progress. Students should take the initiative to meet with their academic advisor, their coursemasters, and the Student Affairs Office when academic problems occur. Experience has demonstrated that the more active a student is in recognizing and addressing potential problems early, the greater the likelihood of avoiding academic difficulties. By the same token, faculty members are encouraged to initiate discussions with students whose performance is likely to result in a failing grade.

A. **Academic Requirements.**

1. Students who receive a failing grade in **any** course (required or elective, didactic or experiential) are eligible for academic dismissal as soon as the failing grade is submitted in writing to the Student Affairs Office.
2. Students who have a cumulative GPA below 2.0 in **required** courses at the end of each semester are subject to academic dismissal.
3. Students who receive more than one D-grade in a given semester in required courses, but are not eligible for academic dismissal, will be invited to an academic hearing with the committee.
4. Students who earn a **semester GPA** below 2.0 but maintain a **cumulative GPA** of 2.0 or greater will receive a letter of academic warning from the Student Affairs Office.
5. Students must pass all first and second year courses before advancing into the third year; and all third year courses before advancing into the fourth year. Students must also pass prerequisite courses before taking related advanced courses

B. **Review Process for F-grades or GPA < 2.0 in required courses**

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 10 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.

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 committee academic review hearing (typically 10 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:
    - (1). *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.
    - (2). *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 coursemaster 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 coursemaster, 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.
  - f. Students who are *academically dismissed* may petition for readmission after they have completed some form of remediation suggested by the committee. Students who have been academically dismissed twice from the school are not eligible for readmission.
- C. ***Review Process for 2 D-grades in required courses in one semester in 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 2 D-grades 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). Students will be directed to the appropriate documents on the web describing the academic review process.
  2. Students identified will be asked to present their case in person before the committee or by writing. The purpose of the review is to identify areas of weakness that are leading to academic difficulty. These students are not eligible for academic dismissal.
  3. *Committee action:* The committee will submit its recommendations 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.
- D. ***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, coursemasters 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. Coursemasters 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 coursemaster, and a copy will be retained in the student's file. If students fail to submit these plans, their registration will be cancelled.

IV. **Readmission Policies.** Students who have to leave the school for personal, disciplinary, or academic reasons have the right to request readmission 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 leaving the program.

- A. *Academic or Disciplinary Dismissal.* As stated in the school's catalog, "Students who have been academically dismissed once may petition for reinstatement after they have completed some form of remediation. Students who have been academically dismissed twice are not eligible for reinstatement". The associate dean and chair will review the prepharmacy and pharmacy school academic backgrounds of students requesting readmission. Many times, specific plans of action have been formulated by the committee following dismissal. These plans will be reviewed to make sure that they were followed. Based on this review, students may be called to meet with the associate dean, chair, and/or committee as deemed necessary. Requests for readmission should be made by June 1st for fall semesters and November 1st for spring semesters.
- B. *Personal Reasons.* 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 restatement to the associate dean who will consider the request and may or may not place certain conditions 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 coursemasters in relevant courses upon their return to inform them of their status. Requests for readmission following a personal leave of absence are typically not reviewed by the committee. Requests for readmission should be made by June 1st for fall semesters and November 1st for spring semesters.

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 form must be signed by the course master and will be kept on file in the Student Affairs Office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SS#: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Coursemaster: \_\_\_\_\_ Current grade: F or I

**Plan to Remove Failing or Incomplete Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To be resolved by: \_\_\_\_\_ (specific date)

**Coursemaster**

**Student**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

**Office Use**

Date Resolved:

Student Affairs Committee Notified:

CC.: Advisor