



**Undergraduate Medical Education Progress,
Promotion and Appeal Regulations
2023-2024**

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the regulations and guidelines for promotion, assessment and appeals throughout the undergraduate medical curriculum. It is recommended that students familiarize themselves with these promotion and appeal regulations. It is advisable to review them at the beginning of each academic year. If clarification is required of any of the content of these regulations, please contact the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) or the Associate Dean, Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB), as appropriate.

1.1. Progress Committee

The Terms of Reference of the Progress Committee can be found at:

<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/faculty-council/policies/2022-06-07FacultyGovernanceToRFINAL.pdf>

1.2. Assessment

A variety of assessment methods are used for the educational experiences throughout the undergraduate medical program including, but not limited to:

- Written examinations
- Laboratory examinations
- Clinical Skills Assessments including Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)
- Tutorial Assessments
- Required clinical and non-clinical experiences.
- Electives
- Clinical logs
- Research in Medicine Assessments
- In-Training Evaluation Reports (ITERS)
- Participation in mandatory scheduled academic sessions

Professionalism and communications skills are assessed throughout the undergraduate medical program. To pass each year in the undergraduate program, all summative assessments must be successfully completed.

The standards for assessments are set and published by the Faculty of Medicine. The details of the assessment process can be found in the assessment policy:

[2022-2023 Assessment Procedural Document Approved by UMECC Nov04 2021 \(1\).pdf \(dal.ca\)](#)

2. Professional Conduct

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A student in the undergraduate medical education program must meet both academic and professionalism requirements to graduate. The Faculty of Medicine Professionalism Policy can be found at:

https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/Professional_Policy_Approved-FC-2022-11-01.pdf

Without limiting what is contained in the Professionalism Policy, medical students are expected to adhere to the standards of ethical behaviour expected of the medical profession. Behaviour which violates these principles, and which affects the performance of professional activities, is viewed as a demonstration of lack of suitability to be a physician. Considering this, assessment of behavioural and ethical performance will be related to the following:

2.1 Communication

The medical student must display adequate skill at communicating and interacting appropriately with their patients, peers, families, clinical faculty and other medical staff, support staff and other health care professionals as described in section 2.2 below.

2.2. Required Professional Behaviours

Examples of Professional Behaviours that must be demonstrated by medical students include:

- respect, empathy and compassion for patients and their families.
- compliance with the Guiding Principles for student standard of dress policy. <https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/PreClerkship%20Student%20Standards%20of%20Dress%20FINAL%20Aug%202023.pdf>
- concern for the needs of the patients and their families to understand the nature of the illness and the goals and possible complications of investigations and treatment.
- respect for, and ability to work harmoniously with everyone in the learning and working environment.
- recognition of the importance of informed self-assessment and of lifelong learning for the maintenance of competent performance.
- awareness of the effects that differences in cultural and social background have on the maintenance of health and the development of, and reaction to, illness and work collaboratively with these individuals.
- respect for the patient as an informed participant in decisions regarding his/her care, wherever possible.
- respect for, and compliance with institutional policies, guidelines and bylaws.
- behaviour that is supportive and respectful in tutorials and all learning activities.
- openness to feedback and a willingness to make changes in response to feedback.
- compliance with academic attendance requirements of the undergraduate medical program.

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- attendance to punctuality for learning experiences involving other individuals.
- adherence to Dalhousie medicine policies regarding leave of absence and missing learning experience (Please see section 9 related to short- and long-term leaves)

2.3. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours

Behaviour unacceptable to the professional study of medicine includes, but is not limited to:

- breach of any of the above principles of behaviour.
- referring to oneself as, or presenting oneself to be, more qualified than one is.
- behaviour or inappropriate judgement which places patients at risk or adversely affects the medical education of self or others, including leaving early, arriving late, missing mandatory clinical or tutorial responsibilities, and failing to be available when on call.
- commission of a criminal act (Associate Dean UGME or DMNB must be notified if charges are laid).
- commission of any act of violence, including any form of harassment; <https://www.dal.ca/dept/vpei/hres/personal-harassment.html>
- commission of an act of academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams or plagiarizing on projects.
- failure to respect patients' rights.
- breach of confidentiality.
- failure to provide transfer of responsibility for patient care.
- failure to document medical care in a timely, appropriate, and accurate manner, including falsification of medical records.
- being impaired due to substances while participating in patient care or on call.
- failing to seek an accommodation for any condition which adversely affects one's ability to discharge one's clinical or academic responsibilities; and
- any conduct unbecoming of a medical student.

Other behaviours not listed may also be considered unacceptable. The above is not an exhaustive list. Proven and confirmed breaches of any ethical and behavioural standards are serious matters, represent a failure to meet accepted standards and may result in remedial training, removal from clinical rotations, or dismissal from the undergraduate medical program under these Regulations.

3. Remediation and Educational Support

Remediation and educational support may take many different forms. They are designed to assist the student in correcting their identified gaps in assessed clinical, academic, and professional performance. Remediation and educational support may include an educational contract which outlines expected standards. The goal of remediation and education support is first and foremost student success in undergraduate medical education. All students with identified

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communication or professionalism concerns or summative assessment failures are required to meet with the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB. The purpose of the meeting is to review the academic requirements for promotion, their overall performance and direct them to resources to assist the student in addressing their difficulties. The student may bring a support person of their choosing with them at such a meeting.

3.1. Circumstances where remediation will be required include but are not limited to:

3.1.1. Pre-Clerkship

- A student receives a failure in an end of unit written assessment.
- A student receives a failure in an end of unit laboratory assessment.
- A student has concerns identified or fails a tutorial assessment.
- A student fails a summative assessment by tutor in the skilled clinician unit.
- A student fails an OSCE.
- A student not meeting Research in Medicine project milestones.
- A student who demonstrates attitudes or behaviors that are unprofessional.

3.1.2. Clerkship

- A student with concerns identified on an ITER.
- A student who fails an ITER.
- A student who fails two or more formative clinical rotation assessments.
- A student who fails the comprehensive examination, or the comprehensive examination plus the supplemental.
- A student who fails an OSCE.
- A student who demonstrates attitudes or behaviors that are unprofessional.

3.2. Remediation Design and Content

Remediation is designed to assist the student in correcting their identified deficiencies in clinical, academic, and/or professional performance, so they can successfully achieve the UGME competencies. The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB will determine whether a remediation plan is required. A student in the circumstances outlined in 3.1 may also request a remediation plan with a focus on educational support. If a remediation plan is required, it is created in consultation with the appropriate unit head and any other individual the Associate Dean determines is appropriate. At their discretion, the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB, may request input from the Progress Committee for any remediation plan.

When a remediation plan is required, it shall be in writing, and shall include the following elements:

- nature of the remedial plan.
- identified areas to remediate.
- expected outcomes of remediation.

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- time frame for elements of the remedial plan, including completion.
- outline of the methods of assessment to be used; and
- consequences of failure to satisfactorily complete the remediation plan having regard to the status of the student at the time of remediation. This includes, but is not limited to, informing the student that failure of remediation may result in failing the year and the potential implications of this.

Educational support may be provided when students do not meet the circumstances set out in 3.1.

Prior to its commencement, the student must sign the remediation plan. If concerns are identified during the remediation, the student may be asked to meet with the Progress Committee to discuss the remediation plan and would be told they are at risk for dismissal.

In Pre-Clerkship, students must be available to complete requirements prior to being promoted to the next academic year. In Clerkship, individual approaches will be considered for remediation as required.

3.3. Remediation Plan Rating

Students will receive a “pass/fail” rating for the repeat assessment and/or on completion of the remediation.

3.4. Leaves of Absence When Participating in a Remediation Plan.

Generally, a student participating in a remediation plan may not be permitted to take a leave of absence. There may be exceptions to this and if so, the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB, must approve any leave of absence in writing in advance of the leave. If the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB determines that a leave of absence is appropriate in the circumstances, the remediation program will be considered incomplete. In such an event, the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB will redesign the remediation plan, with input from appropriate unit or rotations heads, and if requested, the Progress Committee. The redesigned remediation will consider the nature of the deficiencies identified, the performance of the student to date, and the need for continuity of training.

4. Promotion Requirements

To be promoted to the next year, the student must:

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- Pass all summative assessments of the year, including, but not limited to, electives, ITERs, tutorials.
- Pass all mastery lab examinations.
- Pass all required remediation.
- Pass all required supplemental assessments; the supplemental assessment(s) may be tailored to the failed component(s).
- Receive satisfactory assessments of their progress in the Skilled Clinician longitudinal unit.
- Receive satisfactory assessments of their progress in the Research in Medicine unit.
- Meet all standards for professional behavior as described in these Regulations and the Professionalism Policy.

A student who fails to meet requirements for promotion will either be eligible to apply to repeat the year or be considered for dismissal from the undergraduate medical program.

In order to be approved for graduation, the student must successfully complete all the requirements for promotion and graduation.

5. Deferral and Supplemental Assessments

- a. Students, except those in a repeat year, may defer one summative assessment in each academic year. In exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB may consider:
 - i. allowing more than one deferral or
 - ii. students in a repeat year to defer one summative assessment.
- b. The following students are eligible to sit the supplemental assessments.
 - i. A Pre-clerkship student who fails any combination of no more than two summative assessments, including written and OSCE assessments.
 - ii. A Clerkship student who fails the comprehensive examination.
 - iii. Notwithstanding sections i. and ii., above, students in repeat status may only sit one supplemental assessment. That supplemental can be for an assessment that had also been failed the previous year.

6. Repeating the Year

6.1. Eligibility

The following students are eligible to apply to repeat the year:

- A student who fails 1 end of unit or clinical rotation summative assessment plus the supplementary assessment in one academic year.

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- A Pre-clerkship Student who fails 3 summative assessments, including tutorial, written and OSCE assessments.
- A Clerkship student who fails the comprehensive examination plus the supplemental assessment.
- A student who fails to receive satisfactory assessments of their progress for the skilled clinician unit.
- A student who fails to meet Research in Medicine project milestones.
- A student who fails required remediation for any portion of the curriculum, but as noted in section 8, may be considered for dismissal.
- A student in good standing who is granted permission to restart the year on the basis that she or he withdrew voluntarily due to illness or other personal circumstances.
- A student who has met promotion requirements but who feels they would benefit from repeating a year.

Notwithstanding the eligibility criteria set out above, no student will be permitted more than one repeat year during the undergraduate program. A student in this situation may be dismissed from the program.

6.2. Request to Repeat the Year

A student who meets the eligibility criteria to repeat the year and wishes to repeat the year, must submit a request to repeat the year in writing to the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB, as early as possible but no later than 3 weeks prior to the start of the academic year. The Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB, will provide the request and their recommendation to the Progress Committee.

The student's request must explain the impact of the circumstances giving rise to their request, why they wish to repeat the year, how they plan to be successful in the future, and confirm their readiness to return to the study of medicine. If the Progress Committee believes that this information is not sufficient to support the student's success in a repeat year, the Progress Committee may identify additional educational requirements that the student must fulfill prior to or during the repeat year.

A student who is granted permission to restart the year on the basis that (a) they withdrew voluntarily due to illness or other personal circumstances or (b) they have met promotion requirements but feel they would benefit from repeating a year, will not be considered a student in a repeat year. A student who fails one or more assessments and withdraws due to illness must be reviewed by the Progress Committee prior to re-entering the undergraduate medical program. A decision regarding their status on returning to the program will be decided at that time. If the Associate Dean UGME, or DMNB identify any concerns, the student must come before the Progress Committee in person.

A student who meets the eligibility criteria to repeat the year but does not agree

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with the circumstances that resulted in this status may request to appeal their Repeat status. Students must submit in writing to the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB, the reasons for this request. The Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB, will provide the request and their recommendation to the Progress Committee. Such appeals will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

7. Suspension from the Undergraduate Medical Program

The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB may suspend an undergraduate student from Pre-clerkship or Clerkship where, in their opinion, there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the student is jeopardizing patient care and safety, the safety of other students or the Dalhousie community, and/or the student is or has engaged in unprofessional conduct. The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB shall refer the matter to the Progress Committee as soon as reasonably possible to determine whether the student ought to be dismissed from the program. In the case of students in Clerkship, in the absence of the Associate Dean UGME or Associate Dean DMNB, the Assistant Dean of Clerkship or the Assistant Dean Clinical Education DMNB, may act on their behalf. Student suspension is reported to all relevant regulatory and health authorities.

8. Dismissal from the Program

a. The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB may recommend that the Progress Committee dismiss a student from the undergraduate medical program in the following circumstances:

- a student who has required remediation for professionalism issues a second time.
- a Pre-Clerkship student who has failed four or more summative assessments (tutorial, written or OSCE).
- A Pre-Clerkship student in repeat status who fails a summative assessment plus the supplemental.
- a Clerkship student who is in repeat status and fails the comprehensive examination.
- a student who has failed a remediation plan.
- a student who will take more than 7 years to complete the Undergraduate Medical Education Program.
- a student who has engaged in unprofessional conduct that, in the judgment of the Progress Committee cannot be remedied through a formal remediation plan.
- a student who is not eligible for promotion but who is eligible to repeat the year that has either not applied to repeat the year or their request to repeat the year has been denied.
- a student who has been suspended from the program and has failed to meet the terms imposed for returning to the program, within the timeframe prescribed.

b. Notwithstanding section 8(a), a student who otherwise meets the criteria for

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dismissal set out above, may instead be suspended from the program or permitted to repeat the year by the Progress Committee because of exceptional personal circumstances. In such event, the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB will set out the terms of the suspension in writing, including, but not limited to, the duration of the suspension as well as the conditions upon which he or she may re-enter the undergraduate medical education program. Prior to being permitted to re-enter the undergraduate medical education program, the student must meet with Progress Committee and demonstrate their readiness to return to the study of medicine.

c. The student must be given the opportunity to attend the Progress Committee meeting at which their dismissal is under consideration and to make representations to it. To this end, the Chair of the Progress Committee must provide the student with:

- written notice of the meeting at which the dismissal will be considered.
- the Associate Dean's UGME or DMNB, written recommendation for dismissal and copies of all supporting documentation.
- copies of the documentation to be considered by the Progress Committee.
- the opportunity to make written submissions to the Progress Committee.
- the opportunity to make oral submissions to the Progress Committee; and
- notice of his or her right to have a support person or other representative present at the meeting.

d. The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB shall not participate in the Progress Committee's deliberations or decision-making regarding dismissal.

e. The Progress Committee shall deliberate *in camera*. The Chair of Progress Committee shall forward a written decision, including reasons, on behalf of the Progress Committee to the student and the Associate Dean UGME and DMNB. The decision will also confirm the student's right to appeal the decision to a Faculty Appeals Committee as outlined in Section 10.

f. Student dismissal is reported to all relevant regulatory and health authorities.

9. Leave of Absence

The leave of absence policies can be found at the links below.

Illness-Related Leave

Please see related policy document

<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/General%20-%20Absences%20due%20to%20illness.pdf>

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Students on an illness related leave of absence may be reviewed by the Progress Committee prior to re-entering the undergraduate medical program. Students must provide medical documentation to Student Affairs which confirms their readiness to return to the program as soon as possible. If concerns are identified by the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB, the student must appear before the Progress Committee in person.

Non-Illness-Related Leave

Please see related policy document

Pre-Clerkship:

<https://dalu.sharepoint.com/sites/med/ugme/ccsc/PreClerkship%20Leave%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf#search=PreClerkship%20Leave%20Policy>

Clerkship:

<https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/Clerkship%20-%20Short%20and%20Long-Term%20Leave%20of%20Absence%20Protocol.pdf>

Students on a non-illness-related leave must be reviewed or come before the Progress Committee if the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB determines this is warranted. When coming before the Progress Committee, students must provide statement of their readiness to return and if appropriate, the supports they have in place.

10. Right to Review and Appeal

10.1. Review of requirement for remediation

A student may request a review of the decision of the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB to require remediation, including the contents of the remediation plan, pursuant to section 3. A request for review, including the reasons for the request and any supporting documentation, must be made in writing by the student to the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB within 14 calendar days of delivery of the remediation plan to the student.

A review by the Progress Committee may occur notwithstanding that the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB may have consulted with the Progress Committee pursuant to section 3.2.

The Chair of the Progress Committee will set a date for the review meeting and notify the student and the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB. The review meeting must occur within 28 calendar days of receipt of the written notice to

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the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB. The Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB shall provide the Chair of the Progress Committee and the student with all documentation forming the basis for the remediation plan, no later than fourteen calendar days prior to the meeting. The student shall provide the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB with any additional materials they wish the Progress Committee to consider no later than seven calendar days prior to the review meeting.

The student and the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB shall attend the review meeting and be provided the opportunity to make submissions. The student may bring a support person of their choosing to the meeting. The Progress Committee shall then deliberate *in camera*. The Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB (whomever required the students to complete remediation) shall not participate in the Progress Committee's deliberations or decision making.

The Progress Committee may:

- reaffirm the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB's original decision, in whole or in part.
- reverse the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB's decision to require the student to complete remediation; or
- make specific modifications to the contents of the remediation plan.

The Progress Committee will prepare a written decision, including reasons and provide a copy to the student and the Associate Dean, UGME or DMNB for inclusion in the student's file.

10.2. Appeal of a Progress Committee decision

A student may appeal a Progress Committee decision, to the Faculty Appeals Committee ("Appeal Committee") on the basis that:

- Progress Committee had no jurisdiction to make the decision.
- Progress Committee denied the student natural justice (procedural fairness); or
- There is new information relevant to the reason for the Progress Committee's decision that was unavailable at the time the decision was made.

10.3. Appeal Committee

The Appeal Committee is appointed by Faculty Council. Processes followed by the Appeal Committee are set out in the Terms of Reference of that Committee: <https://medicine.dal.ca/for-faculty-staff/faculty-appeals-.html>