

## Professional Program Academic Standards

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The standards set forth in this document are those used for academic programs in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

REPORTED GRADE	NUMERIC EQUIVALENT	QUALITY POINTS
A	90–100%	4.0
B+	88–89%	3.5
B	80–87%	3.0
C+	78–79%	2.5
C	70–77%	2.0
D	60–69%	1.0
F	Below 60%	0.0

Numeric scores that fall between grade categories (e.g. 89.5%) may be mathematically rounded or stand without rounding. Faculty will designate their process for rounding and grading within the course syllabus. If the rounding process has not been stated, a standard mathematical rounding will be applied to the final scores.

The provision for a make-up examination, due to circumstances beyond the student’s control, will be determined by the principal instructor(s). If a make-up examination is provided, the final course grade will be determined by the principal instructor or instructors.

In most circumstances, a make-up examination must be administered and graded so that the final grade for that course can be reported within the time period prescribed by the registrar for that term. However, instructors, at their discretion, have the prerogative of issuing a grade of incomplete (“I”) when circumstances, such as illness, warrant such action. Students in years 1, 2, and 3 must take the exam or complete the required course work for the satisfactory removal of an incomplete from the student’s record by the end of the first 5 academic days of the following semester; otherwise, a grade of “F” may be given. During extenuating circumstances, such as prolonged absences related to health or family emergencies, and at the discretion of the Associate Dean or Dean, satisfactory removal of “I” grades may be extended to completion within 1 calendar year of course end. If an “I” grade is not resolved within 1 calendar year, it is automatically changed to an “F” by the university registrar. All “I” grades must be removed prior to graduation. For students in the final year, see 4<sup>th</sup>-Year Clinical Grading Policy in the [DVM Professional Student Handbook](#).

Courses and their evaluation should be structured so that the median course grade is not less than 80%. If the median grade falls below 80%, the scale may be adjusted so that the class median will be 80% with other points in the scale adjusted accordingly. The scale will not be adjusted if the class median is above 80%.

Upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the Curriculum Committee, a course may use the S/NC (satisfactory/no credit) grading basis without student option.

Courses VMP 801, 802, 803, and 804, (Application Based Learning Exercise/Clinical Exposure I, II, III, and IV) generally consist of 1-week problem-solving and/or clinical experience exercises. Students are required to complete each week within each course with a satisfactory (S) grade. Absences are allowed for emergencies and unavoidable conflicts. However, due to the limited course time available, absences will require completion of additional assignments or make-up clinical day(s) at the course coordinator or clinician's request.

While collaboration among students in the Application-Based Learning Exercises is encouraged and expected, the written work produced by students (notes, papers, problem lists, reflective journals, etc.) is each individual student's work. These written materials should not be shared with students in earlier years of the professional curriculum. Sharing of written information with students in the earlier years of the curriculum is considered academic cheating or plagiarism and is a breach of the university's honor code.

### **SUBJECTIVE GRADING**

In certain courses, a portion of the grading process will be subjective. Students will be advised of the method and basis for the determination of this portion of the grade by the course instructor(s). The grading policy should be outlined in the course syllabus or within the student handbooks for the clinical year.

### **ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY**

Academic evaluation of students is not based solely upon examination grades but is also a matter of continuing, objective and subjective evaluation of student academic performance and/or progress. Satisfactory clinical performance and adherence to standards of professional conduct are required of each student in the College of Veterinary Medicine, regardless of cumulative grade point average. These factors are considered in the evaluation of each student and will be critical in determining the student's continuation in the professional curriculum.

Satisfactory completion of the professional curriculum requires completion of all curricular requirements at a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or greater, completion of the minimum required skills, and a passing score on the standardized Veterinary Educational Assessment (VEA) exam or exam remediation approved by the Academic Progress Committee. All three of these requirements must be completed in order to receive the D.V.M. degree.

The Academic Progress Committee reviews student standing in the college if any one, or more, of the following occurs.

1. A student's cumulative grade point average, or grade point average for any academic semester, falls below a 2.0.
2. A student fails a course or receives a grade of "D" in a course.
3. A student demonstrates unsatisfactory clinical performance, as evidenced by an NC grade, more than one "low performance flag" (unsatisfactory marks within the clinical competency rubric) within a single rotation or low performance flags repeated across three (3) or more rotations.

4. A student fails to adhere to the standards of professional conduct.
6. A student fails to pass the VEA Examination after two attempts

The Academic Progress Committee, composed of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the committee chair, and at least one faculty representative from each of the three departments in the college, will interview and evaluate each student whose performance and/or progress is below the minimum acceptable level. Normally, the meeting will occur within 3 weeks of the last final examination of the semester (excluding holidays). The student will be asked to prepare a written narrative response prior to the meeting, including reflection on their progress and challenges, along with plans for improvement. The responsible instructor or instructors will be contacted, and all pertinent information— including the student’s academic history, all examination grades for the semester (pre-clinical students), and all prior evaluations (clinical students)— will be presented to and evaluated by the committee.

After reviewing this information, the committee will determine appropriate action based on majority vote and academic guidelines. The committee chair will communicate the committee’s decision in writing to the student with copies to the Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Such action may include remediation and re-examination; requirement that a course(s), term(s), or year(s) be repeated; suspension; dismissal with ability to reapply; permanent dismissal; or other appropriate measure(s).

Reviews by the committee are holistic in nature and highly individualized. Normally, students with a D or F grade in a core course and a low semester or cumulative GPA, and students accumulating more than two D grades in the pre-clinical curriculum, will be advised to repeat semester content. In other circumstances of D grades, remediation and retesting, or advancement without retesting, may be recommended. Committee recommendations of an academic plan, actions, or resource acquisition to promote academic success will be provided to the student in writing, usually within 10 calendar days of the meeting. Such actions will be defined as mandatory or as recommendations. It is the student’s responsibility to complete or seek assistance in meeting the ascribed recommendations or actions outlined by the Academic Progress Committee. Failure to meet academic standards or the written requirements outlined by the Academic Progress Committee may result in academic probation, suspension, or dismissal from the College of Veterinary Medicine professional program.

*Academic Probation:* Academic probation is an indicator of academic standing that designates performance short of college expectations. Continued deficiencies during a probationary semester are likely to result in suspension or dismissal. Under academic probation, students must stay in regular contact with their advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, relinquish officer positions in class leadership and student organizations, and review commitments to other extracurricular activities with the Associate Dean. Existing and new scholarships (not financial aid) also may be impacted.

Students placed on academic probation must maintain satisfactory academic performance in the subsequent semesters of study. The semester GPA expectation will be established between 2.0–2.5 with no grades below a C. Students on academic probation who are repeating semester course content will be expected to achieve a semester GPA of 2.5 with no grades below a C. Students will remain on academic probation at any time their cumulative GPA is less than 2.0 or as determined by the Academic Progress Committee. Probationary status for more than two semesters of the program may result in suspension or dismissal.

*Suspension:* Suspension is a temporary pause or deceleration of a student's progress. Suspension may be for a defined period (e.g. one semester or one calendar year) or indefinite period of time (until key criteria have been met). The suspended student is withdrawn from the College of Veterinary Medicine for the period outlined by the Academic Progress Committee.

Readmission requires the student to demonstrate readiness for successful completion of the professional program and completion of actionable plans outlined by the committee. Students must submit a letter of request for readmission. The letter should outline compliance with Academic Progress Committee recommendations or describe actions taken to achieve academic success. The letter should be received by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at least 90 days prior to the expected return date. Upon approval by the associate dean and/or Academic Progress Committee, a readmission form will be provided by the college registrar and must be completed for readmission to proceed.

*Dismissal:* Academic dismissal is the result of a pattern of receiving grades that are below the university's standards for good academic standing. The decision of dismissal means that the student is withdrawn from the College of Veterinary Medicine professional program and may not apply for readmission with advanced standing. Dismissed students will be given one of two options on readmission based on their academic and professional performance. The options for post-dismissal reapplication will be outlined in the dismissal letter as follows: 1) no option for readmission or 2) readmission by competitive process through the VMCAS application service.

Eligibility for a change of status to register in another area of study within the university will be evaluated by the Dean of the Graduate School at the request of the student.

## **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

In general, students with grievances should first seek resolution at the instructor and course coordinator level, communicating clearly and professionally their reasons for concern about examination, course, or other assessment results. Additional internal levels of appeal include the department and college levels. At a minimum, the student must confer with the appropriate faculty member, advisor, the relevant department head, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to college or university appeal. If resolution at this stage is unsatisfactory, further appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, the Graduate Council Appeals Committee through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

*College Appeals:* The decision of the Academic Progress Committee may be appealed in writing, within five (5) business days of written notice/transmittal of the decision to the student. The initial appeal may be made to the Academic Progress Committee if the student can show new information that is material to the original decision. If new information is not the basis for the appeal or the grievance concerns the interpretation of and adherence to college or university policies and procedures, the decision may be appealed in writing to the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, within 14 business days, but no later than 30 days, of the written notice transmittal. Such appeals include issues of academic policy, procedures, or grading (e.g. academic probation, suspension, or dismissal).

*University Appeals:* Students may further appeal decisions by the Dean with the Graduate Council Appeals Committee (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council/appeals->

[committee/](#)). The Graduate Council Appeal Procedure can be obtained at the university Graduate School or at <https://gradschool.utk.edu/documents/2016/02/student-appeals-procedures.pdf/>. Appeals may involve the interpretation of and adherence to university, college, and department policies and procedures as they apply to graduate education and the issuance of grades based on specific allowable reasons stipulated in the [Graduate Council Appeal Procedure](#). Appeals of academic penalties must be placed within thirty (30) days after the final grade has been issued. Appeals of policies or procedures must be placed within thirty (30) days after the UTCVM Dean's decision.

Appeal procedures in regard to allegations of misconduct or academic dishonesty are presented in *Hilltopics* under "Student Code of Conduct" at <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>. Misconduct appeals should be directed to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, 412 Student Services Building. Students with grievances related to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, parental status, genetic information, or protected veteran status should file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity, 1840 Melrose Avenue.

Per Board of Trustees bylaws, Article V, Section 5, "Any employee or student of the University who feels that he or she may have a grievance against the University shall have the right of appeal through the appropriate Chancellor or Vice President to the President of the University, except as otherwise provided by University policy." In the case of UT students, they may appeal the decision of the Dean of the Graduate School to the Provost and then the Chancellor.

**It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with this information and to comply with all university rules and policies**

Approved by the CVM Faculty  
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