



**Graduate School of Nursing
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Bethesda, Maryland**

TITLE OF POLICY: #94-06, Student Promotions Committee

ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 02 June 2000

LAST REVIEW/REVISION DATE: 24 September 2012

POLICY

A. Purpose. This document establishes policy regarding the role and functions of the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) and establishes guidelines and procedures for remediation, probation, setback, interim suspension, and disenrollment of students by the Graduate School of Nursing (GSN).

B. References. GSN P&P #94-05, Grading and Examining Policy.

C. Background.

1. Elements critical to the success of this policy includes early identification of students at risk, a personalized remediation program with regular feedback, and accurate documentation of student progress. All persons involved in the academic and clinical training process must be committed to keeping the attrition rate to a minimum and to assisting students in overcoming weaknesses or deficiencies.
2. Once a student is identified as being at risk, courses of action include remediation, and/or referral to the SPC for probation, setback, or disenrollment from the program. The Program Director or designee (i.e. Director of Clinical Education) may institute a remediation program without convening the SPC. The purpose of a remediation program is to design a plan of support with specific objectives that will enable the student to focus on areas of concern. Use of all available resources including counseling, study groups and individual tutoring are encouraged. Once referred, the

SPC may recommend continuation in regular student status (no action or a letter of counseling), probation, setback, or disenrollment from the program.

3. Students may be referred to the SPC at any time during their enrollment at the Uniformed Services University (USUHS).

D. Applicability. This policy applies to all Masters and Doctoral students enrolled in GSN programs and to all GSN faculty members.

E. Definitions:

1. *Student Promotions Committee (SPC):* An advisory body to the Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, GSN, whose purpose is to provide an objective review of a student's record and performance and make recommendations as to the status of that student. Recommendations may include a return to full student status, probation, setback, or dismissal.
2. *Program Director:* As used in this Policy & Precedent Statement, this means the Director of a Graduate School of Nursing program.
3. *Regular Student Status:* Status of a student who is progressing satisfactorily in their program of study.
4. *Academic Jeopardy Letter:* At the discretion of the Program Director a letter will be presented to a student who is not doing well in a course or program, identifying the specific issues or deficiencies that the student needs to address in order to appropriately progress in their program (i.e. academic and/or clinical performance).
5. *Remediation Program:* A process or plan of corrective actions designed to resolve academic or clinical deficiencies.
6. *Remediation Period:* The duration of the remediation program as described in the remediation plan.
7. *Probation:* A period of time and a designated status of students in academic jeopardy wherein the student must meet a certain set of conditions and / or attain a designated status within a prescribed time period to be allowed to continue in their academic or clinical program.

8. *Leave of Absence*: An approved temporary absence of a student from all academic activities including, but not limited to, classes, labs, clinical rotations and student activities.
9. *Setback*: An opportunity to repeat a block of study resulting in postponement of graduation.
10. *Interim Suspension*: An approved temporary removal of a student from all academic activities including, but not limited to, classes, labs, clinical rotations and student activities.
11. *Disenrollment*: Formal dismissal from the University and termination of student status.

F. Policy:

1. The following actions can be taken prior to an SPC referral:
 - a. *Letter of Academic Jeopardy*: If a student is not meeting minimum standards in a course or program, the Program Director, Course Coordinator, or Faculty Advisor will send a letter of academic jeopardy to the student, listing the deficiencies and notifying the student that they must meet with the Program Director or his/her designee, to institute a remediation program to address the deficiencies.
 - b. *Academic or Clinical Remediation*: a personalized remediation program will be developed for any student identified as having difficulty with knowledge, skills, ability, or progression in their academic or clinical training. The plan will identify areas of concern and strategies to assist the student in meeting semester or course objectives and should include goals, objective criteria for determining if the goals have been met and timelines for completion of the goals (Enclosure 1). Consequences of failing to meet the set goals should be clearly described. Although students may be referred to the SPC at any time, if remediation goals are not met, SPC referral is automatic. In the didactic phase, the remediation period will not ordinarily roll into the following semester. However, it is recognized in some specific cases this may be appropriate. Students in remedial status may not begin the next semester without written permission of the Program Director. In the clinical setting the student will not progress to the next semester objectives until the previous semester objectives have been successfully completed. The following are the guidelines for instituting a remediation program:

- (1) The Program Director or his/her designee will assign a faculty preceptor to guide the student with the remediation program. The preceptor is directly responsible to the Program Director or his/her designee.
 - (2) A written plan for remediation will be established and implemented including individualized student goals, objective criteria to assess goal achievement a timeline for completion and a schedule for meeting with the preceptor. After joint discussion, the plan will be signed by the student, the faculty preceptor and the Program Director. All meetings will be documented in writing.
 - (3) Objective criteria for release from remedial status will be identified in the remediation plan along with a timeline. The student must meet all remediation criteria to be removed from remediation.
- c. Actions that can be taken following referral to the SPC:
- (1) *Counseling Letter*. Students who have demonstrated an unacceptable academic behavior, but whose infraction does not rise to the level of probation may be recommended for a Letter of Counseling to be issued by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Dean, GSN.
 - (2) *Probation*. Students who have failed to meet the standards/objectives of a course, program, or established remediation plan may be recommended for probation by the SPC. The length of probation will be established on an individual basis. At the end of the probationary period, the SPC will reconvene to determine what further action(s) will be taken. If the student has successfully met the established criteria, the probationary period will be discontinued, and the student returned to regular status. If a student fails to meet the established criteria, the SPC has the option to recommend additional probationary time, setback, or disenrollment. Criteria for a probationary are:
 - (a) A faculty preceptor will be assigned by the Program Director or his/her designee to guide the student with the probationary program. The preceptor is directly responsible to the Program Director or his/her designee.
 - (b) A written plan for the probationary period will be established and implemented including individualized student goals, objective criteria to assess goal achievement a timeline for completion and a schedule for meeting with the preceptor. After joint discussion, the plan will be signed by the student, the faculty preceptor and the Program Director. All meetings will be documented in writing (Enclosure 1).

- (c) Objective criteria for release from probationary status will be identified in the plan along with a timeline. The student must meet all probation criteria to be removed from probation. If removal from probation is recommended, the student's attendance at the SPC is optional.
- (3) *Setback.* Students who have failed to meet established criteria may be recommended for setback.
- (a) Students who miss a significant portion of the program due to illness or other problems may also be recommended for setback.
 - (b) Setback shall encompass, at a minimum, one full semester. Consideration for additional time will be determined on an individual basis. The sponsoring Service/Agency must concur with the setback.
 - (c) Students who are setback must meet all program requirements prior to graduation.
- (4) *Disenrollment.* Students who have failed to meet established criteria may be recommended for disenrollment. Though a probationary period should generally precede disenrollment, it is not required and disenrollment may be recommended without prior probation at the discretion of the committee.
- (a) A student should be considered for disenrollment only after reasonable attempts have been made to correct the deficiencies identified.
 - (b) Students who have overall GPA's below 3.0 or grades in individual courses below required minimums may be recommended for disenrollment without a probationary period.
 - (c) Students who are found to have committed serious acts of academic misconduct may be recommended for disenrollment without a remediation or probationary period.
- (5) *Leave of Absence.* Students who require a temporary absence from academic or clinical activities and who remain in good academic standing may be placed in a leave of absence status upon recommendation of the Program Chair and concurrence by the respective Service. At the Program Director's discretion, the student may not be required to appear in person before the SPC.
- (a) Students who miss a significant portion of the program due to illness or other problems may also be recommended for a leave of absence.

- (b) Leave of absence will be determined on an individual basis. The sponsoring Service/Agency must concur with the leave of absence.
- (c) Students who are granted a leave of absence must meet all program requirements prior to graduation.
- (d) Upon return to academic or clinical activities, the SPC will evaluate the academic plan and adjusted timelines.

G. Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Role and Function of the Program Director in this process:
 - a. Institute academic or clinical remediation process.
 - b. Refer to SPC and provide a written recommendation for interim suspension, leave of absence, probation, set back or disenrollment.
2. Role and Function of the SPC:
 - a. When a case is referred to the SPC, the reasons shall be fully documented in the student's record. Information submitted to the SPC shall include a summary of all evaluations, papers, and examinations, performance appraisals, counseling notes, letters of academic jeopardy, remedial work assignments, and outcomes.
 - b. The role of the SPC is primarily procedural and not educational. In evaluating the student's progress, the Committee will determine if an identifiable problem exists, if there is sufficient documentation supporting existence of the problem, and if reasonable efforts have been made to assist the student in correcting the problem.
 - c. The following questions are to be used as a guideline for evaluating this process.
 - (1) Does the student have an identifiable problem? Is the problem documented in the student's academic grades, daily clinical evaluations, counseling sheets, minutes from appropriate committee meetings, or other appropriate documents?
 - (2) Does documentation exist that shows the student was notified of his/her deficiency?
 - (3) Was a specific plan for remediation identified and implemented?
 - (4) Was the student given enough time to correct the deficiency?

(5) Have reasonable attempts been made to assist the student in correcting his/her deficiency?

H. Procedures. Referral to the SPC will be accomplished in the following manner:

1. In the didactic phase or when students are performing clinical training and are billeted to USU:
 - a. The Program Director, Advisor, or Commandant will refer the student to the Chair, SPC by submitting a formal request to convene SPC (Enclosure 2).
 - b. The Chair of the SPC will set a meeting date and time for the SPC by consensus of the members and those presenting cases and will notify the Commandant, GSN of the date and time of the meeting.
 - c. The Commandant will notify the student of the referral to the SPC at least 72 hours prior to the convening the SPC using the Student Referral Form (Enclosure 3).
2. In clinical training when students billeted to the clinical training site (Not for students only TDY):
 - a. The Clinical Site Director will submit a request (Enclosure 2) to the Program Director to convene the SPC.
 - b. The Program Director will evaluate the request and make appropriate recommendations in writing, forwarding the Referral form to the Chair, SPC with a copy to the Clinical Site Director.
 - c. The Chair of the SPC will set a meeting date and time for the SPC to meet via video teleconference (VTC) or teleconference if VTC is not available by consensus of the members and those presenting cases and will notify the Commandant, GSN of the date and time of the meeting.
 - d. The Commandant will notify the Clinical Site Director of the SPC date and time. The Clinical Site Director will notify the student of the referral to the SPC at least 72 hour prior to the convening the SPC using the Student Referral Form (Enclosure 3).
 - e. The form will be forwarded to the Commandant.

- f. Clinical site faculty may be present during SPC discussion to provide information and answer questions specific to that clinical site.
3. The following procedures apply to both the didactic and the clinical training phase.
 - a. Using enclosure 3, the student must be notified at least 72 hours prior to convening the SPC.
 - b. The notification will include the following information:
 - (1) An SPC will be convened.
 - (2) Time, date, and place of the SPC.
 - (3) Names of any invited representatives.
 - (4) The tentative membership of the SPC.
 - (5) That student may challenge any member of the SPC upon presenting evidence that the member may not render a fair and impartial opinion.
 - (6) That the student may be represented before the committee by anyone other than a committee member. This may include an attorney of the individual's choosing, secured at the individual's expense, another student, or a federal government employee, predicated upon availability of such personnel.
 - (7) A copy of this policy will be given to the student. As per this policy, the student may present evidence (documentary, witness, or testimonial) relevant to the proposed action.
4. Selection of committee members. The SPC will have a set membership as follows:
 - a. The Commandant and a representative appointed by the Office of General Counsel/ Brigade JAG shall be members by virtue of their positions.
 - b. The Chair, members and alternates will be appointed through the existing GSN Committee assignment procedures and may serve any number of consecutive terms. Faculty membership should be representative of all GSN programs and must include enough PhD Program faculty to have quorum for SPC meetings for student in the PhD Program.
 - c. A recorder to the committee will be appointed by the Dean.

- d. A non-voting student representative will be appointed by the Commandant, GSN (referred students may decline this student representative participation).
5. The Chair, SPC, will convene a committee of current GSN Faculty members appointed to the SPC. It is recommended that the committee be composed of no less than five voting members. Uniformed members of the committee are to be of equal rank or senior to the student referred to the committee.
 6. Standing Committee Members are:
 - a. SPC Chair or appointed alternate (1) (voting).
 - b. Vice Chair (1) (voting).
 - c. GSN Commandant/Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (non-voting).
 - d. GSN Faculty members (5, minimum) (voting) ideally representing different GSN programs. For doctoral student cases, voting faculty members must hold a doctoral degree.
 - e. General Counsel, Ex Officio (1) (non-voting).
 - f. GSN Student, (1) (non-voting).
 - g. Recorder, (1) (non-voting).
 7. Conduct of an SPC.
 - a. The Chair will convene the meeting and provide for introductions of all persons present including their role, title and whether they are voting or non-voting members.
 - b. The representative from General Counsel will read the student his/her rights and reiterate to those present that the meeting is administrative in nature, therefore, the formal "Rules of Evidence" do not apply and all relevant information may be considered.
 - c. The Program Director or their designee will present the student's record and any pertinent information and should be prepared to answer any questions posed by committee members.

- d. The student will be allowed to present documentary, witness, or testimonial evidence relative to the proposed action, and should be prepared to answer any questions posed by the committee members
- e. After all information pertinent to the case has been presented; the SPC will hold closed deliberations for discussions and voting. (The student, Program Director, and any other persons presenting evidence must leave the room during deliberations.)
- f. Upon completion of deliberations a motion will be made in relation to the case presented and voted upon by the members. All SPC decisions will be by vote of a simple majority of members present, with the exception of a recommendation for disenrollment, which requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present.
- g. Upon completion of the SPC vote, the Chair shall:
 - (1) Inform the student and Program Director of the committee's recommendations.
 - (2) Advise the student that the committee's action is a recommendation only.
 - (3) Notify the student that she/he may appeal the recommendation in writing using Enclosure 4 within five business days from receipt of the official SPC committee report (Enclosure 5) from the Chair, SPC.
- h. The Chair, SPC will prepare the SPC a report (Enclosure 5) outlining the findings and recommendations of the committee. In the event there is divergence among committee members, a dissenting opinion may be prepared and submitted with the committee report. The final SPC report, all supporting documentation, student appeal materials (if applicable) and a signature page (Enclosure 6) will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs within 5 business days of the SPC if no appeal is made or within 10 business days if an appeal is being submitted.
- i. The SPC is an advisory body to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may concur with the Committee's recommendations or request other action be taken. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will return his/her decision to the SPC chair in writing within 5 business days of receiving the final SPC report.
- j. The Chair, SPC will forward a signed copy of the final decision to the student and Program Director for action.

- b. When an interim suspension is imposed, the student may request an expedited meeting of the SPC (within 1 week) if the suspension is for academic related issues. All SPC policies and procedures as stated above will apply. Usually review of suspensions for non-academic issues are the purview of the Brigade and not the SPC.
- I. **Graduation.** The Chair, SPC reviews all students presented for graduation to certify that the students do not have any uncompleted SPC requirements. A list of proposed graduating students will be sent to the Chair, SPC by the GSN Registrar at least one month prior to graduation. The list will be returned to the Registrar with a memo stating which (if any) students have outstanding issues and what needs to be done to resolve these issues prior to graduation. All SPC processes as stated above apply to unresolved SPC issues for graduation.


(Signature) 12/19/12
(Date)

ADA SUE HINSHAW, RN, PhD, FAAN
Dean and Professor
Graduate School of Nursing

Enclosures

Institution of Remedial/Probation Program
Request for Convening the Student Promotions Committee
Student Promotions Committee Student Referral Form
Student Promotions Committee Report Form
Student Notification of the Appeals Process
Associate Dean Signature Page
Student Request for Voluntary Withdrawal Example Letter

Appendices

Appendix A
Timelines/Sequence of Events

Approved by GSN All Faculty: 02 June 2000
Revised and Approved by GSN All Faculty: 22 October 2012

Appendix A

Timelines/Sequence of Events

Steps	Item	Person Responsible	Forms	Timeline
1	Student Referral	PD, Advisor or Commandant	Encl 2	Initiation
2	Meeting Date & Time	Chair SPC		
3	Student Referral Form	ADSA, Faculty, CSD	Encl 3	At least 72 hours prior to meeting
4	Convene meeting	Chair, SPC		
5	SPC Report/Minutes	Chair SPC	Encl 5	5 days of meeting
6	Student Appeal	Student	Encl 4	5 days of receipt of SPC report/Minutes
7	Assoc Dean Signature Page	ADAA to SPC Chair	Encl 6	5 days of receipt of SPC report/Minutes
8	Assoc Dean Signature Page	SPC Chair to PD & Student		Upon receipt of Signature page
9	Appeal to Dean	Student		5 days of receipt of Signature page
10	Dean's Decision	Dean		5 days of receipt of student appeal

PD: Program Director

CSD: Clinical Site Director

ADSA: Associate Dean, Student Affairs (Commandant),

ADAA: Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

Days = Business Days

MEMORANDUM

From: Name, Commandant, GSN

To: Name, Student

Date:

Subject: Student Promotions Committee Student Referral Form

1. Student Name and Rank: _____

Date SPC Initiated: _____

Start of Didactic Training: _____

Start of Clinical Training: _____

2. An SPC is scheduled for:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

*Attendance is optional only when requested action by the Program Director is removal from probation or student requests program withdrawal.

3. Reason for referral to Student Promotions Committee:

Failure to meet course objectives or required academic performance standards

Failure to meet objectives for clinical training

Requested by student

Scheduled interim progress review

Removal from probation

Other (specify) _____

4. Name of any invited representative(s). Check here if none

5. Tentative SPC membership for the scheduled SPC is as follows:

1. (Chair) 7.

2. (Commandant) 8.

3. (General Counsel) 9.

4. 10.

5. 11.

6. 12.

**This is list is tentative only, actual members may vary. Student may challenge any member of the SPC at the time of the meeting upon presenting evidence that the member may not render a fair and impartial opinion

6. Student verification of referral to the Student Promotions Committee and students' rights. (Please initial each statement)

- a. I have received the documents relevant to this case including a copy of the SPC policy.
- b. I have been notified of the tentative membership of the Student Promotions Committee.
- c. I have been advised that, I may challenge any member of the Student Promotions Committee upon presenting evidence that the member may not render a fair and impartial opinion.
- d. I have been notified that I may present evidence at the meeting that is relevant to the proposed action (documentary, witness, or testimonial).
- e. I have been notified that I may be represented before the committee by anyone other than a committee member. This may include an attorney of my choosing, secured at my expense, another student, or a federal government employee.
- f. I have been notified that a non-voting student representative may be invited to the SPC committee if I so choose. This student representative will be chosen by the Commandant, GSN. (initial choice below)

I do **NOT** wish a student representative

I **DO** wish a student representative

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Student Promotions Committee
Report Form**

Student Name: _____

Date / Hour Committee Convened:

Date / Hour Committee Adjourned:

Committee Members and other persons present (indicate role and voting/non-voting status of all persons present):

1. Procedural Matters

2. Faculty Presentation

a. Review of Faculty report of student's issues, course of action, and results to date (reference attachments as appropriate).

b. General Comments from faculty

3. Student Presentation

a. Review of student's report of student's issues, course of action, and results to date (reference attachments as appropriate).

b. General Comments from student

4. Committee Discussion summary

5. Committee Recommendations

6. Committee Vote

7. Notification to student

Chair, SPC Signature

Date

Original to: SPC File

Copy to: Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Student, Program Director

Encl 4

**Student Promotions Committee
Notification of Appeal Procedures**

Student Name: _____ Date of SPC: _____

- I have been informed of the Student Promotions Committee's recommendations in my case.
- I understand that I have the right to appeal these recommendations to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, GSN.
- I understand that if I desire to submit an appeal it must be in writing and may include additional supporting documentation not presented to the SPC committee as appropriate to provide evidence for my appeal.
- I understand that if I submit an appeal, it must be submitted to the Chair of the SPC within five working days of my receipt of the committee's written report.
- I understand that my appeal and its supporting documentation will be included in the packet going forward to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for final decision.
- I have the following wish in regards to my right to appeal these recommendations.

___ I do NOT wish to appeal the committee recommendations

___ I DO wish to appeal the committee recommendations

Student Signature Date

General Counsel Representative Signature Date

Chair, SPC Signature Date

**Student Promotions Committee
Associate Dean Signature Page**

To: Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Date:
Re: **Student Name**
Subject: REVIEW OF SPC RECOMMENDATION

I have reviewed the materials from the SPC in the case of the above named student. If applicable, I have reviewed any additional appeals materials provided by the student. I hereby make the following determination:

- I concur with the Student Promotion Committee's recommendations as stated and agree that they be implemented as written without changes.
- I concur with the Student Promotion Committee's recommendations as stated and agree that they be implemented but with the following minor changes/additional stipulations as listed in the box below.
- I do not concur with the Student Promotion Committee's recommendations. I make the following determination as listed in the box below.

Other action required (specify):

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, GSN

Date

Original to: SPC File
Copy to: Student, Program Director

Encl 6

Sample Student Withdrawal Letter

**TO: DEAN
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NURSING, USUHS**

THROUGH: Director, *name, Program Name, GSN, USUHS

DATE:

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM *NAME PROGRAM OF STUDY.

1. After serious consideration, I have decided to voluntarily withdraw from the *NAME PROGRAM OF STUDY, at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). This decision was not easily made but appears to be the best decision at the current time.

2. Throughout the ## months that I have been in school at USUHS, I have
*State reason/s for withdrawal (i.e. personal, professional, etc)

3. I have discussed this matter in detail with my *name as appropriate: clinical site director, program director, senior service advisor, etc. I am aware of the service commitment already incurred and that a follow-on assignment will be at the discretion of *state your service.

4. I appreciate the opportunity that was bestowed upon me. I have obtained knowledge that cannot be taken from me. I intend on gaining additional experience and building upon that knowledge to better prepare myself for future training as a *state your future goal.

STUDENT NAME, Rank, Service

GSN *state program Student

Receipt Acknowledgement:

Program Director Name, Program Name Director

Date

Encl 7