

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE**  
**POLICY FOR RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND GRADUATION FOR THE**  
**DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE DEGREE**

**1. Overview**

- a. The Policy for Retention, Promotion, and Graduation for the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Degree is established by the Committee on Student Evaluation (“COSE”) of the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (“College”) and applies to students enrolled in the College program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (“D.O.”) degree.
- b. This document was revised and approved by the Faculty of the College and becomes effective with the Fall Semester of the 2021-22 academic year.

**2. Requirements for the D.O. Degree**

- a. Degree Conferral: The D.O. degree is conferred by the Michigan State University (“MSU”) Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the COSE and the affirmative vote of the faculty of the College at the Spring Faculty Assembly.
- b. Degree Requirements: Effective with the 2021-22 academic year, the candidate for the D.O. degree must:
  - i. Earn a passing grade in (or successfully remediate) each required course (or approved equivalent) in the D.O. program, and
  - ii. Achieve a passing score on the following National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) licensing examinations, within the allowable number of attempts as defined by MSUCOM in this policy: COMLEX-USA Level 1 and COMLEX-USA Level 2 Cognitive Evaluation (Level 2-CE); and
  - iii. Complete and pass the required Clinical Performance Competency Assessment with satisfactory performance; and
  - iv. Complete the required training in each year of the four-year curriculum for the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), as outlined by the “America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (COMPETES) Act”, approved by Congress, and required by the University; and
  - v. Meet the academic requirements and professional conduct expectations of the D.O. program as outlined in this Policy, the College Student Handbook and the policies and procedures of Michigan State University.

**3. Additional Program Requirements**

- a. Each student, prior to matriculation, must meet the following College and University requirements:
  - i. Immunizations as required by the Office of the University Physician at [www.uphys.msu.edu](http://www.uphys.msu.edu).
  - ii. Completion of fingerprint and criminal background check.
  - iii. Submission of official transcripts from previously attended colleges/universities.

- b. Each student, while enrolled or while on academic extension or leave of absence, must maintain the following College and University requirements:
  - i. Immunizations as required by the Office of the University Physician at [www.uphys.msu.edu](http://www.uphys.msu.edu), based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for immunization of healthcare workers.
  - ii. Initial and annual refresher training provided by MSU in
    - a) Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP)
    - b) Universal Precautions
    - c) The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
    - d) MSU Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) policy
  - iii. Completion of random urine drug screen(s) at any time during the program for cause, in keeping with University Physician guidelines
- c. Each student, prior to entry to the Clerkship phase must meet the following College requirements:
  - i. Completion of a second criminal background check
  - ii. Completion of a urine drug screen that is negative for controlled and illicit substances or reviewed by the University Physician
  - iii. Certification in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
  - iv. Other requirements may be enacted by the Clerkship Office and communicated to the students

#### **4. Duration of the D.O. Program**

- a. The standard time to achieve the D.O. degree is four (4) calendar years.
- b. The maximum time for completion of requirements for the D.O. degree is six (6) calendar years from the date of matriculation.
  - I. For students matriculating in or after summer semester 2019, the maximum program duration of six (6) years will be inclusive of any program extensions for academic extensions or personal leaves of absence.
  - II. For students matriculating prior to summer semester 2019, any leaves of absence for academic or personal reasons that were initiated prior to summer semester 2019 will not be included in the maximum duration of six (6) years; however, any additional academic extensions and/or personal leaves of absence will be included in the maximum duration of six (6) years.
- c. The standard time for completion of requirements for a dual D.O./Ph.D. degree is nine (9) calendar years from the date of matriculation.
- d. The standard time for dual degree programs may vary, but the D.O. program requirements must be met within a maximum total of six (6) years which may be non-consecutive.

## 5. Grades

a. In accordance with University definitions and policy, as approved by the University Committee on Curriculum, the College employs the Pass-No Grade System. The criteria for the course grade are defined in the syllabus for each course. The following symbols will be used:

- i. P-pass - indicates the student has met the course requirements for a passing grade and will have a "P" recorded on their official University transcript.
- ii. N-no grade - indicates the student has failed to meet the course requirements for a passing grade and will have an "N" recorded on their official University transcript. An "N" grade is equivalent to failing the course and will remain on their official University transcript.
  - a) The terms and eligibility for remediation of an "N" grade are set by the course instructor and published in the course syllabus.
  - b) If a student is eligible to seek remediation and wishes to attempt remediation through reexamination, they will be enrolled in a remediation course in the same semester. If the student successfully completes the terms of the remediation course, they will receive a "P" grade for the remediation course. The "N" grade in the original course will remain on the official University transcript. If the student fails to successfully complete the terms of the remediation course, they will receive an "N" grade for the remediation course. The "N" grade from the remediation course will remain on their official University transcript.
  - c) ET-extension – updated to a "P", indicating the student passed the course, or an "N", indicating the student failed the course.
  - d) A student who is on a "leave of absence", "withdraws" or is "dismissed" from the D.O. program, will be unable to remediate or complete requirements for courses in which an "I" or "ET" was assigned.
- iv. A student who has incomplete or outstanding requirements of a course, will have either an I-incomplete or ET-extension grade recorded on their official University transcript. Upon completion of all requirements, the original grade recorded on the official University transcript will be updated as follows:
  - a) I-incomplete – updated to an "I/P", indicating the student passed the course, or an "I/N", indicating the student failed the course.
  - b) ET-extension – updated to a "P", indicating the student passed the course, or an "N", indicating the student failed the course.
  - c) A student who is on a "leave of absence", "withdraws" or is "dismissed" from the College, will be unable to remediate or complete requirements for courses in which an "I" or "ET" was assigned.

## 6. Evaluation of Student Performance in the D.O. Program

- a. The College provides instruction and assessment aligned with the seven (7) osteopathic core competencies of medical knowledge, patient care, communication, professionalism, practice-based learning, systems-based practice, and osteopathic principles and practice/osteopathic manipulative treatment.
- b. The performance of each student enrolled in the D.O. program will be reviewed on a regular basis by the COSE. Whereas professionalism is one of the osteopathic core competencies, the COSE will

review academic performance and professional conduct. In each review period, the COSE will determine the academic standing of the student as noted in Section 7 of this policy.

## **7. Academic Standing**

- a. A student who earns a passing grade in each course and meets expectations for professional conduct will be deemed by the COSE to be in “good academic standing” and will be permitted to progress to the next semester or phase of the curriculum.
  - i. During the Preclerkship phase, a student with marginal academic performance will be referred for a mandatory consultation (“Academic Success Checkup”) with a College academic advisor. Failure of the student to report for consultation will be referred to the designated College Administrator.
- b. A student who earns an initial failing grade, in any course, but who is eligible for and successfully meets the terms of remediation for the course, will be deemed by the COSE to be in “good academic standing with monitoring”. The student is permitted to progress to the next semester or phase of the curriculum. The status of “monitoring” indicates the student will be referred to resources of the college with the goal of improving academic performance, and/or will be counseled regarding professionalism issues. The COSE may refer the student for review by the Preclerkship or Clerkship Subcommittee of the COSE, or may stipulate additional actions.
- c. A student who demonstrates a lapse in academic or professional conduct may be reviewed by the Preclerkship or Clerkship Subcommittee of the COSE.
  - i. The subcommittee may recommend to the COSE a status of “good academic standing with monitoring” or refer the student to the COSE for further review or action.
- d. A student who receives one or more subsequent failing grades in any course(s); or who receives an “N” grade but is not eligible for remediation or does not successfully complete remediation; and/or who demonstrates egregious and/or recurrent episodes of academic or professional misconduct, will be reviewed by the COSE. The Chairman of the COSE, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Life and/or the Associate Dean for Medical Education, will determine whether the student will be required to appear at the COSE meeting.
  - i. The COSE will review the student’s performance, determine academic standing (from the following) and submit their decision to the student in writing. The student’s eligibility to progress in the curriculum will be determined separately in each case, based upon completion of curricular requirements.
  - ii. Academic warning: Applies to a student who ~~meets criteria to advance in the program but~~ has significant academic (e.g. multiple failed courses) and/or professional conduct issues requiring further intervention.
    - a) An “academic warning” is an official written statement advising the student that additional violations or deficiencies will result in more severe sanctions.
  - ii. Academic probation: Applies to a student who has more serious or recurrent academic or professional conduct issues for whom the COSE deems that prescribed interventions are indicated. The student’s eligibility to progress in the curriculum will be determined separately in each case, based upon completion of curricular requirements.
    - a) The duration and terms of the probation will be set by the COSE and documented in writing.

- b) A meeting will be scheduled within five (5) business days with the student and the Associate Dean for Student Life and/or the Associate Dean for Medical Education, at which time the terms of the academic probation will be discussed
    - c) The student will be required to meet with a designated administrator or advisor of the College to determine if the terms of the probation have been met. A report will be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records. Based on this report or other data, the Chairman of the COSE, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Life and/or the Associate Dean for Medical Education, will determine whether the student will be required to appear at the COSE meeting.
  - iii. Suspension: Applies to a student who is alleged to have engaged in behavior that creates an urgent concern for the safety of patients or others in the learning environment. The purpose of a suspension will be to permit a timely investigation of the reported conduct. A recommendation for suspension may follow review of academic and professional conduct by the COSE or one of its subcommittees, or upon report to a College administrator. A fact-finding hearing will be convened within three (3) class days, as outlined in the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities. Upon a recommendation of suspension, the student will be notified. Suspensions must be approved by the College Dean; if the suspension is not approved, the College Dean may direct that another sanction be imposed. The student will be entitled to due process as defined by the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities.
  - iv. Dismissal: Applies to a student who has severe deficits in academic performance, or for egregious or recurrent incidents of academic or professional misconduct, or who has failed COMLEX-USA Level 1 or Level 2-CE on three attempts, or who otherwise fails to meet the requirements for progression to the D.O. degree
    - a) The COSE will submit a recommendation for “dismissal” and supporting documentation to the College Dean. In the case of a third failure on a COMLEX-USA examination, written notice to the student and to the Dean will be enacted by the Chairperson of the COSE upon report of the failed third attempt.
    - b) A “dismissal” from the D.O. program will require the endorsement of the Dean and the MSU Provost for Academic Affairs. Upon endorsement, a written notice of dismissal will be sent to the student from the Office of the Dean.
- e. Review and Resolution of Academic Standing
  - i. The performance of students who were designated as other than “good academic standing” will be reviewed at the next meeting of the COSE.
  - ii. A student may be returned to “good academic standing” or “good academic standing with monitoring” upon demonstrating improved academic performance and professional conduct
  - iii. A student with ongoing or progressive academic or professional conduct issues may be maintained on the previously assigned academic standing, or assigned to a new academic standing in a progressive fashion.
- f. Due Process and Appeals
  - i. The right of the student to due process is defined in the MSU Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.
  - ii. When a student is placed on “academic warning”, “academic probation”, or when “dismissal” is recommended by the COSE or enacted by the Dean, the student shall have the right to appeal

- by filing a grievance with the COM College Hearing Committee as defined within the MSU Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities (“MSRR”) policy.
- iii. The enrollment status of “academic extension” may not be appealed, as it represents inability of the student to progress in the curriculum due to failure to meet a degree requirement.
  - iv. The status of “good academic standing with monitoring” is an internal designation to promote the student’s academic and professional development, and therefore may not be appealed.
- g. Reporting of Academic Standing to Third Parties
- i. The status of “good academic standing with monitoring” is an internal designation to promote the student’s academic and professional development, and therefore will be reported only as “good academic standing”.
  - ii. The enrollment status of “academic extension” will be reported as an extension or gap in training, but not as a disciplinary action.
  - iii. In the event a student is placed on “academic warning” or “academic probation”, the student will receive written notification of their standing.
  - iv. Whereas the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners requires the College to attest to each candidate’s academic and professional standing to determine eligibility for the COMLEX-USA examination series, a standing of “academic warning” or “academic probation” will be reported to NBOME and the student may be deemed ineligible to sit for examination. If the academic warning or probation is, in whole or in part, the result of failure of a COMLEX-USA examination, the academic standing will not preclude the student from registering for that examination.

## **8. COMLEX-USA Examination Requirements**

- a. The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination of the United States (COMLEX-USA) examination series is administered by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME). It is the nationally recognized licensure examination for osteopathic physicians and an accreditation requirement of the College.
- b. Whereas COMLEX-USA is designed to assess osteopathic medical knowledge and clinical skills to demonstrate competence and readiness for entry into graduate medical education training, the College deems that each student in the D.O. program may have no more than three (3) attempts on COMLEX-USA Level 1 and no more than three (3) attempts on COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE.
  - i. A student who fails a COMLEX-USA examination on a first or second attempt will be notified in writing of the maximum number of attempts allowed (three) and the consequences of not passing the examination within three attempts, e.g., dismissal from the D.O. program. The student will be directed to meet with an academic advisor to identify strategies to promote improved performance.
  - ii. A student who fails a COMLEX-USA examination on their third attempt is ineligible to continue in the D.O. program. A letter will be sent to the student from the Chairperson of the COSE, notifying them of the failure to meet the degree requirement, and that a recommendation for dismissal will be forwarded to the Dean of the College. The Dean will consult with the Provost as defined in the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities (MSRR) and send final notification of dismissal to the student. The student has the right to appeal dismissal on procedural grounds as defined in the MSRR.

- c. COMLEX-USA Level 1
  - i. The D.O. student must attain a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 1 within three (3) attempts.
  - ii. The student must take at least one College-sponsored COMSAE Phase 1 examination prior to taking the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination.
  - iii. Eligibility for COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination
    - a) A student who meets the following criteria may proceed to the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination:
      - I. The student has passed all preclerkship courses, with a maximum of one (1) remediated “N” grade, and
      - II. The student is in “good academic standing” or “good academic standing with monitoring”, and
      - III. The student has received a score of greater than or equal to 450 points on one (1) of two (2) attempts on a College-sponsored COMSAE Phase 1 examination.
    - b) A student who does not meet all three (3) of these criteria will be required to undergo an academic performance review with an academic advisor. The review will assess the student’s overall academic performance during the preclerkship curriculum and provide the student with an informed assessment of their readiness for the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination, as well as any recommendations for additional measures to promote successful completion of the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination.
  - iv. Timing of COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination
    - a) Effective during and after the 2020-21 academic year, a student will be expected to take the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination in the summer semester after they have completed the preclerkship curriculum. The examination must be completed by a date specified by the college, and a passing score on the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination is required in order to advance to clinical clerkship rotations.
      - I. A student who does not attain the required pass score will be placed on academic extension. The student will be expected to retake and pass the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination within twelve months from the date of the initial attempt and within the maximum number of three attempts.
      - II. A student who takes and passes COMLEX-USA Level 1 by February 1 during the academic extension may be scheduled for clerkship rotations at their originally assigned base hospital.
      - III. A student who does not take COMLEX-USA Level 1 or does not obtain a passing score by February 1 will forfeit their assigned base hospital assignment, and will not be permitted to enter clerkship rotations until the start of the next clerkship cycle. The student will remain on academic extension and will be able to select any remaining base hospital positions from any subsequent class year selection if they pass COMLEX-USA Level 1 prior to the one-year deadline. A personal leave of absence during this time will not supersede these requirements. The student will be required to complete or repeat OST 601, and at the discretion of the Assistant Dean for Clerkship, may also be required to complete a college-directed clinical skills evaluation prior to entering clerkship rotations.

- b) Failure of the student to attain a passing score within twelve months of initial attempt will be evaluated by the COSE, and may be cause for additional action, up to and including a recommendation for dismissal.
- v. The D.O./Ph.D. student must attain a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 1 to progress to the clerkship.
  - a) A student who does not attain the required pass score will be placed on academic extension.
  - b) The student must attain a passing score within twelve months from the date of the initial attempt.
  - c) Failure of the student to attain a passing score within twelve months will be evaluated by the COSE, and may be cause for additional action, up to and including a recommendation for dismissal.
- d. COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE (Clinical Evaluation)
  - i. The D.O. student must attain a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE within three (3) attempts.
  - ii. To be eligible to take the COMLEX-USA Level 2 CE, a student must:
    - 1. Have attained a passing score on the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination, and
    - 2. Be in “good academic standing”.
  - iii. The student must attain a passing score within twelve months from the date of the initial attempt. Failure of the student to attain a passing score within twelve months will be evaluated by the COSE, and may be cause for additional action, up to and including a recommendation for dismissal.

## **9. Progression in the D.O. Program**

- a. During the preclerkship, which is defined as semesters one (1) through six (6), the student must pass (or successfully remediate) the required courses of each semester to advance to the subsequent semester.
- b. A student who fails to meet this requirement will be eligible to reenter the curriculum to repeat failed coursework in the semester during which the course is next offered, unless a recommendation for dismissal is made by the COSE and endorsed by the Dean and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.
- c. To progress to the clerkship, each student in the D.O. program must:
  - i. Earn a passing grade in, or successfully remediate, each preclerkship course, and
  - ii. Complete a college-sponsored COMSAE Phase 1 examination, and
  - iii. Complete and pass the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination as per section 8.c of this policy.
- d. To progress to the clerkship, each student in the D.O./Ph.D. program must:
  - i. Earn a passing grade (or successfully remediate) each preclerkship course, and
  - ii. Complete a proctored COMSAE Phase 1 examination, administered by the College, and
  - iii. Complete and receive a passing score on the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination.

## **10. Academic extension**

- a. Academic extension applies to a student who is unable to progress in the curriculum due to failure to meet a degree requirement of the present semester or phase of the curriculum.

- b. If the return from the academic extension occurs after semester six (6) and the duration is two (2) or more consecutive semesters, the student must successfully pass a College directed clinical skills assessment for reentry. Failure to participate in or successfully remediate the clinical skills assessment will result in evaluation by the COSE for determination of the students' academic standing.
- c. A student is required to declare their intent to return through the College Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records.
- d. A student must adhere to the College degree requirements and policies that are in effect at the time of reentry.
- e. During an academic extension, a student must continue to meet college requirements as specified by the Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records at the start of the leave.
- f. Elapsed time during an academic extension will count toward the maximum duration of the curriculum, as defined in section 4 of this policy.

#### **11. Leave of Absence**

- a. A student wishing to request a leave of absence will submit a request in writing through the College Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records.
- b. Approval of a leave of absence will not supersede a student's academic standing as determined by the COSE.
- c. The duration of the leave of absence will be counted toward the maximum time for completion of degree requirements as defined in section 4 of this policy.
  - i. During a leave of absence, a student must continue to meet college requirements as specified by the Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records at the start of the leave.
  - ii. Elapsed time during a leave of absence will count toward the maximum duration of the curriculum, as defined in section 4 of this policy.
- d. Returning from a leave of absence
  - i. Students are required to declare their intent to return through the College Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records.
  - ii. A student who returns to the D.O. program after a leave of absence must adhere to College degree requirements and policies that are in effect at the time of reentry.
  - iii. If the return from the leave of absence occurs after completion of semester six (6) and the duration is two (2) or more consecutive semesters, the student must successfully pass a College directed clinical skills assessment for reentry. Failure to participate in or successfully remediate the clinical skills assessment will result in evaluation by the COSE for determination of the student's academic standing.
- e. Extended leave of absence
  - i. In rare and unusual circumstances, a student may request an extended leave of absence from the D.O. program for at least one (1) but for no more than two (2) years.
  - ii. Examples of an extended leave of absence may include, but not limited to a major personal health issue; called for active military duty; seeking an unrelated degree or program, such as entering a religious order; pursuing a unique research fellowship opportunity.
  - iii. A request for an extended leave of absence must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation and must stipulate the duration of the leave. All request for an extended leave of absence requires the approval of the COSE and the College Dean. If approved, the

period of the extended leave of absence will not count toward the maximum duration of the D.O. program.

- iv. All requirements for reentry to the D.O. program as defined elsewhere in this policy will apply on return from an extended leave of absence. When a student returns from an extended leave of absence, they may be required to participate in assessment of their knowledge and/or clinical skills, and may be required to complete remedial activities if indicated and as defined by the Division of Medical Education.

## **12. Withdrawal**

- a. A student will be designated as having withdrawn from the D.O. program if they:
  - i. Give written notice that they will not continue in the program, or
  - ii. Decline the option to return to the program following a leave of absence, or
  - iii. Decline the option to return to the program following an “academic extension”, or
  - iv. Fail to communicate their intent to return to the program within one (1) semester prior to the anticipated return, or
  - v. Fail to appear before the COSE or subcommittee of the COSE when directed without due cause for their absence.

## **13. Reinstatement**

- a. Following withdrawal, a student will be given an opportunity to seek reinstatement by petitioning the COSE through the College Office of Enrollment Services and Student Records, within one (1) year of withdrawal from the College.
- b. Following dismissal from the D.O. program, a student may invoke their right to appeal as defined in the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.
  - i. If on appeal the dismissal is not upheld, the student will appear before the COSE to determine terms for reinstatement to the program, including whether any course work must be repeated or remediated, and whether any additional assessments of clinical skills are necessary.

## **14. Review and Revisions to the Policy**

- a. The COSE will be responsible for reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- b. If any revisions to this policy are recommended by the COSE, the revised policy will be presented to the Faculty Assembly of the College. The date of approval by the Faculty Assembly and the effective date of the policy will be noted.

This Revision was approved by the Committee on Student Evaluation on September 13, 2021 and by the Faculty Assembly of MSUCOM September 29, 2021.