

## **BIMS Academic Progress and Achievement Committee Operating Procedures**

The BIMS Academic Progress and Achievement Committee (BAPAC) serves as an institutional oversight committee with representation from all Biomedical Sciences (BIMS)-affiliated degree-granting programs to ensure (1) that individual programs have set up clear standards for academic progress and processes to determine if the standards are met; and (2) that individual programs have followed their processes and the institution's conduct policies.

Each BIMS-affiliated degree-granting program is responsible for developing and implementing the academic standards, academic progress, and student evaluation policies for their program. In the case of first-year students who are not yet affiliated with any degree-granting program, the BAPAC will establish a consensus policy that will be reviewed annually in the Spring and conveyed to all first-year advisors for the following academic year. The role of the BAPAC is to monitor the implementation of the individual degree-granting program policies regarding student remediation and dismissal, ensuring due process for students. The BAPAC assesses whether the policies have been followed and assures fairness and consistency across the interdisciplinary programs comprising BIMS.

It is the policy of the School of Medicine to give every qualified and committed student the opportunity to graduate; however, the School reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to make judgments about who has or has not demonstrated the necessary qualifications to earn a degree.

### **I. Name and Mission**

This committee of the Faculty shall be called the BIMS Academic Progress and Achievement Committee (BAPAC). The BAPAC reviews and acts on all recommendations from BIMS-affiliated degree-granting programs regarding students failing to remain in good standing based on 1) grades or other academic performance and/or 2) failing to meet professional standards or exhibiting unethical or unprofessional behaviors. The BAPAC does not establish the academic standards, which are set by each degree-granting program, nor the professionalism standards, which are set by the institution. The committee will consider any action that proposes a loss of financial support and/or standing as a student. It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies for the degree-granting program that is proposing such action to notify both the student and the BAPAC of their intention. This notification will prompt scheduling of a meeting to consider whether the appropriate process has been followed. This meeting must be held before any action is taken, with the exceptions noted in section III.L. below. The BAPAC also approves the list of graduates put forth by the BIMS-affiliated degree-granting programs for May, August and December graduations.

The BAPAC will meet no less than three times a year, and more often when necessary.

## II. Composition

The BAPAC is comprised of the Directors of Graduate Study (DGSs) for each of the BIMS-affiliated degree-granting programs, by virtue of their positions. The BAPAC chair is the Assistant Dean for Graduate Research and Training by virtue of that position and has full voting rights. The committee elects a vice chair from its members. The vice chair will serve a two-year term. No consecutive terms will be allowed, though an individual may be renominated after sitting out one term. The vice chair may call and chair a BAPAC meeting in the event that the chair is unavailable. No member of the BAPAC shall have more than one vote.

## III. General policies

- A. Official votes may be taken when a quorum (greater than 50% of voting members) is present. The DGS for each student at issue will recuse himself/herself from voting. All motions are passed by a 2/3 majority of voting members present.
- B. All committee members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of each academic year.
- C. Administrative support to the committee will be provided by an administrative staff member of the Graduate Programs Office who will work with the chair to set the agenda; inform members of meeting dates and times; take and maintain the minutes; maintain official student folders; maintain copies of all letters sent by the chair; invite additional participants when necessary, etc. This administrative staff member shall also take minutes of each meeting with special emphasis being applied to recording every official motion, and the numerical vote taken on that motion. This individual will also sign a confidentiality agreement each year.
- D. The minutes from each meeting will be approved at the start of the subsequent meeting. A copy of the minutes of all meetings will be maintained by the Graduate Programs Office and are made available to the Dean and/or the Dean's designee. Official letters sent to students also will constitute part of the minutes of each meeting, as they summarize the decisions of the committee. A notice is sent to the Dean and/or the Dean's designee after each meeting indicating that a meeting was held and that the confidential minutes are available for review in the Graduate Programs Office. All paper copies of the minutes and of any other documents utilized by the committee during the meeting will be collected at the end of the meeting by the committee's administrative staff member and destroyed.
- E. When the case involves an allegation of severe professional transgressions and/or the committee is to consider serious actions such as suspension or dismissal of a student, a

final vote should be taken by the committee only after the student has been offered an opportunity to address the committee in person, and to respond to questions from members of the committee. In this case, the student should be notified by the committee in writing before the meeting as to the likely nature of the major concerns of the committee so that the student has time to prepare a response. Faculty who have knowledge related to the situation under discussion may also be invited to attend. If the student elects not to participate in the process, the committee decision will stand.

- F. When a student addresses the committee, the student will act as his or her own advocate. In some sensitive situations, the student may be accompanied by a current member of the School of Medicine community (e.g. classmate, faculty mentor, etc.) for support or advice. Such a participant must be approved by the committee chair prior to the meeting. Since these are not formal legal proceedings, no counsel representing a student shall be allowed.
- G. Official notification of committee actions shall be made by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Research and Training as soon as possible after the action is taken by the BAPAC and after the student has been notified of the action (as defined in III.H below). All individuals and departments with a need to know will be so notified.
- H. The formal decisions of the BAPAC shall be communicated by the chair to the student in a timely fashion, usually by the night following the meeting or the next day. Copies of this communication will be placed in the student's academic record, and into the minutes of the BAPAC. In some situations, such as when news of a decision is given verbally to the student, the chair may invite the student's DGS or faculty mentor to be present.
- I. Consistent with the requirements of law, decisions made by the committee may be revealed to authorized university personnel, to the student, and in appropriate circumstances, to the student's parents or guardians (especially when the personal safety of the student is a concern). Other individuals may be notified as appropriate.
- J. The official School of Medicine transcript shall accurately reflect the actual academic record of the student and important decisions reached by the committee about each student's academic performance or misconduct (for example, reflecting changes in student status, grades changed through re-examination, suspensions, etc.).
- K. Guidelines and policies written in advance cannot cover all possible scenarios. When in doubt, the committee will be guided by several important general principles, including: fairness to students; ensuring due process; promptness of action and notification; maintaining confidentiality when possible; and, balancing the best interests of each student with the committee's obligations to the Faculty, the School and to society to train graduates who demonstrate the highest standards of academic performance and conduct.

- L. As discussed above, no student will be formally dismissed or suspended prior to an appropriate hearing by the BAPAC. However, on rare occasions an emergency may arise in which the health of a student, faculty member, or other member of the community is placed at risk by the presence of a student. In such an unusual situation, the chair of the BAPAC may recommend to the Dean or Senior Associate Dean for Education that a student be suspended provisionally, pending formal consideration of the relevant issues by the full committee at the earliest possible opportunity. It is anticipated that this action will be required only under very rare circumstances.
  
- M. When a student wishes to contest a decision of the BAPAC, the student must follow the process as described in the Graduate Record:

A student who wishes to appeal a particular action taken by the BIMS Academic Progress and Achievement Committee (BAPAC) may do so in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate and Medical Scientist Programs within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date on which the decision being contested was communicated to the student. A three-person ad hoc Appeals Committee will be established that is composed of faculty drawn from a pool of 10 faculty members named by the Associate Dean for Graduate and Medical Scientist Programs, none of whom is a current member of the BAPAC. The student selects one member, the Senior Associate Dean for Education selects one member, and the Dean of the School of Medicine selects the third member, who will also serve as Chair of the ad hoc Appeals Committee. The student will be permitted to inspect all documentation considered by the BAPAC. The student will be permitted to have counsel, to submit affidavits and exhibits, and to summon witnesses at the Appeals Committee hearing. Legal counsel may be present to provide advice, but legal counsel will not be permitted to participate actively in presentation of testimony, examination/cross examination of witnesses, or oral arguments. The Appeals Committee is to conduct a hearing as soon as possible (ordinarily within 14 days) and will uphold, modify, or reverse the decision of the BAPAC. The Appeals Committee will provide the student with all the evidence against him/her, including the academic grades and written evaluations, and will base its recommendations upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The Appeals Committee will send its decision, along with a written record of its proceedings, to the Dean of the School of Medicine. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

- N. The policies and processes for the BAPAC will be updated as needed. The updated version will be posted online. The incoming first year class will receive a URL link to the latest version at the time of matriculation and all students will be notified when substantive revisions are made to the policy.