Dental College of Georgia
DCG Policy Archive
Policy Title: Academic Progress Policy for Advanced Education Programs

Policy Owner: DCG Academic Administration

POLICY STATEMENT
The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the evaluation and management of dental residents’ academic progress in The Dental College of Georgia Advanced Education Programs that are consistent with the Augusta University’s educational mission, and the goals of The Dental College of Georgia:

AFFEC TED STAKEHOLDERS
Indicate all entities and persons within / associated with the DCG that are affected by this policy:
- [ ] Faculty
- [ ] DMD Students
- [ ] Visitors
- [ ] Others: __________________________
- [ ] Staff
- [ ] Dental Residents
- [ ] Visitors/Contractors
- [ ] Pat ients
- [ ] O Bio Graduate Students
- [ ] Alumni

DEFINITIONS-

Special Residents: Any resident who, as a result of academic deficiencies, is required to study in an altered curriculum (e.g., more courses, fewer courses, or different courses than the resident's class would normally be taking) will be considered a special resident. Special residents would normally not be expected to complete the program on time.

Time Limitations: In all policies of this document regarding time limitations, working days shall include the five days of the work week (Monday through Friday) regardless of whether classes are in session, and shall exclude all official holidays of Augusta University. Exceptions to this definition will be listed as calendar days.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES
1. Academic Progress Review:
Academic progress of students enrolled in Dental College of Georgia (DCG) Advanced Education programs is monitored by the respective program directors. At the end of each semester, and at any other time deemed appropriate, the program director reviews and evaluates each resident's performance and may take the following actions:
- [A] Continue enrollment as a regular resident;
- [B] Continue enrollment as a resident on academic probation;
- [C] Continue enrollment as a Special Resident;
- [D] Repeating of course work in any deficient areas, as appropriate;
- [E] Repeating of a portion of the curriculum;
- [F] Dismissal; or
- [G] Promotion to the next year of the program (effective July 1 of each year), as appropriate.
2. **Failing Grades and Incompletes**

   A. **Failing grades**: Residents must pass all required courses within the respective program to be eligible to receive a certificate. When a failing grade is received, an F or U grade is recorded. The resident must be re-registered in the course before a passing grade can be earned. In order to earn a second grade for a course previously failed, residents must participate in additional learning experiences under the supervision of the program director. Promotion to the next year of the program is precluded until all courses in the preceding year have been completed with a passing grade.

   B. **Incompletes**: If a resident receives an ‘Incomplete’, the program director will notify the resident in writing of the time limitations and requirements to remove the ‘Incomplete’. When the resident completes the course, the course director is responsible for submitting the grade earned by the resident to replace the Incomplete. Grades changes should be submitted within 3 days of course completion. Promotion to the next year of the program is precluded until all Incomplete grades have been removed. Responsibility for monitoring resolution of Incomplete grades rests with the program director.

   C. **Core Curriculum and Interdisciplinary Courses**: Residents must also pass all required core curriculum and interdisciplinary courses in their program. It is the responsibility of course directors to inform the appropriate program director(s) regarding a resident’s unsatisfactory academic performance in these courses, including course remediation requirements for any failing or incomplete grades.

III. **Academic Probation**: Any resident whose cumulative grade point average (GPA) is below 2.0, or who earns 8 or more credit hours of failing grades (F or U) at the end of any semester shall be considered on academic probation. Residents on academic probation are subject to the Academic Dismissal policies of the program and the Dental College of Georgia. Programs may set additional standards for satisfactory progress in courses related to their specialty discipline. In addition with approval of the dean, individual programs may also establish higher GPA standards for probation or dismissal, in which cases the higher standards shall apply.

IV. **Academic Dismissal**: Authority to dismiss dental residents/advanced education students from the Dental College of Georgia rests with the Dean. Any resident who fails to meet the standards of academic progress listed in this section of Dental College of Georgia policies and/or those of the respective advanced education program may be dismissed for academic reasons. (Each program director is responsible for developing and publishing any additional program policies.) The program director has the responsibility for monitoring resident academic progress, and recommending to the Advanced Education Committee the dismissal of any resident who does not make satisfactory academic progress through the respective program. The Advanced Education Committee shall not recommend the dismissal of any resident until the resident has been provided an opportunity for a hearing before the Advanced Education Committee. The Advanced Education Committee may support the program director’s recommendation or offer alternative recommendations. If the Advanced Education
Committee supports the recommendation of the program director these two recommendations shall go forward to the Dean. If the Advanced Education Committee does not support the program director’s recommendation they will inform the program director and the Dean of their decision and may recommend alternative actions.

A. **Standards of Academic Progress:** Residents whose level of academic achievement falls below the standards of academic progress set forth below will be identified by the program director and may be scheduled for an academic dismissal hearing before the Advanced Education Committee to be considered for dismissal. A resident may be considered for dismissal if:

1. The resident's cumulative GPA is below 2.0 at the end of any semester; or
2. The resident earns 8 or more semester hours of F or U during a single semester; or
3. The resident is on academic probation for two of three consecutive semesters; or
4. The resident fails to achieve academic and clinical standards of the specific program.
   - Any additional program specific academic policies must be written and published by the program director.
   - Program directors must conduct frequent (at least semi-annual), periodic evaluation of residents’ academic progress.
   - Program directors must maintain records of regular, periodic evaluations of residents’ academic and clinical progress.

5. Individual programs shall set policies concerning academic probation and dismissal in regard to residents who receive a grade of U (unsatisfactory) in courses graded S or U.

6. In addition, the Advanced Education Committee may recommend to the Dean the dismissal of any resident on academic probation. Prior to such a recommendation, any resident being considered for dismissal has the right to a hearing before the Advanced Education Committee.

B. **Hearing Procedures:** The Advanced Education Committee shall use the following procedures for all academic dismissal hearings initiated by the Advanced Education Committee on request of a program director. These procedures are subject to periodic review by the Advanced Education Committee and may be revised accordingly.

1. **Request for Academic Dismissal Hearing**
   The Program Director must request an academic dismissal hearing before the Advanced Education Committee in writing. The request must describe the grounds for dismissal in accordance with the above Standards for Academic Progress and
must be signed by the Program Director and the appropriate Department Chair. Requests should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Advanced Education.

2. **Notice to Resident**
   Prior to any hearing before the Advanced Education Committee, any resident who may be subject to dismissal will receive a written notice of the time, date, and place of the hearing and a written notice of the applicable policies which could lead to the resident's dismissal. The Associate Dean for Advanced Education shall notify the resident of the dismissal hearing.

3. **Hearing Procedure Rules**
   
   - An audio recording of the hearing proceedings shall be kept and made available to the parties concerned in the event an appeal is filed.
   
   - The program director will present the resident’s academic record to the Committee and may present witnesses from the faculty to provide information about the resident's performance in courses.
   
   - Residents appearing before the Advanced Education Committee will be permitted an advisor of his (her) choice except that a resident may not select an attorney as his or her advisor. If a resident selects an advisor who is not a faculty member of Augusta University, the resident must sign a written waiver of confidentiality for the advisor to attend the hearing. Any such waiver of confidentiality is intended to permit the non-faculty advisor to attend the hearing, and the resident's right to privacy will otherwise be protected to the extent allowed by law. Advisors may not directly participate in the hearing.
   
   - The resident shall have access to his (her) academic record.
   
   - The resident shall be afforded an opportunity to obtain and present witnesses and documents or other evidence.
   
   - The resident and all members of the Advanced Education Committee shall have the right to question all witnesses.
   
   - The decision of the Advanced Education Committee shall be based on the resident's academic record and shall be presented by the Chair of the Advanced Education Committee to the Dean in the form of a written recommendation within 24 hours of the end of the hearing.
   
   - In cases where the Chair of the Advanced Education Committee determines that participation of a faculty member in a resident dismissal hearing creates a conflict of interest, the faculty member will be excused from the hearing.
• The Associate Dean for Advanced Education shall serve as Chair of the Academic Hearing and shall have the responsibility of directing the dismissal hearing. At least five voting members (not including the resident’s program director) of the Advanced Education Committee must be present for a dismissal hearing. The Advanced Education Committee will deliberate in executive session to formulate a recommendation regarding the resident’s academic standing. The respective program director shall not participate in the Executive session. The recommendation will be voted on by a written, secret ballot. Recommendations must pass by a simple majority of the voting members present.

• **Dean’s Responsibilities:** The Dean may implement the Advanced Education Committee’s recommendation or modify the recommendation. The Dean may dismiss the resident or continue the enrollment of the resident as a regular resident, a special resident on an altered curriculum, or as a resident on academic probation. The Dean shall advise the resident in writing of his/her decision within 5 days of receiving the written recommendation of the Advanced Education Committee. The Dean’s decision is final for the Dental College of Georgia.

V. **Appeals:**
In accordance with university policy (Policy 415: Student Academic Appeals Policy; https://augusta.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=424&public=true), residents dismissed or suspended for academic reasons may appeal the Dean’s decision to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost if he or she can reasonably claim that the action taken by the Dean was not justified by the procedures and/or guidelines established to govern that decision. The resident should submit the appeal in writing to the Provost. It is the student’s responsibility to gather the evidence necessary to support his or her case and to include that evidence when submitting the written appeal. In preparing the appeal, the student should keep in mind that the primary issue is whether the administrative decision was justified by the procedures and/or guidelines established to govern that decision. The Provost will render a final decision in the case within ten (10) business days, and may either uphold the original decision, modify the decision, or overturn the decision. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the administrative appeal, he or she may appeal the decision to the president. All appeals must be in writing and submitted to the President of the University (or his/her designee) within five (5) business days of the receipt of the decision. The President or his/her designee (e.g., Provost or Vice President for Academic and Faculty Affairs) shall review the appeal within five business days. He or she may either uphold the decision, overturn the decision, or modify the decision. The President or his/her designee shall notify in writing the concerned parties (i.e., both principals, the dean, and the VPAFA) of his/her decision within five (5) business days. Students have the right to appeal final decisions of the President to the Board of Regents of the University System in accordance with Article IX of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents.
VI. **Readmission**
Any resident who is dismissed or who withdraws from an advanced program of the Dental College of Georgia may apply for readmission as a first year resident by submitting a regular application for admission following standard admission procedures. No re-enrollment with advanced standing will be permitted except under the provisions of the Dental College of Georgia’s Leave of Absence policy.

VII. **Graduation**
Successful completion of all academic and clinical requirements of the advanced education program leads to awarding the appropriate certificate of training. Approval to graduate rests with the program director and the Dean. Graduation requirements include:

A. The program specific number of semesters in residence; and  
B. Completion of the respective program’s curriculum within the program’s published time limits.  
C. Passing grades in all required courses; and  
D. Overall grade point average of 2.0 or higher; and  
E. Satisfactory completion of all clinical services; and  
F. Return of assigned institutional property and equipment in acceptable condition; and  
G. Payment of all outstanding financial obligations to include tuition and all required resident fees.

VIII. **Academic Grievances**
In accordance with Augusta University policy recourse is provided for residents who feel that his or her academic rights have been violated by the faculty in a course the resident is taking or has recently taken. Residents and faculty should refer to Policy 452: Student Grievances Policy (https://augusta.policymaker.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=425&public=true) for detailed information regarding the protocol for filing an academic grievance and any related appeals. A resident may file an academic grievance if he or she feels that one or more of the following circumstances apply:

A. Grounds for filing an academic grievance:
   1. Grading was not in accordance with published program or course grading policy;  
   2. Grading was arbitrary or capricious; or  
   3. Grading was determined on the basis of race, disability, gender, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

B. Academic Grievance Protocol:
   1. Timeframe: Academic grievances should normally be made by the grievant during the term of the resident’s enrollment in the course in which the violation of rights was alleged to have occurred, and no later than end of the semester following the alleged violation of rights, including summer semester.
2. The resident should first consult with the faculty member involved by written letter or email, no later than the first day of classes of the semester following that in which the grievance occurs. The resident should articulate the reason(s) for the grievance and the expected remedy. When a resident prepares his or her case, he or she should keep in mind that the burden of proof is on him or her, not on the instructor.

3. The faculty member (respondent) should provide a response to the resident by written letter or email within five (5) business days.

4. If after communicating with the faculty member the resident is not satisfied that a fair and equitable solution has been achieved, the resident may take the grievance to the administrative supervisor of the faculty member. In most instances, this will be the department chair. This statement of the alleged grievance and the remedy, along with any documentary evidence, should be in written form.

5. If the student is still not satisfied, he or she may take the grievance to the Associate Dean for Advanced Education. If the course is also being taken for credit toward a degree in the College of Graduate Studies, residents must concurrently contact the Associate Dean for Advanced Education in the Dental College of Georgia and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. This statement of the alleged grievance and the remedy, along with any documentary evidence, should be in written form. The resident should receive a response from these administrators within five (5) business days.

6. As a last resort and only after steps 1 through 5 above have been carried out, the resident may present a formal grievance in writing to the Augusta University Vice President for Academic and Faculty Affairs in accordance with Policy 452: Student Grievances Policy. He or she should set forth in writing a statement of the alleged grievance and the remedy sought at the department or college level, along with any documentary evidence, which should be delivered to the Office of the Vice President for Academic and Faculty Affairs (VPAFA).

7. Residents who are not satisfied with decisions made at the level of the Vice President for Academic and Faculty Affairs may appeal to the President.

8. Residents who are not satisfied with decisions made at the level of the President may appeal to Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia in accordance with Articles 4.7.1 or 8.6 of the Board of Regents Policy Manual.

Policy Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to confirm compliance with CODA accreditation standards and USG/AU guidelines.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
RELATED POLICIES

- AU Policy No. 415: Student Academic Appeals Policy;  
  https://augusta.policymtech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=424&public=true

- AU Policy No. 452: Student Grievances Policy  
  https://augusta.policymtech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=425&public=true

- BOR Policy Manual 4.7.1: Student Appeals  
  https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section4/C333/

- BOR Policy Manual 8.6: Application for Discretionary Review  
  https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C2363

APPROVED BY:
DCG Advanced Education Committee Date: 7/17/2017