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# Effective Practices for Developing Policies on Good Standing

Group on Student Affairs, Committee on Student Records

Association of  
American Medical Colleges

This document was created by the Group on Student Affairs – Committee on Student Records (GSA-COSR) for the purpose of providing guidance on developing an effective good standing policy. All content reflects the views of GSA-COSR and does not reflect the official position or policy of the Association of American Medical Colleges unless clearly specified.

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# Effective Practices for Developing Policies on Good Standing

*Group on Student Affairs - Committee on Student Records*

## Work Group Composition

The work group was comprised of nine AAMC constituents who represent various positions, experiences, and geographic locations.

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*COSR Chair*

Almi Rodriguez, Registrar, Florida International University  
*COSR Southern Region Representative*  
*Good Standing Work Group Chair*

Edward Lahart, Registrar, The Commonwealth Medical College  
*Good Standing Work Group Co-Chair*

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### Acknowledgments

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*Keith Krosinsky, AAMC*

*Marissa Miles, Director of Financial Assistance, Florida International University*

*Michael J. Pepe, Director of Student Finance, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine*

## Work Group Charge

The COSR document, *Good Standing Best Practices*, needed updating (see Appendix B - Previous Good Standing Document). The conversation around what it means to be enrolled, in good standing, and satisfactory academic progress varies not only by institution, but also within institutions (registrar's office, financial aid office, etc.). This work group was tasked with updating and expanding the previous document to include recommendations on how to classify students based on federal regulations. The expected time commitment was 1-2 conference calls per month over a 3-6 month period.

## Work Group Approach

Documents of good standing provide important information regarding the academic and/or professional status of a student. The work group shifted the focus of the previous document, which attempted to define good standing, to a document that aims to assist school officials in developing their own good standing policy. Additionally, the document was updated to include satisfactory academic progress (SAP) recommendations.

To begin, a survey was distributed in December 2016 to the medical student records administrators' listserv to assess the climate of the community regarding good standing policies. Answers were compiled by the AAMC and provided to the work group. The work group reviewed the survey results and utilized the answers to guide the initial conversations around restructuring the good standing document. The work group agreed that the previous document, while providing a good foundation, was conflicting.

The work group met bi-weekly over the span of three months. During the meetings, the work group considered the following questions:

1. What is the importance of good standing?
2. How do students lose and return to good standing?
3. Who at an institution makes decisions regarding good standing?
4. What is the role of professionalism in good standing?
5. How does good standing impact eligibility for outside electives?
6. How do the Department of Education regulations on Satisfactory Academic Progress relate to good standing?

The work group came to the consensus that each school should define good standing at their institution. As such, the work group is providing guidelines to facilitate the development of an effective good standing policy, rather than a blanket definition of good standing. These guidelines should serve as a foundation allowing institutions to assess their good standing policy. Additionally, the work group encourages collaboration among financial aid and registrar offices in defining good standing.

**Good Standing** often denotes that a student has met the academic and professionalism requirements of the medical school and is eligible to continue enrollment, re-enroll, or transfer elsewhere.

While each institution has the discretion to define what constitutes a student in good standing, the following effective practices should be incorporated into an institution's policy:

- A good standing policy should have clear requirements.
  - Criteria can include:
    - Measures of academic performance such as a GPA or a defined number of course failures
    - Progression to next the academic year
    - Making satisfactory progress towards degree completion
    - USMLE exam results
- Professionalism may be part of the criteria for good standing.
  - Criteria can include:
    - Adherence to published professionalism standards, ethical standards, policies/rules, etc.
    - Adherence to behavioral and/or ethical standards of the medical profession

Good standing policies should be published and accessible.

A good standing policy should include specific information such as how a student loses good standing and how a student regains good standing as well as who is responsible for making those decisions. Schools should have a process to inform students of changes to their standing and the effects thereof. These effects could include impacts on the ability to participate in extramural and/or extracurricular activities.

Students in a **probationary status** are not generally considered in good standing until they have successfully completed the requirements to remove the status. However, students in an “at-risk” or “warning” status (less severe than probation) are still considered in good standing despite facing additional scrutiny or requirements, so long as the student is successfully working towards removing the status.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and Good Standing

Students who receive federal aid must meet standards for SAP. Good standing policies should be aligned with SAP policies. Registrars should develop a process to communicate with their financial aid office to inform them of students who are not meeting, or are in danger of not meeting SAP.

Consult with your financial aid office regarding your institution's SAP policy.

## Appendix A – COSR Good Standing Survey

### Email Communication:

On behalf of the Group on Student Affairs – Committee on Student Records (GSA-COSR), the AAMC is conducting this survey regarding good standing policies. Your responses will be instrumental in helping us construct a best practices document on good standing. We greatly appreciate your participation.

Link to survey: <https://surveys.aamc.org/se.ashx?s=7C7E87CB092D8131>

Participating in this activity is voluntary. This survey will take 10 - 20 minutes to complete. If you are not able to respond to this survey, please forward it to the person at your institution that can best provide the information requested. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Keith Krosinsky, [kkrosinsky@aamc.org](mailto:kkrosinsky@aamc.org).

### Survey Contents:

Institution Name:

What is your school grading scheme? (Grades, Pass/Fail, hybrid, etc.)

### Good Standing Questions:

1. Does your school have a good standing policy? If so, what is it?
2. Does your good standing policy include academic and non-academic (i.e. professionalism) requirements?
3. Does your school report when a student is not in good standing? If so, where? (MSPE, licensing docs, transcript, etc.)
4. When is a student NOT in good academic standing at your institution? (ie. Repeating a year, academic probation, etc.)
5. Are there any restrictions placed on students that are NOT in good standing? (ex. Class Officer, club President etc.)
6. How does a student regain good standing? Who makes the decision to place a student back in good standing?

### Academic Probation Questions:

7. Does your school have an academic probation policy? If so, what is it?
8. Does your school report academic probation? If so, where? (MSPE, licensing docs, transcript, etc.)
9. Other Questions:
10. Does your medical school registrar attend promotion/progress meetings?

Do you have any additional comments or questions about good standing?

## Appendix B - Previous Good Standing Document



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### Good Standing Best Practices Committee on Student Records

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Fundamentally, the status of being in good standing is a classification that indicates that the student is eligible to continue, to return, or to transfer elsewhere. It implies good academic standing as well as good citizenship. While each institution has the discretion to define what constitutes a student in good standing, the following best practices should be incorporated into any institution's policies.

- Good standing policies must have clear, objective criteria and not be based on subjective decisions. The criteria should be related to the student's academic performance and progression through the curriculum.
  - Common criteria are:
    - Grade point average (i.e. greater than a 2.0)
    - Enrollment history as it pertains to their expected graduation date. For example, a student is not in good standing if the student is not promoted to the next level at the expected or reasonable point in the curriculum. The criteria must also stipulate how the student re-gains the status of good standing.
  - Academic probation should not be part of the criteria for determining good standing.
  - Professionalism issues should not be part of the criteria for good standing unless the student is dismissed due to professionalism issues. From a practical standpoint, whether or not the student is in good standing is rather obvious since the student is no longer enrolled and did not complete the curriculum.
  - Professionalism issues should be addressed in the MSPE and not part of good standing criteria. It is advisable that the institution's policies on reporting in the MSPE be fully disclosed to students.
  - If a disciplinary action is part of your good standing criteria, it should only change the student's official status once the student has exhausted the appeal process.
- A student NOT in good standing should be considered a serious and permanent category. It should not be used while a student is on probation at your institution.
- Good standing policies should be published and accessible to students and individuals where the good standing status is reported.
- Institutions should have only one set of criteria for good standing and not have different criteria based on where the status is being reported. This will help minimize situations susceptible to a student grievance or ambiguity.
- A common philosophical consideration when developing a policy is that if a student is considered "good enough" to be enrolled at your institution, they should be considered in good standing.
- If an institution has concerns about sending a student to an away rotation, research opportunity, or some other activity where the receiving institution requires the student to be at good standing at their home institution to participate, the good standing status should not be used to prevent the student to participate. Rather the home institution has the discretion to not sanction the student to participate and/or advise them that it is not in the best interest to participate.
- Good standing status can be considered directory information according to FERPA which means it needs to be listed as directory information in your student records policies. If not, you need a release from the student in accordance with your student records policies to release good standing information to a third party.