Policy on Student Progress

Please note: The following policy, approved April 30, 2018, applies to all PhD and master's programs at UCSF.

Policy on Student Progress: Requirements, Notification, Remediation, and Review

1a. Criteria for satisfactory academic progress in PhD programs

Students in Year One?

First-year students should meet with their graduate advisors once a quarter. Student progress is assessed at the end of the year on the basis of course grades and performance, rotation reports (for lab-based programs), and program-specific exams (for medical anthropology and sociology). Indicators of unsatisfactory progress include, but are not limited to, substandard work or unprofessional conduct in the lab/research environment (as reported by the PI), or failing grades in any courses (see list of examples below).

Students in Year Two

Second-year students should meet with the graduate advisor or lab PI once a quarter. Indicators of unsatisfactory progress in year two (as in year one) include, but are not limited to, substandard work or unprofessional conduct in the lab/research environment (as reported by the PI), failing grades in any courses (see list of examples below). In programs with qualifying exams taken by the end of year two, students are also evaluated on their progression toward, timely scheduling of, and then successful completion of the qualifying exam.

Students in Year Three and Beyond

In programs with qualifying exams taken in year three, students are evaluated on their progression toward, timely scheduling of, and then successful completion of the qualifying exam. Students in years three and beyond may also be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress according to any of the indicators listed below.

Students should form their dissertation committee in a timely manner. Not submitting the
names of committee members to the program within 6 months of passing the qualifying exam will be considered an indicator of unsatisfactory progress, except in extraordinary circumstances.

In lab-based programs, students are expected to schedule meetings with their dissertation committee at least once a year.

Students are expected to complete all degree requirements within normative time for their program.

Unsatisfactory progress indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Failing below a 3.0 GPA
- Failing grades in any course
- Failure to find a lab after four rotations (for lab-based programs)
- Unsatisfactory work in the lab (rotation or thesis, as reported by the PI)
- Unprofessional conduct in the lab/research environment (rotation or thesis, as reported by the PI)
- Failing the qualifying exam the first time
- Failure to submit dissertation chapters in a timely fashion (for social science programs)
- Disciplinary problems and other conduct and professionalism infractions that fall within the scope of UCSF’s Code of Conduct.

1.b. Criteria for satisfactory academic progress in master’s programs

Students should meet with their advisors once a quarter. Student progress is assessed at the end of each quarter on the basis of course grades and performance in the program.

Unsatisfactory progress indicators are determined by each individual program. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Failing an exam
- Failing grades in any course
- Failing below a 3.0 GPA
- Failure to achieve milestones toward the capstone requirement (where applicable)
- Unsatisfactory work in the clinic (where applicable)
- Unprofessional conduct
- Disciplinary problems and other conduct and professionalism infractions that fall within the scope of UCSF’s Code of Conduct.

2. Process by which failing students will be notified and remediated

Students whose progress is unsatisfactory (according to one or more of the criteria listed above) will be notified and will meet with the advisor and the program director to develop an individualized remediation plan to address the deficiencies. The meeting results in a memorandum of understanding that clearly outlines specific steps and associated deadlines that the student must fulfill in order to receive a satisfactory report. The report is then signed by the following parties: the student, the primary advisor, and the program director. At this point, the report is filed in the student’s academic file within the program, and a copy is sent to the associate dean for graduate programs.

Should the student be unable to fulfill the expectations according to the timeline outlined in the
letter, the student will be subject to dismissal from the program. Depending on the student?s standing in the program, PhD candidates may be allowed to leave with a terminal master?s degree.

The process for in-depth review of a student?s eligibility for dismissal will follow the UCSF Divisional Procedure for Student Grievance in Academic Affairs, section 4.0 [1], and will be conducted by the program?s in-depth committee.

3. Composition of the in-depth review committee, should one be necessary?

Each program determines the composition of its in-depth review committee, which shall consist of at least three members. In most instances, it consists of faculty members on the executive committee.