

Time To Graduate

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University of South Alabama College of Medicine Time to Graduation Policy for Students enrolled in the Medical Doctor degree earning program.

1. **Purpose:** It is recognized that some students due to academic disruptions or leaves of absence may require more than four (4) academic years to successfully complete the curricular elements necessary to be awarded the Medical Doctor degree (M.D.). This policy establishes the maximum number of academic years for a student enrolled in the Medical Doctor (M.D.) degree earning program to complete the degree as tracked from matriculation to graduation.
2. **Applicability:** This policy applies to all University of South Alabama College of Medicine (USACOM) students pursuing the M.D. degree after matriculation.
3. **Definitions:**
 - a. **Academic year:** The annual period of a student's education. The length of the academic year in months and weeks varies in the COM dependent upon the student's curricular/clinical responsibilities for a given year and is posted on the academic calendar published on the COM website.
 - b. **Academic Calendar:** Calendar defining the beginning and end dates for each cohort class.
 - c. **Base time to graduation:** This refers to the four academic years from a student's initial matriculation date to the anticipated date of graduation.
 - d. **Time to graduation:** The length of time between a student's recorded matriculation and the recorded date of graduation.
4. **Policy Guidelines:**
 - a. **Normal progression** through the COM core M.D. curriculum requires that a student demonstrate a consistently satisfactory level of performance. Module, clerkship, and course grades generally serve as indicators of performance. The curriculum is designed with the expectation that students will complete the curriculum successfully within four (4) academic years from the initial date of matriculation ie the base time to graduation.
 - b. The COM recognizes that each student has unique capabilities and life experiences, and therefore, some students may need to extend their time from matriculation to graduation due to but not limited to a leave of absence or as the result of academic disruptions which necessitate a repeat or remediation of academic work or a component of the USMLE licensing exams. For these reasons, the USA COM has decided upon two years of additional flexibility which can be added to the base time to graduate which would therefore allow the student a maximum of six (6) academic years to successfully complete the M.D. curriculum including specific licensing exams as tracked from initial matriculation.
 - c. In framing the time to graduation policy, the USA COM needs to adhere to the COM's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy enforced through the COM Office of Financial Aid. Within the SAP policy is found the following verbiage: Based on federal regulations, maximum time frame is defined as the maximum number of years after first enrollment that a student may complete COM courses in the full-time pursuit of a degree and receive federal financial aid funding. For federal student aid purposes, the maximum time frame to complete a medical degree in the COM is six (6) years after which a student is no longer eligible to receive federal student aid.
 - d. All leaves of absence count toward the student's time to graduation.
 - e. If a student withdraws from the COM and is not on probation at the time of withdrawal, the time between withdrawal and readmission does not count toward the student's time to graduation.
5. **Procedures**
 - a. The student's time to graduation is tracked from the initial date of matriculation.
 - b. A student whose pace of progress precludes completion of all required coursework including success on the USMLE licensure exams for the M.D. degree within the stated and defined six (6) academic years will have their academic

record reviewed by the Student Promotions and Evaluation Committee (SPEC). Pending the outcome of this meeting, the student could be subject to dismissal.

1. SPEC's review of the student's academic record will occur at the first juncture when it becomes apparent that the student will be unable to complete all required coursework in the given six (6) academic year timeframe.
 2. The SPEC policies and procedures as delineated in the COM Student handbook will govern the proceedings.
 - c. Any student has the right to petition SPEC requesting a meeting to present documentation in support of an extension of the maximum six (6) academic year time frame by no more than one academic year. The committee meeting would follow the SPEC policies and procedures outlined in the COM Student Handbook.
 - d. Applies to all students who matriculate in 2022 and thereafter.
6. Enforcement: All infractions of this policy will be referred to the SPEC as soon as the student has exceeded the limits of time available to successfully complete the curriculum. Once referred to SPEC, the policies and procedures which govern SPEC will be enforced.
7. Related documents
- a. [Leave of Absence](#)
 - b. [Satisfactory Academic Progress policy](#)