



MAXIMUM PROGRAM DURATION POLICY

EFFECTIVE DATE:	5/13/2024	NEXT REVIEW:	2/1/2026
APPROVAL:	Policy Committee, CAC, Faculty Assembly	DATE:	3/21/2024
CATEGORY:	Academic		
APPLIES TO:	Students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Program		
CONTACT:	COM Registrar		

REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES:

- Element 6.3, Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) Standards for Continuing Accreditation (effective 2023)
 - See also: MSUCOM Policy on Retention, Promotion, and Graduation
 - See also: MSUCOM Policy on COMLEX-USA
 - See also: MSUCOM Policy on Extension
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PURPOSE

This policy describes the duration of the standard program leading to the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine and defines the maximum allowable time for completion of all program requirements. The process for monitoring satisfactory progression in the program is outlined, as well as the process for consideration of exceptions to the maximum duration of training.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Standard duration of the DO program

The DO program is designed to be four (4) years in duration, consisting of the preclerkship curriculum (OMS-I and OMS-II) and the clerkship curriculum (OMS-III and OMS-IV). Program duration will be monitored as academic years. An academic year is defined as the period of consecutive summer, fall, and spring semesters.

Curriculum Phases, Segments, and Semesters

The program is organized into fall, spring, and summer semesters. The DO program begins in the summer semester of the first year (OMS-I) and ends in the spring semester of the fourth year (OMS-IV).

1. The preclerkship phase consists of six consecutive semesters, beginning with summer semester of the OMS-I year (semester 1) and continues through spring semester of the OMS-II year (semester 6).
 - a. OMS-I
 - b. OMS-II

2. The clerkship phase begins in summer semester (semester 7) and continues through spring semester of the OMS-IV year.
 - a. OMS-III
 - b. OMS-IV

3. A student's duration in the program begins with matriculation which is the first day of semester 1 and is inclusive of all periods thereafter, including active enrollment in the DO curriculum, academic extensions, and leaves of absence, and ends with program completion or termination through discontinuation or dismissal.
 - a. For most students, degree conferral will take place in the spring semester of OMS-IV, and on an official conferral date determined by the university's schedule. Delays in completion of program requirements may result in degree conferral at the end of summer semester (August) or fall semester (December), on official conferral dates determined by the university.

Maximum duration of the DO program

1. The maximum duration for completion of degree requirements for the DO program is six academic years from the date of matriculation which is the first day of semester one; e.g., 150 percent of the standard program duration.
2. To ensure that candidates for the DO degree meet the academic and professional standards of the program, and in compliance with COCA accreditation requirements, the College will enforce a maximum duration of six academic years for completion of all DO program requirements.

Timely progression in the DO program

1. Because of the sequential design of the program, a student will be expected to make timely progress through the preclerkship and clerkship curricula and complete the DO program in the standard four years.
 - a. After completing semester 6 courses in OMS-II, the student is expected to take COMLEX- USA Level 1 by the college's deadline and progress to clerkship in semester 7 of the same year (see COMLEX policy for more details).
 - b. Extensions to the program beyond four years will result from a personal leave of absence or academic extension (please see the extension policy for more details).
 - i. A leave of absence may be requested by the student due to personal issues.
 - ii. An academic extension occurs when a student does not meet an academic requirement that is only offered once a year, typically in the preclerkship curriculum and will join the next class year. For example, if a student fails and must retake a course that is offered in fall semester, they would be on academic extension for the following spring and summer semesters and would resume core curriculum enrollment in fall semester.
 1. A student who will resume instruction following a leave of absence or academic extension may be subject to additional requirements prior to or in the semester of return, including but not limited to enrollment in other courses due to changes in the curriculum or activities to maintain and refresh clinical skills.
 2. A failure of the first attempt of COMLEX-USA Level 1 will prevent a student from progressing to clerkship and the student will be placed on academic extension. The student will be expected to pass with a maximum of three attempts on COMLEX- USA Level 1, and within one year of their first attempt to progress in the

program. Please refer to the COMLEX policy for more details.

- iii. Timely progression in the program will be monitored by the Office of the COM Registrar. A student who extends their program due to leave of absence or academic extension will be notified of their cumulative time in the program and the remaining time needed to complete degree requirements.

Exceptions to the six-year maximum duration

The College notes that in some cases, extenuating circumstances may cause a student to exceed the six-year maximum duration and defines the following criteria and process for consideration of exceptions to this policy.

1. Criteria to seek an exception:
 - a. The student must be in good academic standing which includes a review of academic performance, professionalism, and timely progression throughout the program.
 - b. The student must submit a written request for an exception to the six-year maximum to the Office of the COM Registrar.
2. Extenuating circumstances that may be considered:
 - a. Personal leave of absence related to health issues.
 - b. Parental leave associated with the birth or adoption of a child.
 - c. Family leave associated with a significant medical or personal issue.
3. Process:
 - a. The Office of the COM Registrar will review the written request for the exception to determine if it meets the criteria. If criteria are not met, the student will be informed in writing.
 - i. The student will have the right to resubmit the request if the original was incomplete.
 - b. Approved requests will be forwarded to the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE) for review and action. The student may be asked to meet with the COSE to discuss the exception request.
 - i. If the COSE does not allow the exception, and the result is a recommendation for dismissal, the student will have the right to file a grievance on procedural grounds, as defined in Article 5 of the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities. The student may not challenge dismissal based on academic performance, including the rejection of an exception where significant academic deficiencies have contributed to program extension.
 - c. The student will be informed in writing of the disposition of the COSE and the terms of the approved exception. Alternatively, if the request for an exception to the maximum duration is not approved, a recommendation for dismissal will be initiated and the student will be advised of their rights under the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities.
 - d. The Office of the COM Registrar will maintain detailed documentation of the request, findings, and will monitor for completion of degree requirements within the terms established by the COSE.

Dual- or combined-degree programs

1. When a student is enrolled in the DO degree program and another graduate degree program, they will be expected to complete all DO program requirements within four to six years.
2. Progression toward other degrees, including PhD and master's degrees, will be defined by

the individual program and monitored by the respective graduate committee.

Program completion data and reporting

1. The Office of the COM Registrar will track the number of students who complete the DO program in four, five, and six years, and will provide an annual report of these statistics to the Curriculum Committee and the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE).
2. Program completion data will be made available on the MSUCOM website.