

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 40.04, Student Promotion

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to describe policies and procedures related to student promotion and progress through the School of Medicine curriculum.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure will be reviewed every year by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee with input from the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** This policy is intended to provide guidelines for faculty and administrators on procedures to be used in determining the status of students relevant to their promotion through the curriculum. Information gathered in accordance with this policy should be used by the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee (SPPCC) to identify and evaluate students deemed to be in academic or professional difficulty.
2. **Introduction.**
 - a. The responsibility for the evaluation of students rests with the faculty of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine. Faculty have an obligation to the students, to the school, and to the larger society to award passing grades to, and to promote to subsequent training experiences, only those students who have met all learning objectives of the course material. For purposes of this policy, the term “course” includes all required activities, courses, and clerkships, which must be successfully completed for promotion and graduation. In addition to the evaluation of students' knowledge and skills, the faculty has the obligation to determine whether students' behavior or conduct is suitable for the practice of medicine. It is inappropriate to give a passing grade to a student when unacceptable behavior or conduct in the treatment and care of patients and/or in relationships with staff and peers has been established, even if performance on tests or other forms of evaluation has been satisfactory. Expectations for student behavior are described in the following documents:
 - 1) Student Conduct Policy (SOMOP 40.03, including the Medical Student Honor Code)
 - 2) Compact between Teachers and Learners of Medicine
 - 3) TTUHSC Code of Professional Conduct
 - 4) The SOM faculty has the responsibility for recommending students for promotion and graduation. This responsibility is administered through the SPPCC, which represents the faculty at large. Principles of fairness and due process will be applied when considering actions of the faculty or administration that might adversely affect the students.

- b. Students covered by this policy: These promotion policies apply to students enrolled or eligible to enroll in the courses necessary to complete the requirements for the Doctor of Medicine degree in the TTUHSC SOM. This includes prematriculated students, as well as students enrolled in the 4-year curriculum, accelerated programs (e.g., Family Medicine Accelerated Track), and all dual degree programs currently offered by the School of Medicine:

Partner School	Dual Degree Program
TTUHSC Graduate School of Biological Sciences	MD/PhD, MD/MPH
Texas Tech University Rawls College of Business Administration	MD/MBA
Texas Tech University School of Law	JD/MD
Texas Tech University Whitacre College of Engineering	MD/M Eng

Although this policy does not cover the coursework done for other degree programs in which the student is additionally enrolled, the SPPCC will make decisions about the student's continued participation in dual and accelerated programs. The SPPCC will also make decisions regarding SOM enrollment and progression based on student conduct while a student is participating in other degree programs, regardless of their enrollment status in the SOM. Representatives from dual and accelerated programs may serve in ex-officio roles when students in those programs are required to meet with the SPPCC.

- c. Responsibilities of the SPPCC: The voting members of the SPPCC are elected by the faculty and confirmed by the Faculty Council Executive Committee. The SPPCC is charged with the following responsibilities:
- 1) Formulate and modify policies within its purview.
 - 2) Review and evaluate the academic and behavioral progress of each medical student enrolled or eligible to enroll at TTUHSC School of Medicine.
 - 3) Implement policies related to promotion, reinstatement, or dismissal of individual students in accordance with the policies and procedures described herein.
- d. Responsibilities of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs: The Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs are responsible for documenting the progress of medical students during their course of study in order to provide, or refer students to, the appropriate academic or personal counseling services, if applicable. The Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Student Wellness and Advancement, or a campus-specific designee serve as due process advocates for students. The Office of Student Affairs provides staff support to the SPPCC and will maintain permanent minutes of SPPCC meetings. The Office of Student Affairs will provide students appearing before the SPPCC with information pertaining to their meeting at least five (5) business days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- e. Responsibilities of the Dean: The Dean has final responsibility for actions taken regarding a student. Initial decision(s) and subsequent action(s) for each student are the responsibility of the SPPCC. The SOM Dean is responsible, per this policy, for executing any appeals process regarding the decisions and actions of the SPPCC.

3. Curricular Progression and Length.

- a. Expected progression through the SOM curriculum requires that a student meet or exceed minimal standards of performance, including but not limited to exam or final course grades of "Pass", as described in SOMOP 30.01: Grading Policy. Students are expected to complete the medical school curriculum within three (3) or four (4) years of the initial date of matriculation based on the degree track in which the student is enrolled (an accelerated track or 4-year MD curriculum, respectively). This does not include time spent in coursework for other degree programs, for example, the dual degree programs listed above.
- b. Time in the curriculum may be extended due to 1) a leave of absence, 2) academic difficulty requiring repetition of an academic year as per this policy, or 3) requests for decompression of the medical school curriculum. Failure to complete Phase 1 (Years 1 and 2) of the curriculum in three years, Phase 2 and Phase 3 (Years 3 and 4) of the curriculum in three years, and Phases 1-3 in 6 years, may result in dismissal. The total time in the SOM curriculum will be calculated based on the original matriculation date. As such, students are expected to be conferred a degree within 6 years of their matriculation date, inclusive of administrative and academic leaves of absence, and time spent remediating portions of the curriculum. The only time not included in the time-in-curriculum calculation is medical leaves of absence and time spent in dual degree programs that extend time to graduation (e.g. MD/Ph.D. and MD/JD programs). The completion of the medical school curriculum is required for graduation. The MD degree will be conferred at the next commencement after a student completes graduation requirements. Students may not extend their time in the curriculum following an unsuccessful match to pursue research opportunities. The Office of Student Affairs will annually present to the SPPCC and HSC Registrar a list of candidates for receipt of the Doctor of Medicine Degree based on the policies described herein.

4. Grade Assignment and Tracking of Student Progress.

- a. Grades are assigned as described in SOM OP 30.01, Grading Policy.
- b. The Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for maintaining a comprehensive database of student grades.
- c. The progress of each student enrolled in the SOM will be reviewed by the SPPCC on an annual basis, based on data provided by the Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Prescribed courses of action and decisions by the SPPCC will be based on the cumulative performance of the student.

5. Notification of Students with Satisfactory Progress.

- a. The SPPCC will notify students of promotion as follows:
 - 1) Promotion from Year 1 to 2 (during Phase 1) requires satisfactory performance in all courses that constitute the Year 1 (Phase 1) curriculum (see Table 1).
 - 2) Promotion from Phase 1 to Phase 2 requires satisfactory performance in all courses that constitute the Year 2 (Phase 1) curriculum (see Table 2). In addition, students must obtain a "Pass" result on the USMLE Step 1 exam for promotion to Phase 2 of the curriculum. (defined below).
 - Students in the FMAT program must also complete the FMAT1 course and all components of the FMAT2 course except the Family Medicine NBME,

SOM OP 40.04: Promotion Policy

Page 3

which can be taken following either clerkship period 3 or 4 in their Phase 2 curriculum.

- 3) Promotion from Phase 2 to Phase 3 requires satisfactory performance in all clinical clerkships, the Integration Seminar and any other coursework in Phase 2. Passage of USMLE Step 2CK is not required for promotion to Phase 3. Unless problems arise, students will proceed from Phase 2 to Phase 3 with no formal notice of promotion.
 - Students in the FMAT program are not promoted to Phase 3 and complete graduation requirements after completing the FMAT 3 course and passing USMLE Step 2CK.

6. Notification of Students with Unsatisfactory Progress.

- a. Good academic standing: A student is considered in good academic standing as long as they are meeting the minimum academic and professionalism expectations.
- b. Not in good academic standing: A student is considered to be not in good academic standing when they are not meeting minimum academic and professionalism expectations. As such, these students are required to meet with the SPPCC (or delegate) for consideration of their academic performance or professionalism/misconduct.
 - 1) Students who are not in good academic standing are returned to good standing once they have met with the SPPCC committee (or delegate) and have completed any requirements set forth by the committee (if any).
 - 2) Students who are required by the SPPCC to repeat an academic year due to poor academic performance return to good academic standing on the first day of the repeated year.
- c. The Office of Student Affairs and/or The Office of Academic Affairs will identify students with unsatisfactory academic performance on a continuing basis. Specifically, these Offices will identify students who meet one of the following criteria:
 - 1) Obtain a final grade of "Fail" in any Phase 1 course.
 - 2) Fail more than one individual exam in a Phase 1 course.
 - 3) Fail to demonstrate readiness to take USMLE Step 1 based on the criteria set by the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - 4) Obtain a "Fail" on USMLE Step 1 or 2
 - 5) Obtain a final grade of "Fail" or interim grade status of "In Progress" (PR) in Phase 2 (Note – one clerkship NBME exam can be remediated within an academic year without penalty (see SOMOP 30.01 – Remediation)).
 - 6) Obtain a final grade of "Fail" in any Phase 3 course.
- d. Students meeting any of the above criteria will either be referred directly to the SPPCC by the Office of Student Affairs and/or Office of Academic Affairs, or will be reviewed by the SPPCC Chair, to determine the need for referral to a SPPCC meeting.
 - 1) The Office of Student Affairs will prepare documentation for each student whose academic performance or conduct warrants a meeting with the SPPCC, provide a

SOM OP 40.04: Promotion Policy

Page 4

SPPCC Student Report Form to each identified student in a timely manner, and arrange for the student to meet with the SPPCC.

- 2) In lieu of meeting with the SPPCC, students in Phase 1 are approved for remediation of 2-3 exams (Year 1) or 2 exams (Year 2), and must meet with the Academic Success Team to review their academic performance. A student in either of these situations may request a meeting with the SPPCC. Further, a student in either of these situations may be required to meet with the SPPCC at the discretion of the chair (or delegate) of the committee.
- e. Students reviewed by the SPPCC will be notified in writing of the SPPCC decision and informed of stipulations for continuation in the curriculum (if any).

7. USMLE Step Exams.

- a. In order to become fully licensed to practice medicine in the United States, individuals must pass all three USMLE Step exams – Step 1, Step 2 Clinical Knowledge, and Step 3. Each state’s medical licensing board determines the number of attempts individuals may make at each Step exam in order to remain eligible for licensure. Individuals must pass each Step exam within three attempts to be licensed in the state of Texas.
- b. USMLE Step 1:
 - 1) Students are required to take USMLE Step 1 prior to beginning their core clerkship year (Phase 2). A delay in taking Step 1 may be approved by the SPPCC. A student may be delayed in taking Step 1 due to
 - the requirement for remediation of exams or a course,
 - not demonstrating “readiness” to take Step 1, or
 - having extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from taking Step 1.
 - 2) Demonstration of “readiness” to take Step 1 requires a student to achieve a requisite minimum score on a SOM Administered NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE). This minimum score is established annually by the Office of Academic Affairs based on national and local data.
 - 3) Any student who takes USMLE Step 1 without prior approval of the Office of Student Affairs, or who does not take USMLE Step 1 by the specified date after receiving approval from the Office of Student Affairs, will be referred to the SPPCC for review of professional conduct due to violation of this policy.
 - 4) Students who obtain the requisite score on a CBSE (i.e., demonstrate “readiness” to progress to Phase 2 of the curriculum) and take Step 1 prior to the start date of Phase 2 are eligible to begin the clerkship phase (Phase 2) of the SOM curriculum on schedule (unless on leave of absence).
 - NOTE: Any student who has passed USMLE Step 1 and enters the Phase 2 curriculum during either clerkship period 1 or 2 is considered to be progressing as expected in the curriculum for academic progression reporting purposes (e.g., MSPE).

- 5) Any student who fails to demonstrate “readiness” to take Step 1 by the last scheduled CBSE prior to the start date for Phase 2, clerkship period 1 of the current academic year must remain actively enrolled in the School of Medicine to maintain access to educational resources, including academic advising, online resources and examinations. Students in this situation are not eligible for an academic or administrative leave of absence from the SOM.
- 6) Any student who fails to demonstrate “readiness” to take Step 1 as described in 7.b.5 and who indicates the desire to remain actively enrolled will switch registration to Independent Study/Guided Study for period 1 and period 2 (when appropriate) and continue with preparation for Step 1. Students will pay full tuition for the Fall semester.
- 7) Students who take Step 1 prior to the beginning of Phase 2 but do not pass the exam will:
 - Not start clerkships (Phase 2) if the “Fail” result is received prior to the start date of the clerkship curriculum, OR
 - Complete their current clerkship period, then be enrolled in Independent Study (IDS)/Guided Study (GS) during the next period to prepare for and retake Step 1, OR
 - Drop the current period clerkship and be enrolled in IDS/GS to prepare for and retake Step 1, OR
 - Take a leave of absence for the remainder of the academic year and enter Phase 2, clerkship period 1, with the next academic class

For any of the above options, the student must obtain a passing score on USMLE Step 1 to be eligible to start or return to the SOM curriculum.
- 8) No student will be permitted to enter the Phase 2 curriculum after the first day of period 3, even under exceptional circumstances.
- 9) Any student who has not demonstrated readiness to take Step 1, based on the standard defined by the Office of Academic Affairs, prior to the first day of Phase 2, clerkship period 3, will be referred to the SPPCC for dismissal.
- 10) Any student who fails USMLE Step 1 or does not enter the Phase 2 curriculum by clerkship period 2 will be under the purview of the SPPCC on an ongoing basis.

c. USMLE Step 2:

- 1) Students are required to pass the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge exam to be eligible for graduation from the SOM.
- 2) Students must complete all Phase 2 requirements, including the remediation of any academic issues, before being eligible to take the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) exam.
- 3) Students must take at least one Comprehensive Clinical Science Examination (CCSE) to demonstrate “readiness” to take Step 2 CK.

- Students must achieve a pre-determined requisite score on the CCSE in order to be approved to take Step 2 CK. This minimum requisite score is established annually by the Office of Academic Affairs based on national and local data.
 - Any student who does not achieve the requisite score will receive counseling on appropriate preparation for Step 2 CK through the Academic Success team.
- 4) Students must take Step 2 CK within 16 weeks of completing all Phase 2 curricular requirements, including required NBME subject exam remediations. Students who fail to meet this deadline will be referred to the SPPCC.
- A passing score for Step 2 CK must be documented prior to graduation. Failure to document a passing score by March 1 of a student's last year in the SOM curriculum may result in a delay in graduation. It is the responsibility of each student to monitor Step exam reporting dates to ensure their score is received by the March 1 deadline.
- d. Longitudinal Clinical Skills Examination:
- 1) Students are required to pass the Longitudinal Clinical Skills Examination (LCSE) to be eligible for graduation.
8. **Student Performance and Progression through the Curriculum.** Based on the ongoing review of student academic performance described above, individual students may be referred to the SPPCC. The SPPCC will use the guidelines in the following tables to determine the appropriate actions for each student.

Table 1: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in Year 1 of Phase 1

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
All course grades of Pass or better	No action required	Student will be promoted to next academic year
One final course grade of Fail with all others Pass or better for the academic year	Request permission to remediate the Failed course	- Remediation - Repetition of academic year
Two final course grades of Fail for the academic year	- Request permission to repeat the year - Withdraw	- Repetition of the academic year - Dismissal
Failure of 2-3 individual exams in an academic year	Remediate all failed exams at the first attempt, achieving a final score of 75 or above on each exam	- Promotion to the next academic year upon successful completion of remediation - Repetition of year - Dismissal
Failure of 4 or more individual exams in an academic year (not including failed exam remediation attempts)	Request permission to repeat the year	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
<i>Procedures during Remediation and Repetition</i>		

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
Failure to successfully remediate a Fail course grade prior to the start of the next academic year	- Request permission to remain in the curriculum - Withdraw	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
Failure to successfully remediate 1 failed exam prior to the start of the next academic year	- Request permission to remediate the course - Request repetition of the year	- Assign grade of Fail for the course - Remediate the course - Repetition of the year
Failure to successfully remediate more than 1 failed exam prior to the start of the next academic year	Request permission to repeat the year	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
Failure of a course during a repeated year	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure of more than one individual exam in a repeated course	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure of more than one exam across all courses in a repeated year	- Request to remediate exams - Withdraw	- Remediate exams - Dismissal

Table 2: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in Year 2 of Phase 1

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
All course grades of Pass or better and passage of USMLE Step 1.	No action required	Student will be promoted to next academic year
One final course grade of Fail with all others Pass or better for the academic year	Request permission to remediate the Failed course	- Remediation - Repetition of academic year
Two final course grades of Fail for the academic year	- Request permission to repeat the year - Withdraw	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
Failure of 2 individual exams in an academic year	Remediate all failed exams at the first attempt, achieving a final score of 75 or above on each exam	- Promotion to the next academic year upon successful completion of remediation - Repetition of year - Dismissal
Failure of 3 or more individual exams in an academic year (not including failed exam remediation attempts)	Request permission to repeat the year	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
<i>Procedures during Remediation and Repetition</i>		
Failure to successfully remediate a Fail course grade prior to the start of the next academic year	- Request permission to repeat year - Withdraw	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
Failure to successfully remediate 1 failed exam prior to the start of the next academic year	- Request permission to remediate the course - Request repetition of the year	- Assign grade of Fail for the course - Remediate the course - Repetition of the year
Failure to successfully remediate more than 1 failed exam prior to the start of the next academic year	Request permission to repeat the year	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
Failure of a course in a repeated year	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure of more than one individual exam in a repeated course	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure of more than one exam across all courses in a repeated year	- Remediate exams - Withdraw	- Remediate exams - Dismissal
<i>Procedures related to taking and passing USMLE Step 1</i>		
Failure to meet criteria for promotion to Phase 2 within three years of student's date of matriculation	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure to achieve the requisite score after the maximum number of attempts on the CBSE	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure to demonstrate "readiness" to take USMLE Step 1 prior to the first day of Phase 2, Period 3	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure to pass USMLE Step 1 after three attempts	Withdraw	Dismissal

Table 3: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in Phase 2

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
Failure of a single clerkship NBME or Clerkship Clinical Examination (CCE) in an academic year	None required	Remediate one clerkship NBME or CCE without penalty
Failure of Clinical Evaluation component of grading system in any clerkship	None required	Repetition of clerkship
Failure of a total of two NBME and/or CCEs	None required	Review by SPPCC to determine if student should continue progressing on schedule

Failure to remediate clerkship NBME or CCE at the second attempt	None required	Assign final grade of Fail and repetition of clerkship
Failure of NBME AND CCE in a single clerkship	None required	Assign final grade of Fail and repetition of clerkship
Failure of any three major components* within the core clinical clerkships (subject exam, CCE, clinical evaluation, professionalism), inclusive of all work undertaken after initial matriculation into Phase 2 (*not inclusive of failed remediation attempts)	Request permission to repeat academic year	- Repetition of academic year - Dismissal
Failure of overall clerkship	None required	Assign final grade of Fail and repetition of clerkship
<i>Procedures during Repetition of 1 or More Clerkships</i>		
Failure of single major component of a Clerkship (i.e., NBME, CCE, Clinical Performance)	- Request Repetition of Component - Withdraw	- Repetition of Component - Dismissal
Failure of two or more major Clerkship components. This could occur within a single Clerkship or across multiple Clerkships	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure of overall clerkship (e.g., due to unprofessional behavior)	Withdraw	Dismissal

Table 4: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in Phase 3

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*
Failure to meet criteria for graduation by June 1 of third year following entry into Phase 2	Request extension	- Dismissal - Approval of extension
Failure to pass USMLE Step 2 CK after three attempts	Withdraw	Dismissal
Failure to pass LCSE after three attempts	Withdraw	Dismissal

Table 5: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in special programs (dual degree, accelerated programs) in Phases 1 and 2

ACADEMIC CONDITION	COURSE OF ACTION FOR STUDENT	POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR SPPCC*

Failure of a single exam in Year 1 or 2 or of a single clerkship NBME or CCE	No action required	Review by SPPCC to determine if student should continue in special program
Failure of 2 or more exams or a course in Phase 1, 2 or more clerkship NBME or CCEs, a clerkship, Clinical Evaluation component in any clerkship, or USMLE Step Exam	No action required	- Review by SPPCC to determine if student should continue in special program - Dismissal from dual or accelerated program.
Failure to progress as expected in dual degree or accelerated program (e.g., failure to enter Phase 2 curriculum on time)	No action required	Dismissal from dual or accelerated program

* SPPCC options include, but are not limited to, the described actions. Students may appeal decisions of the SPPCC. The mechanism for appealing these decisions is described in Section 14.

9. Repetition of Year 1 or 2 (coursework during Phase 1).

- Students in either Year 1 or Year 2 (Phase 1) who are granted the opportunity to repeat that curricular year (coursework) due to unsatisfactory academic performance (see Table 1) may be enrolled in IDS/GS versions of any remaining courses in that academic year.
- Students who are granted the opportunity to repeat either Year 1 or Year 2 (coursework during Phase 1) for a reason other than unsatisfactory academic performance will not be expected to enroll in IDS/GS.
- Students who have been approved to repeat an academic year may request a final grade of W (withdraw) of a single in-progress course, even if they have an average score below passing. This approval must be requested from and granted by the SPPCC at the time the student is approved to repeat the academic year.

10. Dismissal Policy. A student shall be dismissed if the SPPCC determines that the student has not performed satisfactorily in academic pursuits, is not competent to pursue the assigned course of study, or has been deemed by the SPPCC, for just reason, unfit to continue the study of medicine. The student shall be notified in writing of the dismissal decision of the SPPCC.

11. Appeals Procedure.

- The SPPCC will notify the student in writing of the outcome. A student may appeal an adverse decision by the SPPCC. Except for extraordinary circumstances, the student shall remain in the curriculum and may pursue appropriate coursework until the appeal is resolved.
- If at any point in the appeal process the student retains legal counsel, the student's legal counsel is to immediately notify the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. All correspondence after notification is received, will be conducted through the student's counsel and the Office of General Counsel (OGC).
- The appeal, addressed to the Dean of the School of Medicine, must be submitted through the office of the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs within five (5) business days of the SPPCC's written notification decision. The appeal may only raise the following:

- 1) Whether a procedural deviation occurred that substantially affected the outcome of the case;
 - 2) Whether there is new information sufficient to alter the findings or other relevant facts not available or mentioned in the original hearing because such information or facts were not known to the person appealing at the time of the SPPCC Hearing.
- d. The Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will review the appeal request and make a recommendation to the Dean of the School of Medicine as to which matters raised constitute proper appeals. The Dean will review the recommendation and decide which matters raised constitute proper appeals. If an appeal is denied in its entirety, the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will notify the student of that decision. All decisions are final.
 - e. If any portion of an appeal will be heard, the Dean will appoint an Appeals Committee comprised of three members of the senior faculty within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written appeal. The Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Chair of the SPPCC (or designee) will serve as ex-officio members of the Appeals Committee. The student will be notified in writing of the members and will have three (3) business days to challenge, in writing, the impartiality of any member. The student must prove impartiality by a preponderance of the evidence.
 - f. The Appeals Committee will be convened by the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs not earlier than after the student's member impartiality challenge period but no later than ten (10) business days after appointment to consider the student's appeal.
 - g. Not later than two (2) business days prior to the appeal hearing, the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the student will exchange documents and witness lists (if any). The Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall then provide all documents to the Appeals Committee.
 - h. Failure of the student to appear at the hearing will result in automatic denial of the appeal and any and all other rights of appeal.
 - i. The student may appear in person and/or present a statement to the Appeals Committee relative to the appeal and may be accompanied by legal counsel retained by the student. In the event the student is to be accompanied by legal counsel:
 - 1) The student's legal counsel shall notify the OGC copying the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs not later than two (2) business days prior to the hearing. The Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs shall notify the OGC if the OGC was not included on the correspondence.
 - 2) A representative from the OGC shall attend on behalf of the university.
 - 3) Legal counsel may serve only in an advisory capacity to the student and TTUHSC and may not participate in the hearing.
 - j. The hearing will be recorded and either party may obtain a copy upon written request. No transcript will be provided.
 - k. At the start of the hearing, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall review the procedural rules that shall be observed and identify the documentation and/or witnesses the Appeals Committee intends to consider.

- l. If a witness is not available to attend the hearing in person, the Appeals Committee may consider allowing the witness to participate by telephone or video teleconference. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall determine whether information provided at the hearing is relevant and material to the appeal.
- m. After the conclusion of the presentation of the appeal, the student will be excused and the video recording will be stopped. The Appeals Committee will then deliberate in closed session.
- n. The Appeals Committee will report its recommendation to the Dean within five (5) business days of the appeals meeting. The Dean will review the Appeals Committee's recommendations and render a final decision. The student and the Chair of the SPPCC Committee will be notified of the outcome in writing by the Dean. The decision of the Dean is final.