Academic Information and Policies

Below are some of Ross University School of Medicine’s academic policies on student registration, evaluation, promotion, and related matters. Students are advised to review the Student Handbook and take note of faculty announcements in each course.

Registration
Registration must be completed no later than 30 days before classes start for each semester. Students who register after the first day of class will be considered as having registered late and subject to a late registration fee.

No student may register unless all documents required for matriculation have been received by Ross University. New students enrolled in the Basic Sciences Curriculum must confirm their registration in person on the island before classes begin. No unregistered student will be admitted to classes.

Continuing students must register early for the ensuing semester during the period designated, and must subsequently confirm their registration in person at the beginning of each semester on campus. All students must confirm registration.

Students in the Clinical Sciences Curriculum register through the Office of the Dean of Clinical Sciences.

Promotions Committee
All academic matters, including grading policies and academic standards, while students are pursuing the basic sciences portion of the curriculum (the first two academic years), are within the purview of the University’s Promotions Committee. This committee acts within the framework of the policies set forth herein. It is a faculty committee, whose recommendations are transmitted to the Dean or his designee. The decision of the Dean or his designee, after consultation with the Promotions Committee, is final.

Evaluation and Grades
The basic sciences courses are graded: Pass, A, B+, B, C+, C or F. The passing grade in all courses in the segment is B; C is marginally passing and F is a failing grade. Students should aim to maintain a B average during the Basic Sciences Curriculum. This predicts high passing rates and high scores on the USMLE Step 1. Students who pass all their required courses with grades of A, B, C, or Pass are eligible for promotion.

During the Clinical Sciences Curriculum, students are evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is failing, and 5 is excellent. Evaluations during the Clinical Sciences Curriculum include an assessment not only of the student's fund of knowledge and ability to apply it to clinical problems, but also of those characteristics considered desirable in a good physician. These characteristics include problem-solving ability; reliability; judgment; interpersonal relations with peers, patients, and staff; professional skills (history taking and patient examination); and motivation. A final exam concludes each core clerkship, and the exam is administered at the hospital training site.
Examinations
The examinations monitor the progress of students and evaluate the quality of
instruction. Examinations are an integral part of the learning process and, as such, are
designed to emphasize important concepts and to develop problem-solving abilities. The
policies governing examinations are found in the Student Handbook.

A student found to have violated the Honor Code is subject to Dismissal after review by
the Grievance Committee of Ross University School of Medicine.

Monitoring of Student Progress
At appropriate points in the educational process, the faculty reviews the progress of
each student in order to identify any academic difficulties that may exist or are
developing. To be in good standing, students in the Basic Sciences and Clinical
Sciences Segments must comply with all academic rules and regulations and remain
current in financial obligations.

Students successfully completing and passing all the basic sciences courses and the
National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) Comprehensive Basic Sciences ‘Shelf’
Examination (COMP), will be eligible for certification to take the USMLE Step 1. A
student who does not pass the COMP is given two subsequent opportunities to take and
pass the COMP in order to certify for Step 1.

Students who fail to achieve a passing grade on the COMP at the end Semester 4 will
be permitted to move to Miami and register for the AICM course, but will be required to
retake the COMP at the end of the AICM segment.

Students must take and pass all basic science courses, COMP, AICM, and USMLE Step
1, otherwise they cannot proceed into the core or elective clinical clerkships in U.S.
hospitals. Students who are certified to take the USMLE Step 1 must register and take it
within six months of becoming eligible. Students who become eligible to take the
USMLE at a later date, and those who do not pass the USMLE Step 1, must take or
retake the USMLE within four months after they become eligible or after they receive
notification that they did not pass the USMLE on their first or second trials.

Ross University School of Medicine’s policies provide that students must pass the
USMLE in no more than three attempts.

Students are required to pass the USMLE Step 1, and the USMLE Step 2 CK and CS
examinations in order to be eligible to receive the M.D. degree from Ross University
School of Medicine.

USMLE regulations require that to be eligible to take the USMLE Step 2, students must
be within one year of graduation. Currently, Ross University policy provides that in order
to be eligible to take the USMLE Step 2, students must have completed a minimum 48
weeks of clinical training (including the 12 weeks of the AICM segment) which must
include the majority of core clinical clerkships, including Internal Medicine.
Students are required to adhere to the “Good Standing and Satisfactory Progress” standards described in full in the Student Handbook. Satisfactory Academic Progress is defined as an acceptable level of performance in meeting degree requirements within specified time periods.

The standards are used in both academic evaluation and in determination of financial aid eligibility. Satisfactory Academic Progress requires completion of the basic sciences portion of the curriculum in six semesters or less, and completion of the clinical sciences portion in no more than seven semesters of attendance. Thus, the maximum length for completion of the entire program is 13 semesters. Students must complete the entire Doctor of Medicine program in no more than 225 weeks (4.3 calendar years) of enrollment. There are also limits on the total time that each segment must be completed, including all periods of absences (see Student Handbook).

Class Attendance
Students must attend all classes. Attendance is mandatory for all laboratory sessions, case studies/problem-based learning conferences and the “Introduction to Clinical Medicine” course in the Basic Sciences Segment. Daily attendance is also mandatory in all clinical clerkships.

Probation
Students may be placed on academic or behavioral probation.

“Academic Probation” is determined based on course work and recommended by the Promotions Committee to the Executive Dean.

Students are on academic probation while they are repeating basic sciences courses in remedial semesters or repeating previously failed clinical training periods. Students on academic probation are also placed on financial aid probation for one semester. During this probationary semester, students may obtain financial aid. If students are not removed from probationary status the following semester, they will be ineligible to obtain any aid. Additional financial aid eligibility information is provided in the University publication, “Ways & Means of Financial Aid.”

Students may be placed on behavioral probation at the recommendation of the Grievance Committee or the Honor Council with concurrence of the Grievance Committee with the approval of the Executive Dean. Behavioral probation is determined based on a student’s behavior violating one of the requirements in the Student Handbook. As a term of probation, a student may be required to undergo a physical, psychological or other examination.

Appeals Process
Students may appeal final grades and decisions affecting their promotion. The appeals process is outlined in the Student Handbook.
Faculty Advisors
During enrollment, each student is assigned to a faculty advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their advisors for counseling on academic or other University issues.

Emergency Absences, Vacations, and Academic Leaves of Absence
Emergency absences are granted under extraordinary and well-documented circumstances. Students are advised to consult with the Dean of Student Affairs or the Dean of Clinical Sciences, as appropriate, to discuss their plans for any interruption of their studies and its academic impact. Those receiving student loans must also contact the Financial Aid Office; for additional information see the University publication “Ways & Means of Financial Aid.”

During the clinical semesters, students must also abide by the policies and procedures of the institutions they are attending. Short breaks due to scheduling constraints may occur. Such breaks due to scheduling issues, provided they do not exceed four weeks, have no impact on the student’s enrollment status. (Consult the publication, “Ways & Means of Financial Aid,” for information about loan disbursements in the event of longer gaps.)

Emergency Absences
Students may have unavoidable non-academic reasons for interrupting their enrollment during a semester. With the approval of the Executive Dean, a student may be granted a brief emergency absence.

Students who find it impossible to return from an emergency absence must request an academic leave of absence (ALOA). Failure to request an ALOA will result in administrative withdrawal and the student must apply for re-admission.

Academic Leave of Absence
A student may request an Academic Leave of Absence (ALOA) for personal reasons that do not meet the requirements for an emergency absence. An ALOA must be requested in writing, can only be taken at certain points (at the end of a semester or clinical clerkship) during the student’s academic tenure, must be approved by the Executive Dean or Dean of Clinical Sciences, and submitted to the University Registrar. Students who do not return from an ALOA at the specified time will be administratively withdrawn, effective at the start of the ALOA period.

Unauthorized Leaves
With the exception of approved emergency absences as outlined above, students may not leave during a semester or a scheduled clinical clerkship. Those who do so will be administratively withdrawn. Students wishing to return to the University after an unauthorized leave must re-apply for admission.

Withdrawals
Students who have been withdrawn (by student or administrative action) must apply for re-admission if they wish to return to the University. A re-admission must be reviewed by the Promotions Committee and is not guaranteed. If a student is re-admitted, he will be
subject to all academic policies and tuition and fees in effect, without any “grandfathering” provisions based on his original admission.

**Student Withdrawals**
Students may not withdraw from any single course during a semester; they must withdraw completely from the University. Such students will receive W, WP, or WF on their transcripts, depending on whether they were passing or failing a course at the time of their withdrawal, as specified under the “Student Grading and Promotions Policies” section of the Student Handbook. The same grading policies apply to students who do not formally withdraw, but fail to attend classes and/or laboratories during a semester, and are therefore withdrawn administratively.

**Administrative Withdrawals**
The University Registrar enters an administrative withdrawal in the student’s record when any of the following apply. The student:

- leaves Ross University, after one semester ends and before the next one begins, without applying and receiving an approved academic leave of absence,
- does not return at the specified time for the end of an approved leave,
- does not return to Dominica to register for the following semester and to attend week one semester classes.

**Deferrals**
Prior to the start of classes, students admitted to a specific semester may request to defer their admission to a subsequent semester. This is limited to no more than the next two semesters. Those who do not begin enrollment during that period are considered to have deactivated their applications and must re-apply for admission. Applications for deferrals must be made to the New Jersey Admissions Office. Students deferring to a future semester must meet all the requirements in effect for that semester.

Entering students, who, following their initial registration, wish to defer their enrollment to the following semester may do so through the Dean’s Office in Dominica, only during week one of the semester.

Students who are admitted for a given semester, and do not arrive or attend campus registration for that semester, and do not request a deferral are considered to have deactivated their applications and must re-apply for admission.

**Dismissal**
Students may be dismissed from Ross University for poor academic performance, violation of the *Honor Code*, and/or for disruptive or unprofessional behavior. As a general Ross University policy, students who are dismissed will not be considered for re-admission. A process for appeal is available to dismissed students (see *Student Handbook*).
Professional Conduct, Ethics
Ross University School of Medicine expects its students to adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior in every aspect of their lives, as they are expected to do as medical professionals. Medical students must demonstrate professional behavior that is expected of a physician.

Students must conduct all aspects of their lives with honesty, integrity, and respect for others. Students have adopted an Honor Code and each student is bound by its provisions and is required to sign a written acknowledgement of receipt. Documented failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from Ross University.

Cheating (whether on examinations or with laboratory data), undisclosed knowledge of cheating, stealing (whether from the Library or from fellow students), and plagiarism cannot be tolerated and can lead to expulsion from Ross University.

Disciplinary Actions
Ross University may implement a variety of disciplinary actions for non-academic infractions such as, but not limited to: theft, vandalism, assault, illicit drug use, animal neglect, or any blatant disregard for University policies, faculty/administrative authority, or professional ethics. These actions consist of verbal reprimand, letter of reprimand, restitution, suspension, and expulsion.

Students have the right to appeal all non-academic disciplinary actions to the President of Ross University. See the Student Handbook for additional information.

Grievances
All students and faculty members have the right to present grievances to the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee is the investigative and judicial arm of the Executive Dean's Office. The Grievance Committee has authority over all matters referred by the Dean, Associate Deans, Student Government Association, or any individual student or faculty member, involving, but not limited to, violations of the professional conduct standards.

Anti-Hazing Policy
Ross University School of Medicine hereby asserts unequivocally our opposition to hazing and pre-initiation activities, which do not contribute to the positive development and welfare of students. We define hazing as any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off University premises, with or without consent, to produce excessive physical fatigue, embarrassment, or public ridicule or possibly cause mental or physical harm or injury. Such activities and situations include paddling in any form; physical and psychological shocks; publicly wearing apparel which is not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts or other activities which may be harmful to the image of the University; morally degrading or humiliating activities, including eating and swallowing of any food or beverage or any activity that might violate any local, state, or federal law; late work sessions which interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with the University's code of conduct, or other regulations and policies of the University. Violations of this policy will be dealt with judiciously by the University and sanctions may include suspension or dismissal from the University.
Honor Code
The Student Government Association of the School of Medicine adopted an Honor Code whose jurisdiction extends to all students. This Code is based on principles of medical ethics and the Hippocratic Oath. The purpose of the Code is to foster habits of honesty and morality, which graduates will then carry with them into their professional lives. The Honor Code is fully set forth in the Student Handbook. Each student is required to sign a written acknowledgement of receipt of the Honor Code.

Graduation Planning
In order to be eligible to receive the degree Doctor of Medicine from Ross University School of Medicine, a student must have met the following requirements:

- Successful completion of all courses in the Basic Sciences Curriculum
- Successful completion of all courses and clerkships in the Clinical Sciences Curriculum. The core and elective clerkships as specified by the Dean of the Clinical Sciences, and taken in approved hospitals.
- Passing Steps 1 and 2 of the USMLE.
- Payment of all fees and charges owed to the University.
- Completion of a review of academic documents, as well as academic and financial aid exit interview.

Transcript Requests
Official transcripts are available only from the Registrar. Students may obtain a transcript request form from the Registrar or from www.rossmed.edu. The Campus Registrar will forward requests to the Registrar in New Jersey. Requests cannot be taken over the telephone or via e-mail. Students in the Basic Sciences Segment will receive a student copy of their transcript when received in Dominica. Transcripts will not be released until all financial obligations to the University have been met.

Commencement
Commencement exercises are held each year in New York City. Diplomas are received at the end of the month after which the student completes the graduation requirements. Diplomas will not be released unless all outstanding balances, administrative documents, clinical evaluations, and scores from USMLE Steps 1 and 2 have been received.