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## College of Veterinary Medicine Academic Standards

### Academic Standards Policy for the College of Veterinary Medicine

*Approved by the general faculty on December 1, 2003*

**Preamble:** The following standards relate to issues of subject knowledge and proficiency in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) curriculum. They govern academic expectations and procedures that will be followed in the event that a student fails to meet these expectations in a given discipline or field of study.

The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) is charged with the responsibility of awarding the degree of DVM to those it believes have demonstrated that they are knowledgeable and proficient in the disciplines related to the profession of veterinary medicine. Acceptable levels of knowledge and proficiency are determined by the faculty and demonstrated by the students via satisfactory completion of a variety of evaluative tools, including required exercises, examinations, and proficiency assessments. Proficiency or mastery in a field or course of study is the goal; whether the course is required of all students by the faculty, or selected from a pool of focused course materials by the individual student. Failure of any course, regardless of whether it is required by the College or selected by the student, demonstrates that, in the judgment of the faculty responsible for the course, the student concerned has not demonstrated that he/she possesses acceptable knowledge and proficiency in the subject. In keeping with the CVM's responsibility in awarding the DVM degree, any such failure must be addressed in accordance with the academic standards outlined below.

Courses taken by students enrolled in the DVM program fall into three categories. Students must take courses from the first two categories and may take courses from the third category:

1. **CORE courses:** The CVM dictates that all DVM students must take these courses. Passage of all core courses is required for graduation.
2. **SUPPLEMENTAL CORE courses:** The CVM requires that some number of these courses be taken and the students select which courses they will take. Passage of each supplemental core course taken is required for graduation.
3. **ELECTIVE courses:** The CVM does not require that these courses be passed for graduation unless the credit for those courses is counted toward the 147 credits required for graduation (44 of which must be earned in the 4th year). A grade of "F" in an elective course will be considered when applying the "less than marginal pass" rule (see #2 below).

In the DVM program, credit toward graduation is earned by satisfactory completion of all required exercises, including coursework and in some instances proficiency tests, which may be given in any year of the veterinary curriculum in association with any discipline. If a student's performance in a course or clinical rotation is deemed to be unsatisfactory and that student is required to retake the course or clinical rotation as part of a remediation plan, the course or clinical rotation must be repeated at WSU. The Academic Standards policy applies to all students who participate in the CVM curriculum, including those from Ross and St. Georges Universities. Specifically:

1. A student who earns a failing grade in a core or supplemental core course will be dismissed from the CVM. Students who have been dismissed from the program must petition the CVM Student Progress Committee if they wish to be considered for reinstatement. Following their review of a student's case, the Student Progress Committee will recommend to the Dean either a plan of specific actions and conditions for reinstatement or permanent dismissal. Reinstatement to the DVM program will be considered probational. Earning less than a grade of "S" (satisfactory) in a course while on probation is grounds for permanent dismissal from the CVM.
2. Students who, during the first, second and third year of the veterinary curriculum, accumulate more than 5 semester credits with a grade of "marginal pass" must petition the CVM Student Progress Committee to progress in the curriculum. Following their review of a student's progress, the Student Progress Committee will recommend to the Dean specific terms for continuation in the curriculum. In order to progress in the curriculum, students must comply with the final terms of reinstatement issued by the Dean (see step #15 on page 7 for appeals process). These terms may involve repeating courses in addition to those for which grades of "marginal pass" were earned, e.g., repeating an entire year. In addition, continued progression in the DVM program will be considered probational. Earning less than a grade of "S" (satisfactory) in a course while on probation is grounds for dismissal from the CVM (see #1 above).
3. Assessment of a student's performance in clinical courses will be based on performance in clinical rotations, or on performance in said rotations and any subsequent, related proficiency examination. A student whose performance in a rotation warrants a failing grade will be dismissed from the CVM. A student who has failed a rotation will not be allowed to participate in any rotation that involves patient care duties until they have been reinstated into the program.
4. A student who earns a passing grade in all of the rotations of a clinical block, but fails any subsequent proficiency examination three times, will be considered academically deficient and must petition the CVM Student Progress Committee to progress in the curriculum. Academically deficient 4th-year students will be able to continue in rotations while the Student Progress Committee considers their case. No student will be allowed to graduate until the deficiency has been satisfactorily remedied. In the event that a student fails the proficiency test three times, the Student Progress Committee will

recommend to the Dean either a plan of specific actions or conditions for continuing in clinical rotations, e.g., repeating rotations, repeating previously passed courses, or dismissal.

5. A student who earns a "marginal pass" or a grade of less than "C" in any two clinical rotations will be considered academically deficient and must petition the CVM Student Progress Committee to progress in the curriculum. The Student Progress Committee will recommend to the Dean a plan of specific actions or conditions for continuing in clinical rotations. Continued progression in the clinical curriculum will be considered probational. Earning less than a grade of "S" (satisfactory) in a rotation while on probation is grounds for dismissal from the CVM (see #1 above).

6. Approval or modification of the actions recommended by the CVM Student Progress Committee is at the discretion of the Dean of the CVM. No information concerning possible reinstatement or remediation plans will be relayed to the student until after the Dean or his designee has taken final action.

7. A copy of these regulations will be given to each student entering the college and will be posted on the CVM internal web.

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### **The Roles and Responsibilities of Persons Involved in Upholding and Promoting the Academic Standards of the College of Veterinary Medicine**

#### **Veterinary Students:**

Each student has the opportunity to excel in the DVM curriculum at Washington State University. Students are expected to work with a high level of focus, commitment and integrity to master the information presented to them and available to them through the medical and scientific literature. Students are expected to be active learners and must demonstrate entry-level clinical proficiency in order to progress through the curriculum.

#### **Faculty Members:**

Faculty members are responsible for designing, implementing, maintaining, and refining a challenging, contemporary curriculum that encompasses a variety of basic and clinical science courses, all designed to prepare students for a veterinary career. Faculty strive to bring a high level of enthusiasm, competence and commitment to their teaching duties, while at the same time aspiring to serve as mentors, coaches, and role models for students enrolled in the DVM curriculum. Faculty members are responsible for the curricular content they offer, the methods of student assessment they employ, and are responsible for determining whether students have demonstrated sufficient proficiency or mastery in each aspect of the curriculum.

#### **Associate Dean for Academic Affairs:**

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is a member of the faculty charged with a number of administrative responsibilities, including general oversight of the curriculum and ensuring fair and impartial application of the academic standards in all matters relating to student academic performance. Depending upon the circumstances (see Academic Standards policy), the Associate Dean may counsel students about their academic performance, guide deficient students through the process of petitioning the College for the right to progress in the curriculum, or help them petition for reinstatement. The Associate Dean may, in the course of counseling and advising, consult with members of the faculty, administrators and others as necessary. He/she may also review and refer to a student's veterinary academic record and, when necessary, preveterinary academic records in an effort to comprehend the issues underlying a student's academic deficiency in order to help devise a suitable plan for remediation, when called upon to do so.

#### **The Student Progress Committee:**

The Student Progress Committee is comprised of faculty from across the college who are interested in the academic well-being and progress of our students. They are asked to consider in a timely manner petitions for reinstatement to the College of Veterinary Medicine or for permission to progress in the veterinary curriculum as described in the Academic Standards Policy. The committee maintains complete confidentiality before, during, and after a review of a student's academic progress. They will have access to the veterinary academic record of any 5 student whose progress they review. They will consult with faculty, administrators and others as necessary and appropriate to their fundamental responsibility of defining and understanding a student's academic standing and making an informed recommendation to the Dean. The committee will recommend a plan for remediation or permanent dismissal from the DVM program to the Dean.

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### **Application of College of Veterinary Medicine Academic Standards to Students with Academic Deficiencies: Policies and Procedures**

#### **Guidelines for Review of Academically Deficient Students**

Matters surrounding the review of academically deficient students will be treated with respect and confidentiality. From time to time, it may be necessary to consult with faculty and others in the professional community in these matters. Likewise, it may be necessary to review a student's prior veterinary academic record. It may also be necessary to communicate with faculty and staff about specific remediation plans for students. A careful review of the record and consultation with involved parties are meant to help the members of the Student Progress Committee to understand the nature of a student's difficulties in order to recommend an appropriate remediation plan or dismissal. Parties involved in such discussions are expected to adhere to the highest level of respect, sensitivity, and confidentiality in these matters.

#### **Procedures for Review of Students with Academic Deficiencies:**

1. Students in academic difficulty either self-identify or are referred by faculty and/or administrators to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
2. After consulting with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, students may be counseled directly by the Associate Dean

when appropriate. Alternatively, students may be asked to petition the Student Progress Committee for permission to progress in the curriculum (Academic Standard #2), or for reinstatement to the DVM program (Academic Standards #1).

3. Students who have been referred by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to the Student Progress Committee will be afforded a timely opportunity for a review and hearing by that committee. At least three members of the Student Progress Committee or their alternates must be available to meet and hear cases coming before the committee.

4. Faculty serving on the Student Progress Committee who are involved in the assignment of grades that rendered the student in question academically deficient will recuse themselves and be replaced by an alternate, if necessary to maintain a quorum. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may solicit alternate faculty members when necessary.

5. Students coming before the Student Progress Committee should present a written narrative to the committee, outlining the reason for their poor academic performance, including any extenuating circumstances, and a proposed plan to substantially improve their academic performance.

6. The Student Progress Committee will meet with the student in question to discuss the narrative and the issues surrounding the deficiency. Students may invite one or more faculty advocates to speak on their behalf in the preliminary phase of the proceedings.

7. The Student Progress Committee will have the opportunity to consult with faculty, administrators and others as appropriate to their review of the academic deficiency, the underlying reasons for the deficiency, and the development of a sound plan to remedy the deficiency or to recommend permanent dismissal from the DVM program.

8. The Student Progress Committee will have the opportunity to review the student's academic record including their DVM transcripts, class rank, written evaluations, and any material in their record that may shed light on the underlying causes of the deficiency and the most appropriate course of action.

9. The Student Progress Committee will propose to the Dean one or both of the following:

- a. A recommendation to progress or not progress or to reinstate or not reinstate.
- b. A remediation plan is to accompany any recommendation to progress or reinstate.
  - The remediation plan will be developed in consultation with the Associate Dean and the Chair of the department involved to ensure that it is appropriate and feasible.
  - It is the responsibility of the department Chair (or the Chair's faculty designate) to consult with and confidentially alert faculty and staff who are involved or likely to be affected by the remediation plan.

10. The final authority for acceptance, modification, or rejection of the recommendations of the Student Progress Committee rests with the Dean of the CVM.

11. The Dean and/or Associate Dean will notify the student of his decision by letter at the end of the deliberative process.

12. The Associate Dean will work closely with the Chair and staff of the department in question to implement the final remediation plan.

13. The department Chair or the department Chair's faculty designate will coordinate efforts to implement the remediation plan.

14. A student who does not accept the conditions for reinstatement, as indicated by a failure to provide a signature within 2 weeks of receiving the CVM Dean's letter, will not be reinstated and may be permanently dismissed from the DVM program.

15. If a student wishes to appeal the CVM Dean's decision about their progress in the veterinary curriculum, (s)he should contact the Dean of the Graduate School at 335-6412 within 25 days after receiving the Dean's/Associate Dean's letter.

Notes:

1. The policies and procedures for reviewing students as described above will be applied equally and impartially for all students seeking review of academic difficulty. Each student and each student's case will be treated and considered separately, independently, but consistently within the context of these Academic Standards. However, no two students and no two students' situation and circumstances are identical. Although the situations and cases may appear to be very similar, the faculty members, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Student Progress Committee Members, and the Dean, may recommend or implement different remediation plans or recommendations.

2. The definition of "timely" (point 3 above) shall mean that a committee meeting will be held within 2 weeks after the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs has received a referral by the faculty/administration or a petition from a student to appear before the committee.

3. The Student Progress Committee is not the venue in which a student would appeal a deficient grade. The Student Progress Committee has no authority to overturn a grade assigned by a faculty member in the DVM curriculum. Students having complaints about instruction or grading should refer them first to the instructor. If the complaint is not resolved, then the student may refer the complaint in writing to the chairperson of the 8 department in which the course is offered. The chair's decision shall be rendered within 20 business days. After the chair's decision, the student or the instructor may appeal to the Dean's office. Complaints must be presented in writing to the Dean within 20 business days of the chair's decision. The decision of the Dean is the final step and shall be made within 20 business days.

4. Grades of "F" awarded for academic dishonesty, such as cheating, falsification or fabrication of records, etc., as defined by WAC 504-25, will result in dismissal from the DVM program (see Essential Requirements policy and #1 in the Academic Standards policy above) and referral to the University Office of Student Affairs regardless of the student's academic standing.

5. A student who earns a "marginal pass" in a satisfactory/fail-graded course or less than a C in a 4th-year letter-graded course will receive a letter of notification from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

*Approved by the general faculty on December 1, 2003*

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