

## Academic Standards

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### **Purpose:**

To provide information for students on the COM's academic standards that include grading, class attendance, tuition and fees, refunds, student promotion, retention, graduation, students' rights and responsibilities, and the filing of grievances and appeals.

### **Scope:**

This Policy shall apply to Duquesne University College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) students.

### **Responsibility:**

The responsibility to review and revise this Policy is established by the COM leadership and approved by the COM Dean and Duquesne University Provost. It is effective as of the date noted and shall remain effective until amended or terminated by the COM Dean or University Provost.

### **Policy:**

This policy is a reference for COM students, providing information regarding academic standards, including grading, class attendance, tuition and fees, refunds, student promotion, retention, graduation, student rights and responsibilities, and the filing of grievances and appeals. Each student enrolled in the COM is responsible for knowledge of the standards contained and/or referenced in this Policy.

#### **1. Academic Standing**

Academic Standing is defined as a student's academic performance within their respective block or clinical rotation. In order for students to remain in good academic standing, they must not have any un-remediated course failures or rotations.

#### **2. Student Promotion**

Students are evaluated for promotion and graduation based on established osteopathic core competencies required at the medical student level. The competencies include communication, problem-solving and critical thinking, clinical skills in patient care, osteopathic philosophy and manipulation, medical knowledge, and professionalism and ethics. These competencies are tested on written examinations and skills-based testing throughout the four-year curriculum. Grades are recorded on the students' transcripts at the end of each block and at the end of each year. Students may access an unofficial transcript of their progress at any time, free of charge.

Federal law requires that all students receiving federal financial assistance are required to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory academic progress within the COM is defined as passing all required courses at the end of each term, and completing all requirements of the program within 150% of the assigned time for the four-year curriculum (e.g., completing all required coursework and assignments within 6 years from the date of matriculation into the COM). Student progress is monitored regularly by the Office of Medical Education or Clinical Affairs as applicable and formally

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evaluated by the Student Academic Progress and Promotion Committee (the “SAPP Committee”) at the conclusion of each academic year. Students who have successfully completed all academic requirements of the previous year will be recommended for promotion, and recommendations for graduation will be made by the COM Faculty Council. A more complete explanation of the duties of the SAPP Committee is contained in the COM Policy, entitled Student Academic Progress and Promotion Policy and Procedures, and a more detailed explanation of the duties of the COM Faculty Council is contained in the COM Faculty Council Bylaws.

More detail on requirements by year is included below:

- For the MS1 and MS2 years of the curriculum, students must pass or successfully remediate all curricular components for each course, as well as all other requirements in all blocks to advance to the next semester. If a course has multiple graded components (such as a lecture portion and a laboratory portion), the student may be required to pass each portion of the course as outlined in the course syllabus in order to achieve a passing grade for the course. A final course grade of less than 70% will normally require remediation of all portions of the course during the one-week period provided between blocks. Remediation of a course requires the student to study on campus during the remediation week, as well as regular meetings with the course director prior to completing the remediation examination. Remediation examinations are comprehensive over the entire course material, and must be successfully completed prior to the first day of the next block.

Additionally, MS2 students must pass or successfully remediate COMLEX qualification exams and end-of-year assessments and all other requirements including sitting for COMLEX-USA Level 1 to advance to the MS3 year. As further described in the COMLEX and Student Academic Progress and Promotion Policies, an exception may be granted by the COM Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in order to permit the student to take the MS3 Simulation Block, as long as the student is engaging in an assigned Modified Course of Study plan, but the student is not eligible for full promotion to MS3 and/or to begin clinical rotations until they sit for the COMLEX Level 1 examination.

- For the MS3 year of the curriculum, students must pass or successfully remediate all clinical rotations, end-of-rotation exams, end-of-year assessments, the COMLEX Level 2 CE qualifying exam, and all other requirements including sitting for COMLEX Level 2 CE in order to advance to the MS4 academic year. As further described in the COMLEX Policy, an exception may be granted by the COM Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, as long as the student is engaging in an assigned Modified Course of Study plan, but the student is not eligible for full promotion until they sit for the COMLEX Level 2 CE examination.

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- MS 3 and MS4 students must pass both the overall rotation as outlined in the syllabus and the end-of-rotation examination for core rotations, in order to pass that rotation. The rotation assessments will include a competency evaluation consisting of metrics including medical knowledge, communication, physical examination skills, problem solving and clinical decision-making, professionalism and ethics, and osteopathic-specific competencies. Students will be rated by their clinical preceptors on each of these metrics, and these ratings will be compiled to determine the student’s final grade (e.g., H, HP, P, F). Students who do not pass the written examination with a 70% or greater grade will be required to pass a remediation examination administered by the COM within one month of receiving notice of the failed examination grade. Students who do not pass the clinical rotation competency evaluation or the remediation exam will be referred to the SAPP Committee to determine eligibility to repeat the failed rotation. Multiple failed clinical rotations may result in dismissal.
- MS4 students must pass or successfully remediate all clinical rotations, end-of-rotation exams, and all other requirements in order to be eligible for graduation.

### 3. GRADING SCALE:

The Duquesne University COM utilizes the following grading scales:

Duquesne University COM Grading Scale and GPAs (Quality Points)								
MS1-MS2 Courses		Quality Points per credit hour	MS3-MS4 Rotations				Other Grades	
			Preceptor Eval Grade	Exam Grade	Overall Final Grade	Quality Points		
A	90-100%	4	Honors	Honors	Honors	4	IC	Incomplete
B	80-89%	3	Honors	High Pass	Honors	4	W	Withdrawal
C	70-79%	2	High Pass	Honors	Honors	4		
C-R*	70%	2	High Pass	High Pass	High Pass	3		
			Honors	Pass	High Pass	3		
P	70-100%	4	High Pass	Pass	High Pass	3		
P-R*	70%	2	Pass	Honors	High Pass	3		
F	<70%	0	Pass	High Pass	High Pass	3		
			Pass	Pass	Pass	2		
			H, HP, P, or R*	R*	Pass R*	2		
			<b>Fail</b>					

- The maximum percentage earned in any course cannot exceed 100%.
- Percentage grades are rounded to the nearest percentage from 0.5 upwards. (e.g., 89.50% - 90.49% = 90%, whereas 88.50% - 89.49% = 89%).
- H designates honors; HP designates high pass; P designates a passing grade, F designates a failing grade in a pass/fail course.
- R\* designates a course or rotation passed after successful remediation of an initial failure.

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**Incomplete:** an incomplete is the grade given when there are extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from completing all course requirements. An incomplete grade can only be assigned with permission from the appropriate Associate Dean. Incomplete grades must be resolved prior to the first day of the next semester or the Incomplete grade automatically becomes a failing grade.

**GPA and Class Rank:** The student's grade point average (GPA) is measured on a scale from 0-4.0; it is the cumulative average of the grades in all subjects and is calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. Additionally, percentage points per course will be recorded and in the event of multiple students with the same GPA, percentage points will be utilized to determine class rank.

#### 4. CLASS ATTENDANCE:

The COM provides a curriculum that employs a variety of learning modalities in the training of future physicians. These modalities include but are not limited to lectures, laboratories, team-based learning, clinical application sessions, skills development exercises, group learning, and simulations. Because good attendance is a significant component of professionalism and is a critical component of the practice of medicine, COM students are expected to attend all aspects of the provided educational content. Minimum attendance requirements per year are as follows:

- MS 1 and MS 2 students must maintain a minimum required attendance of 80% of all lectures in each course, and 100% attendance for all laboratory sessions, group- and team-based learning activities, clinical skills and clinical application sessions, simulations and testing.
- MS 3 and MS 4 students are required to attend all clinical rotation activities, exams, and COM educational sessions.

Any unexcused absences may result in a reduction in a course's overall grade. Any student with a planned absence (such as medical procedures, funerals, or attending a conference) must obtain permission in advance for this absence through the medical education office (MS 1 and MS 2 students) or office of clinical rotations and preceptor (MS 3 and MS 4). Students with unplanned absences (e.g., illness) must notify the Office of Medical Education or Clinical Rotations and preceptor by 8:00 a.m. on the date of absence, and provide documentation (e.g., physician's note) upon return to the COM. Of note, timely arrival to all educational activities is another important sign of professionalism and is considered a sign of respect to faculty and fellow classmates; repeated tardiness may result in student referral to the Professionalism and Ethical Conduct Committee ("PECC Committee").

#### 5. TUITION AND FEES

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**a. Admission Application Fee**

A nonrefundable fee of \$65.00 is due to the COM upon submission of a secondary application to the COM. Students are also responsible for the cost related to background checks.

**b. Acceptance Fee**

Students will deposit \$1500.00 within two weeks of the date of acceptance to the COM. This is a non-refundable deposit that is applied to the student’s MS 1 tuition.

**c. Tuition and Fees**

The student’s cost of attendance is based on tuition, required books and educational supplies, room and board, and other miscellaneous expenses. Student tuition and costs are billed biannually (typically July and December) and is due within 30 days of receipt of the bill. Students who fail rotations, board examinations, and/or are assigned additional curricular requirements in a Modified Plan of Study will incur the cost of the Modified Plan of Study that is chosen by the COM. Late fees may be assessed to students who do not pay their tuition by the deadline, and checks returned for insufficient funds will be assessed an additional fee. Graduating students must satisfy all tuition and other financial obligations to the COM and University before their degree will be conferred. Students who withdraw or transfer must also satisfy all tuition and financial obligations to the COM and University prior to the finalization of the changed status.

**6. REFUNDS**

If a student withdraws from the COM prior to completing the coursework for a given semester, a pro-rated refund will be assessed and returned to the student’s account as outlined below; of note, the U.S. Department of Education requires the COM to return the unearned portion of federal student loans.

Withdrawal Date	Possible Refund
During the first week of the semester	100%
During the second week of the semester	80%
During the third week of the semester	40%
During the fourth week of the semester	20%
After the end of the fourth week of the semester	0%

**7. RETENTION**

The COM deeply values each student for their commitment to the profession and their future contribution to the betterment of healthcare in our region and beyond. As such, the COM places a strong emphasis on student success and well-being. Given the main reasons that students may leave a higher education program (cost, isolation, social difficulties, and unclear expectations), the COM has put in place several retention strategies to best support our students:

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- a. The COM and University maintain an environment to promote and support wellness. Some of the key resources available to students, faculty, and staff are outlined in the COM's Wellness, Mental Health, and Fatigue Mitigation Policy.
- b. The COM employs personnel who will assist students to improve their study skills, test-taking skills, goal-setting, time management, and stress management. Such personnel will also work individually with students who have specific academic concerns or difficulties, to help the student obtain and maintain successful strategies to ensure success in the curriculum.
- c. Students will be assigned an academic advisor for additional academic support and guidance, and the COM will maintain an open-door policy for students to seek guidance from trusted faculty members and administrators.
- d. The COM Office of Student Affairs will remain available to support students, particularly for non-academic concerns and difficulties.

### 8. GRADUATION

To be eligible for graduation, a student must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- A) Successfully complete (pass) each required course in the COM curriculum.
- B) Achieve a passing score on the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) COMLEX-USA Level 1 and COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE licensing examinations within allowable attempts and timelines.
- C) Meet all academic requirements and professional and ethical conduct expectations as outlined in the COM Student Handbook.
- D) Complete all program requirements within 6 calendar years from the date of matriculation inclusive of any program extensions for any reason.
- E) Complete all exit paperwork that is required by the COM and University.
- F) Satisfy all financial obligations to the COM and University.

### 9. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### a. Student Code of Conduct

As future physician leaders, COM students are expected to closely follow an appropriate level of conduct and professionalism throughout their education at the COM as outlined in the Policy on Student Professionalism and Conduct. All COM students will respect the rights of others, and will follow the expectations set forth in the Student Professionalism and Conduct

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Policy. All COM students are further expected to uphold the American Osteopathic Association's Code of Ethics, the COM's Policy entitled "Student Professionalism and Conduct," and to comply with the University's Student Handbook and TAPs. COM students should be aware that they may be subject to sanctions for off-campus conduct as further described in these rules, regulations, and policies. No Policy or Handbook referenced is intended to be a contract, and is subject to change. Students are expected to be knowledgeable about all published rules, regulations, and policies of the COM and the University. Students responsible for misconduct may be disciplined, following a hearing by the PECC Committee, as appropriate, or by the adjudicating body set forth in the University's Student Handbook and/or applicable TAP. Additionally, COM students are also expected to comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

### **b. Student Rights and Responsibilities**

- 1) *Access to Higher Education:* The COM shall be open to all students who are qualified according to its admission process. Duquesne University publishes non-discrimination policies in TAPs No. [30](#), [31](#), and [61](#). Such Policies are consistent with Duquesne University's requirements under applicable Federal law including Title VII and Title IX, and apply to all programs and activities of the University, including admission and employment practices. These policies provide that, among other things, the COM will not discriminate in the selection of administrative personnel, faculty and staff, and students based on race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age or disabilities, and religion. See also the COM's Nondiscrimination Policy.
- 2) *Campus and Classroom Expression:* The University's policy regarding Campus and Classroom Expression is set forth in the University's Student Handbook, and is incorporated into this Policy by reference. In addition, public statements made by COM students must clearly identify that the statements are made by the speaker alone and are not intended to be representative of the COM or the University.
- 3) *Student Government:* As constituents of the academic community, COM students are free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and matters of general interest to the student body. Student concerns should be referred to the COM's Student Government Association officers, who will then present these concerns to the COM administration for consideration.
- 4) *Access to and Release of Student Records:* The COM complies with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). In accordance with FERPA, students have certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights are outlined in the Duquesne University [TAP 28](#).

## **10. FILING OF CERTAIN GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

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- a. For complaints related to FERPA, COM students have the option to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:
  - Family Policy Compliance Office
  - U.S. Department of Education
  - 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
  - Washington, DC 20202-5901
- b. For complaints related to accreditation standards, students should refer to the COM Policy entitled, "Complaints Related to Accreditation Standards."
- c. For academic concerns such as grade appeals, students must bring the concern to the course director as outlined in the course governance section of the syllabus. Students may appeal decisions made by the course director to the appropriate Associate Dean.
- d. For grievances related to student affairs, students should bring these concerns to the COM's Student Government Association officers who will bring the concerns to the COM administration. If a student feels that their concerns have not been adequately addressed through the Student Government Association officers, the student may appeal to the COM Office of Student Affairs who will seek to resolve the concern or involve the appropriate Associate Dean or the Dean as needed.
- e. For more information about all other grievance or appeal processes, students are referred to the applicable COM or University policy.

Effective Date: 11/1/2022

Revised: Revision: 0