

Model Hospital Policy on Academic and Disciplinary Dismissals

In July, 1993, the Board of Trustees of the American Osteopathic Association adopted the following policy:

The hospital and department have clearly defined procedures for academic and disciplinary action. Academic dismissals result from a failure to attain a proper level of scholarship or non-cognitive skills, including clinical abilities, interpersonal relations, and/or personal and professional characteristics. Institutional standards of conduct include such issues as cheating, plagiarism, falsifying records, stealing, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or any other inappropriate actions or activities.

In cases of academic dismissal, the hospital and department will inform trainees, orally and in writing, of inadequacies and their effects on academic standing. The trainee will be provided a specified period in which to implement specified actions required to resolve academic deficiencies. Following this period, if academic deficiencies persist, the trainee may be placed on probation for a period of three (3) to six (6) months. The trainee may be dismissed following this period, if deficiencies remain and are judged to be unremediable. In accordance with institutional policy, the trainee will be provided an opportunity to meet with evaluators to appeal decisions regarding probation or dismissal. Legal counsel at hearings concerning academic issues will not be allowed.

In cases of disciplinary infractions that are judged unremediable, the hospital and department will provide the trainee with adequate notice, in writing, of specific ground(s) and the nature of the evidence on which the disciplinary action is based. The trainee will be given an opportunity for a hearing in which the disciplinary authority will provide a fair opportunity for the trainee's position, explanations and evidence. Finally, no disciplinary action will be taken on grounds which are not supported by substantial evidence. The department and/or hospital intern training committee, or house staff education committee, or other appropriate committees will act as the disciplinary authority. Trainees may be allowed counsel at hearings concerning disciplinary issues. Pending proceedings on such disciplinary action, the hospital in its sole discretion may suspend the trainee, when it is believed that such suspension is in the best interests of the hospital or of patient care.

The above policies are a model. Programs should adhere to institutional disciplinary procedures where they exist.