

Student Academic Policies

The following academic policies apply to all students who matriculate during the academic year of this catalog publication. These policies will apply throughout the entire time a student is enrolled in the college. In the event that these policies need to be revised as the result of new accreditation requirements, mandates of the United States Department of Education, or other unforeseen circumstances, students will be notified in writing prior to the effective date of the new policy.

Faculty and students should also refer to the University Academic Policy section for additional policies that apply to all students at Midwestern University.

Student Promotion and Graduation Committee

The Student Promotion and Graduation Committee (SPGC) is responsible for enforcing the published academic and professional standards established by the faculty and for assuring that they are met by all students enrolled in the program. As such, this Committee establishes the criteria and policies and procedures for student advancement and graduation, as well as academic probation, dismissal, and readmission. This Committee meets at a minimum at the end of each academic quarter to review the academic progress and performance of students enrolled in the program in relation to institutional academic policies. At the end of the academic year, the Committee assesses the academic and professional progress and performance of each student. If the student's progress is satisfactory, the student is promoted to the next academic year, provided all tuition and fees have been paid. Finally, the Committee also identifies and recommends to the MWU Faculty Senate candidates for graduation.

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress in completing the prescribed course of study, the Committee shall take appropriate action to correct the deficiency(ies). In instances involving repeated failures of a student to maintain satisfactory academic/professional progress, the Committee may recommend dismissal.

If a student's academic performance is scheduled for discussion during a Student Promotion and Graduation Committee meeting and the result could change the student's status in the college (extended program or dismissal), then the student will be invited to either appear personally before the Committee or submit a letter or documentation to be presented at the meeting. The invited student must indicate, in writing, their intention to appear or provide materials 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The information will be provided to the Chair and committee members of the SPGC. Among the options available to the Committee in regard to unsatisfactory student performance are:

Among the options available to the Committee in regard to unsatisfactory student performance are:

1. A written letter of caution provided to the student.
2. That the student
 - be placed on academic probation for a specified period of time,
 - take an alternative approved course offered at another college or university,
 - repeat the course(s) in which there is a failure when the course is offered again in the curriculum,
 - be placed in an extended program,
 - require that the student take additional coursework (e.g., OPTOD 1582, 1583, 1584, 1585), or
 - be dismissed from the College.

Within two working days following the Committee meeting, the Associate Dean is responsible for providing notification in writing with a delivery confirmation (i.e., next-day express mail, e-mail, or hand-delivery) to the involved student, informing the individual of the recommendation of the Committee. The Associate Dean is responsible for reviewing all recommendations for consistency with stated College academic policies and practices. The Dean or Associate Dean is responsible for providing written notification to all appropriate academic support offices (i.e., Registrar, Student Financial Services, etc.).

Academic Standards

An annual didactic grade point average will be used as the central measure of academic performance. It is calculated from all didactic courses from a particular professional year. Grades earned in courses taken prior to matriculation in the professional program, grades earned for courses taken at another institution while enrolled in the professional program, and grades earned for courses taken at the College in a more advanced professional year than that in which the student is enrolled, are not included in the calculation of this annual grade point average.

Students must maintain an annual grade point average of 2.00 and earn a passing grade in each required course to remain in good academic standing.

Students who have an "F" course grade at the end of a quarter must resolve the failure prior to advancing in the program.

Students who have one, two or three "F" grades in a quarter will be reviewed by the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee and will be either dismissed or will be placed in an extended program. The extended program year must take place in the year immediately following and the student will be required to repeat all the courses in which the grades of "F" were received. The student may be required to repeat courses that would serve to enhance the mastery of optometry knowledge, skills techniques, and concepts and that are deemed critical for success in the Doctor of Optometry curriculum. A student is allowed to go through an extended program only once. To be returned to good academic standing, a student must raise the student's annual grade point average to 2.00 or above at the end of the repeat year. Such a student reenters the next professional year curriculum and resumes a full load. A reentering student must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 at the end of each quarter to continue at CCO.

If the student does not meet the criteria for satisfactory academic performance at the end of the extended program year, the student will be dismissed.

If a student earns a grade of "F" in one or more required courses, the student is notified, in writing that the individual is being placed on academic probation for the next academic quarter. Probation represents notice that continued inadequate academic performance may result in dismissal from the program and the College. A student placed on academic probation is prohibited from:

1. Holding an office in a class, student association, fraternal, or any other student organization.
2. Participating in off-campus professional meetings and activities beyond program or course requirements during the academic year.

If the student earns an "F" in four or more courses overall, and/ or fails a repeated course, the student will be dismissed from the College. The dismissal is based on the determination by the Committee that the student has not satisfactorily demonstrated that the individual possesses the aptitude to successfully achieve the standards and requirements set forth in the academic policies and professional expectations for the program.

A student must complete all courses in an academic year with a "C" grade or better, and a cumulative GPA of 2.00, to progress to the next academic year curriculum.

Academic recommendations are made by the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Students will be notified, in writing, within two working days following the committee meeting regarding the recommendations of the Committee.

The following policies also guide decisions made by the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee:

1. A student must pass all required courses before entering the next year of the professional program.
2. Students placed on an extended program must pass any and all additional required courses assigned by the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee.

Students must successfully resolve all "I" (Incomplete) and "IP" (In Progress) grades before beginning external clinical rotations.

Appeal of Dismissal or Placement on an Extended Program

Following notification of a decision for dismissal or placement on an extended program, a student may appeal, in writing, the decision to the Dean. Such appeals must be received by the Dean within three working days after the student is officially notified of the dismissal or deceleration decision. A narrative explaining the basis of the appeal should accompany the request. An appeal must be based on one of the following premises:

1. Bias of one or more Committee members.
2. Material information not available to the Committee at the time of its initial decision.
3. Procedural error.

The Dean will review the appeal request and narrative. If he/she deems that there are sufficient grounds to convene another meeting of the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee, the Dean will request that the committee consider the appeal. If a decision is made to convene a Committee meeting, the student requesting an appeal shall be notified in writing with a delivery confirmation (i.e., e-mail or hand delivery) by the Associate Dean at least two working days in advance of the scheduled Committee meeting in which the student's appeal will be heard. The student may request and shall be permitted to appear before the Committee (in person or via telephone) in order to present the basis of the appeal request. In such instances, the student shall inform the Associate Dean in writing (i.e., e-mail or hand delivery) of his/her desire to appear before the Committee or his/her intent to waive the right to appear. If the student chooses to appear before the Committee, this prerogative extends to the involved student only and not to any other individuals. The Committee then submits its recommendation to the Dean. Upon receipt of the Committee's recommendation, the Dean makes the final decision, typically within 5 working days.

If the Dean's initial review does not reveal a substantial basis for another SPGC meeting, he/she will rule on the appeal request independently. The Dean makes the final decision, typically within 5 working days.

During the appeal process, the student must continue to attend classes. Students registered in a rotation course may be placed on a mandatory leave of absence until the appeal process is finalized.

Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the College for academic reasons upon the recommendation of the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee. The dismissal is based on the determination by the Committee that the student has not satisfactorily demonstrated that he or she possesses the aptitude to successfully achieve the standards and requirements set forth in the academic policies and professional expectations for the program.

Clinical Rotation Failure (refers to OPTOD 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1800, 1810, 1820, and 1830 Clinical Services I-VIII) Clinical service courses are completed sequentially.

If a student receives an "F" in a clinical service course, he/she may appeal the failing grade, in writing, to the course director. This must be submitted within two business days after the grade is posted. The course director will act on this appeal and must inform the student, in writing, within 2 business days of this decision. If the appeal is accepted the course director may place the student on an individualized education plan (IEP) under the direction of the course director and may require that the student take coursework. The course director's options are not limited to the above and can be modified on a case-by-case basis. If the course director decides to uphold the "F", the student has the right to follow the appeal process outlined below in Grade Appeals. "F" grades, or those that are upheld through the appeal process will be forwarded to the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee who may exercise any combination of the following sequence:

1. Place the student in an extended program, if eligible.
2. Put the student on a leave of absence to undergo a period of independent study.
3. Require additional coursework or specified activities to enhance optometry knowledge, skills techniques, and concepts that are deemed critical for success as a Doctor of Optometry; and/or demonstrate mastery of the knowledge, skills techniques and concepts deemed critical for success as a Doctor of Optometry.
4. Require the student to repeat the failed clinical rotation.
5. Be dismissed from the program.

Extended Program

Problems may arise that may necessitate the deceleration of a student's academic course load. Accordingly, an individual's academic course load may be reduced so that the student enters what is termed an extended program or split academic course of study. Such a program rearranges the course schedule so that the normal time period for the program is extended, usually by one additional year. Only enrolled students may enter an extended program. To enter an extended program, either one or both of the following conditions must be met:

1. Personal hardship. If a student is experiencing unusual stresses in life and an extended academic load could alleviate added stress, the student may petition the College for an extended program. This petition is to be submitted to the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, in writing, and may not be automatically granted, but may be approved in exceptional circumstances. The Dean or Associate Dean is responsible for reviewing and assessing the petition and may forward it to the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee if appropriate. The student will be informed of the decision, in writing, by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
2. Academic. As described above, a student ending an academic year with an annual GPA of less than 2.00 may be given the option to repeat courses from that year in which "F" grades were received. A student may be placed on an extended program for academic reasons at the discretion of the Student Promotion and Graduation Committee. A student placed on an extended program for academic reasons is automatically placed on academic probation and may not be returned to good academic standing until the extended program is successfully completed.

If a student is placed on an extended program, such action does not modify or limit the committee's actions for dismissal. Thus, the student may be dismissed for academic reasons while on an extended program.

A student placed on an extended program for academic reasons will be returned to good academic standing when the student reenters the prescribed academic program and completes all courses that were unsatisfactory and are required for graduation.

A reentering student (after an extended program) must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 at the end of each quarter to continue at the college. A student is allowed to go through an extended program only once.

Licensing Board Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to take any part of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) examination, students must successfully complete all CCO course requirements and meet requirements as established by the Office of the Dean.