



POLICY TITLE: <i>Performance and Advancement Committee Standards and Procedures</i>	APPROVAL DATE: <i>June 7, 2019</i>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Medical Education</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>All Students</i>

POLICY STATEMENT

I. PERFORMANCE AND ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

A Performance and Advancement Committee (PAC) monitors the progress of each medical student through the curriculum. A separate PAC is established for each cohort of students upon entry into the program of medical education. Each committee regularly reviews each student's performance and may make decisions on promotion, retention, dismissal, leave of absence and compliance with COM standards.

A. MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

Overall evaluation of student performance at the COM shall be made by any of two PACs. One PAC will follow the student primarily through the pre-clinical years (the M1/M2 PAC), and the other through the clinical years (the M3/M4 PAC). A transfer student will be assigned to the PAC which applies to the class into which he or she enters. MD/PhD students will be followed by the M1/M2 and M3/M4 PACs when they are in their medical student years. When these students are working on their PhD dissertation or doing MSTP work outside of the MD requirements their progress will be monitored by the MSTP Academic Progress Committee, following the rules and regulations established by the MSTP and the department in which they are obtaining their PhD degree.

Membership on each PAC shall include seven faculty members including both basic science and clinical faculty. Members will be appointed by the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs or his designee. A chairperson and vice-chairperson of each PAC shall be designated by the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs or his designee from among the members on PAC. Each member, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson will have one vote. A simple majority of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum.

An Executive Secretary to the PAC may be appointed by the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Affairs. The Executive Secretary is a non-voting member of PAC. Members of the Office of Medical Education and of the Office of Student Affairs may be asked to attend PAC meetings to provide information that may assist the Committee in their deliberations.

Decisions of PAC will be based upon the student's academic record, behavior and professionalism and overall performance. A PAC may review, at its discretion, information submitted by the student under consideration. A PAC is not required to review any information that is submitted by a student that the PAC did not specifically request.

The PAC will document its decisions in meeting summaries or minutes. These meeting summaries will not be detailed transcripts of discussions at meetings. Adverse actions or significant concerns as determined by PAC regarding an individual student will be communicated to the student and may also be communicated to the student's advisor and to the Office of Student Affairs at the discretion of the PAC. Email is an acceptable form of communication to a student by a PAC.

A student may appeal the decision of a PAC only in the manner described in Appeals and Grievances. No other appeal or review mechanisms are applicable.

B. FREQUENCY OF THE MEETINGS

Each PAC shall meet no less than four times per year. It is anticipated that each PAC may need to meet more frequently such as monthly to review student progress. A PAC may meet at other times as needed. Virtual meetings of PACs, including email votes, are allowed but should be limited to special circumstances that preclude a meeting of the PAC.

C. THE NATURE OF Committee DELIBERATIONS

All deliberations of the PAC are confidential.

It is the PAC's responsibility to assure to the extent of its abilities that all graduates of the COM are prepared to become physicians and deserve the conferring of the Doctor of Medicine degree by the University. The PAC will review student performance based upon the published educational objectives of the courses, derived from the graduation competencies. This includes not only test scores and other measures of knowledge and skill, but also, behaviors that the faculty has defined as part of the academic requirements of the curriculum. A PAC member who has a conflict of interest in the matter shall remove themselves from the deliberation and any potential vote of action concerning the student. A conflict of interest is determined to exist in instances where the PAC member: 1. is related to the student; 2. is or has been in a significant mentoring or social relationship with the student or student's family; 3. believes s/he cannot be completely impartial in his/her consideration of the matter regarding the student or 4. has previously given a grade of Failure to the student in a course or clerkship that is an integral component of the decision that is currently before PAC pertaining to this student.

The PAC will follow the guidelines defining **Advancement and Retention** and **Appeals and Grievances**.

Issues relating to improper conduct or lack of professionalism may be referred directly to the Co- Chairs of the Honor Council and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and/or the appropriate PAC as determined by the person submitting the Exemplary/Formative Feedback Form. The COM adheres to the General Professional Standards: **Policies for the Honor Council** and the Guidelines for Student Conduct maintained by the University of Cincinnati as well as the standards of performance expected of all students enrolled in the medical school curriculum.

D. PERSONAL APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

A student whose advancement and/or academic or professional performance is in question may be requested to appear before a PAC. This includes students for whom actions such as dismissal, repetition of a course or other component of the curriculum, or other alterations in progress are likely possibilities. Repeated instances of marginal grades or other poor academic or professional performance may lead to a request by the PAC for the student to appear. The PAC also reserves the right to mandate a student's appearance. Failure of a student to attend a mandated PAC appearance will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the College of Medicine.

A major purpose for providing the student access to the PAC is to allow the student an opportunity to furnish more information before a decision is made. Correspondingly, invited students are encouraged to inform the PAC of any extenuating or mitigating circumstances affecting academic or professional performance.

The PAC must provide notice to the student via email at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which the student is requested to appear to allow the student sufficient time to make alternations in his or her schedule.

A student may request an appearance before a PAC to discuss requests for Leaves of Absence, participation in Program Related Activities, or other extenuating or unusual requests. Students wishing to appear before the PAC must provide notice to the PAC at least 48 hours prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the PAC. Any

such appearance by a student is at the sole discretion of the PAC.

A PAC may request, at its sole discretion, an assessment for fitness for duty regarding any student who experiences problems that interfere with academic or professional performance.

A student may bring an advisor to the meeting with the committee. The PAC, at its discretion, may also meet with the advisor in the absence of the student. When the student is present the advisor may advise the student, but not directly interact with the PAC. Once the meeting with the student is over, and the PAC has no questions for the advisor, the advisor will leave the meeting before PAC deliberations begin.

II. LETTER OF CONCERN

A. Use and Consequences

1. The PAC may, but is not required to, issue a Letter of Concern if, in its judgment, the student is at academic risk. The decision to issue a Letter of Concern is a matter of discretion of the PAC and is not a prerequisite or condition to later action, adverse or otherwise, regarding a student. An unsatisfactory performance, whether interim or final, in any course may result in the PAC sending a Letter of Concern to a student. A student who has failed to pass the USMLE Step 1 or Step 2 Clinical Knowledge/Clinical Skills exams may be issued a Letter of Concern.
2. The nature of the Letter of Concern status is meant to alert the student that he or she is in significant academic or professional difficulty. It is not recorded on the student's official transcript and does not affect financial aid. Receipt of a Letter of Concern cannot be appealed.

B. Removal of Letter of Concern Status

To have the Letter of Concern status removed, a student must maintain two successive semesters with passing grades in all courses, i.e., receive no Failures or Conditionals. The passing grades may be interim grades. However, a PAC may retain a student's Letter of Concern status for a period longer than two semesters, if the PAC believes that extending the Letter of Concern would be beneficial to the student's academic progress.

III. PROFESSIONALISM REQUIREMENTS

The PAC recognizes that there is a range and degrees of behavior that encompass professionalism. However, a medical student who fails to maintain the degree of personal and professional standards deemed essential for all medical students by the COM is subject to actions which may include dismissal from the COM.

Failure to meet the academic standards of a course for any reason will lead to review of the student by the PAC. Issues relating to improper conduct or lack of professionalism should be referred to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and the appropriate PAC chair in writing (see below). The PAC chair and Associate Dean for Student Affairs will discuss the issue and determine if the concern expressed in the professionalism referral should be referred to the Honor Council, be handled by the Office of Student Affairs, or by the PAC. The Exemplary/Formative Feedback Form can be found in the appendix (one is for behavior which needs correction, another is for exemplary behavior).

A. PAC Review of Professionalism

1. An individual who has concerns about a lack of professionalism exhibited by any COM medical student may express concerns to the PAC and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. Any submissions must be in writing and describe the concerns. The preferred format is through the use of the COM Exemplary/Formative Feedback Form but the use of this form is not an absolute requirement.
2. If the issue is to be handled by the Office of Student Affairs the PAC will be informed of the

discussion between the student and the Office, and the PAC will be aware of the outcome of such discussions.

3. If the issue is to be handled by the PAC, the PAC will review the documentation of the alleged unprofessional behavior and, if applicable, any action taken to correct the alleged behavior. The student who allegedly engaged in the unprofessional behavior shall be invited to appear before the appropriate PAC to allow the student an opportunity to furnish more information before a decision is made. The PAC will investigate the alleged unprofessional behavior and make a determination as to whether there is reason to believe that the medical student engaged in the alleged unprofessional behavior. Once a determination is reached, the PAC will proceed as described under point 4.
4. The PAC will summarize in its minutes or meeting summary the conduct of its review, and may choose to do any or a combination of the following:
 - a. Take no action
 - b. Place the student on a Professional Warning status

A simple majority of the voting members in attendance at the PAC meeting, provided that a quorum is present, must agree to the placement of the student on Professional Warning.

In placing a student on Professional Warning, the PAC will specify the corrective actions, activities and parameters that the student will be required to demonstrate or perform. These may include, but are not limited to, monitoring of performance; a Leave of Absence; specifications regarding the student's academic program and schedule; periodic updates or appearances before the PAC; consultation and advising, or other actions. The PAC will also delineate specific timelines as applicable for resolution of the Professional Warning.

A student in Professional Warning status will undergo regular reviews by the PAC to assure that progress is being made by the student in addressing the concerns that led to the Professional Warning status. Removal of Professional Warning Status is at the discretion of the PAC and requires a simple majority vote of PAC members providing that a quorum is present.

- c. Inform others, such as appropriate course directors and members of the COM administration, of the student's need to engage in corrective actions so that appropriate monitoring can be provided. In addition, the PAC may work with the course directors and COM administration to arrange for alterations of instructional situations and/or mentoring to assist the student in correcting the deficiencies.
- d. Determine if a statement regarding the professionalism problem should be placed in the student's MSPE; or, if the MSPE has been sent, to send out an addendum to the MSPE to the student's matched residency program or programs to which the student is applying of the specific needs which the student has regarding professional guidance.
- e. Determine that dismissal is appropriate due to unprofessional behavior.

IV. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Granting of and return from a Leave of Absence will be determined by the PAC as described in the **LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**.

V. GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

Information describing reasons for grievances and appeals, and procedures used to file a grievance or an appeal can be found under **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE, GRADE APPEALS PROCESS, AND ACADEMIC STATUS APPEALS PROCESS.**