

Office of Medical Education
Division of Academic Affairs
Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University

SOP #

1

Version #

12

Implementation Date

7.18.22

Heading:

Distinction Track Standard Operating Procedures

Last Reviewed/Update Date

05.22.25

Approval by DT Leadership

05.22.2

Distinction Track Standard Operating Procedures

Rationale

As a participant in the Brody School of Medicine Distinction Track Program, you understand that it is a privilege to be named a distinction track scholar. The para-curricular, longitudinal programs provide an opportunity for you to explore an area of interest beyond the medical school curriculum. You will be held in high regard by faculty, peers, leadership, and the community. For these reasons, we have developed and subscribe the following procedures and guidelines for your years of distinction track participation.

The Distinction Track program leadership reserves the right to adjust the standard operating procedure provisions as deemed necessary.

General Provisions Defined by Standard Operating Procedure

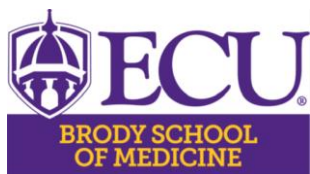
Academic Standing

It is a privilege to be a BSOM Distinction Track Scholar. You must remain in good academic standing as defined by the Student Affairs policy and the provisions below set forth by Distinction Track Program Leadership.

By accepting the offer to participate in a Distinction Track Program, you agree to the following terms:

1. Information regarding academic standing will be communicated to Track leadership by promotion and review committees.
2. Track leadership may access your academic transcripts at any time to confirm academic progress in order to support your success as a medical student.

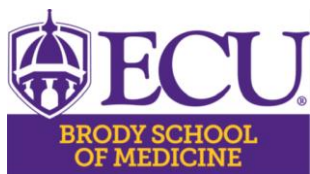
In response to any of the circumstances listed below, you must first notify your track director and Jenna Garris. The distinction track program administration will assist with scheduling a meeting with the Distinction Track Program Leadership Committee to discuss the factors that impacted your ability to remain in good academic standing and continued participation in the Distinction Track Program. This discussion must occur before the next scheduled Track activity.



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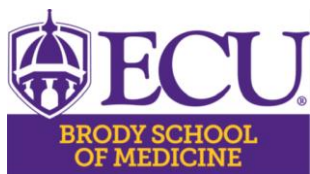
Grounds for Dismissal <i>May be appealed to the Distinction Track Leadership Committee</i>	
Action	Outcome
1. Two shelf exam failures while on clinical rotations	<p>In response to one shelf exam failure requiring remediation, the student will receive a warning letter and is allowed to remain in the track.</p> <p>In response to a second shelf exam failure, the student will receive a dismissal letter which they can appeal to the distinction track leadership committee. After two shelf failures with successful remediation, a third shelf failure requiring resolution will result in dismissal from the track without the option to appeal. After two shelf failures with successful remediation, any future course, clerkship, or Step failure, missed assignment or unexcused absence will result in dismissal without the option to appeal.</p>
2. Three thread failures in the M2 year	<p>In response to two thread failures requiring resolution, the student will receive a warning letter and allowed to remain in the track. In response to a third thread failure, the student will receive a dismissal letter which they can appeal to the distinction track leadership committee. After three thread failures with successful resolution, a fourth thread failure requiring resolution will result in dismissal from the track without the option to appeal. After three thread failures with successful resolution, any future thread, course, clerkship, Step, or shelf exam failure, missed assignment or unexcused absence will result in dismissal without the option to appeal.</p>
3. Step 2 Clinical Knowledge exam failure	<p>In response to a Step 2 Clinical Knowledge exam failure, the student will receive a warning letter and is allowed to remain in the track. In response to a second Step 2 Clinical Knowledge exam failure, the student will receive a dismissal letter which they can</p>



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	appeal to the distinction track leadership committee.
4. More than two unexcused absences or “no shows” from any scheduled meeting or event without prior notice and approval	In response to one unexcused absence without prior notice or approval, the student will receive a warning letter and will be allowed to remain in the track. In response to a second unexcused absence without prior notice or approval, the student will need to complete the Distinction Track LIPPMR form and meet with the distinction track program leadership. In response to a third unexcused absence, the student will receive a dismissal without the option to appeal.
5. Missing more than two assignments or deliverable deadlines (i.e. progress reports, etc.)	In response to one missed assignment, the student will receive a warning letter and will be allowed to remain in the track. In response to a second missed assignment or deliverable, the student will need to complete the Distinction Track LIPPMR form and meet with the distinction track program leadership. In response to a third missed assignment or deliverable, the student will receive a dismissal letter without the option to appeal.
6. Failure to comply with professionalism standards	In response to a professionalism referral, the student will receive a warning letter and will need to complete the Distinction Track LIPPMR form and meet with the distinction track program leadership. More than one professionalism referral will result in dismissal without the option to appeal.
Grounds for Dismissal <i>No option to appeal</i>	
Action	Outcome
1. Course, clerkship, or more than three thread or two shelf exam failures	In response to a course, clerkship, more than three thread or two shelf exam failures, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.



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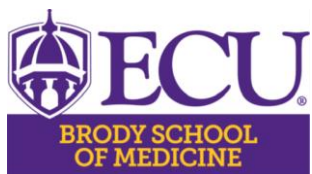
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2. Required remediation of any course in Blocks 2 through 4	In response to required remediation of any course in Blocks 2 through 4, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
3. Two un-remediated shelf examinations requiring repeat of M3 year	In response to two un-remediated shelf examinations requiring repeat of the M3 year, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
4. Step 1 Failure	In response to a Step 1 failure, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
5. Lack of progress on longitudinal distinction track project for two consecutive reporting periods (i.e. six months of no work)	In response to lack of progress on longitudinal distinction track project for two consecutive reporting periods, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
6. Failure to meet capstone requirements	In response to failing to meet capstone requirements, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
7. Referral from Promotion and Review to the BSOM Conduct Committee for any reason	In response to a referral from Promotion and Review to the BSOM Conduct Committee, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.
8. Any official sanction from the school	In response to receiving any official sanction from the school, the student will receive a dismissal letter which cannot be appealed to the distinction track leadership committee.

Additional Information:

1. **Number of Appeals:**

Students are limited to submitting two appeals to the Distinction Track Leadership Committee throughout the M2 through M4 years.



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2. **Meetings with Distinction Track Program Leadership:**

Arrangements to meet with the Distinction Track Program Leadership to discuss continued participation must be made through the Distinction Track Program Administrator, Jenna Garris. Prior to the scheduled meeting, you must complete the Distinction Track Learning Improvement Plan Pre-Meeting Reflection (LIPPMR) form which can be downloaded from the Distinction Track program [website](#). *Please note, this LIPPMR form is different from the form provided by OSSaW.*

Leave of Absence

Any student who takes an approved leave of absence, is allowed to remain in the Distinction Track Program. An exception would be an academic LOA as that would contradict the dismissal criteria for the Distinction Track Programs. The student must notify the track director and distinction track program administrator of the approved leave of absence as modifications to meet program requirements may be necessary.

Any student who takes an approved leave of absence for extended Step 1 preparation, will need additional modifications to meet the clinical curriculum requirements.

The modifications to meet the clinical curriculum construct are:

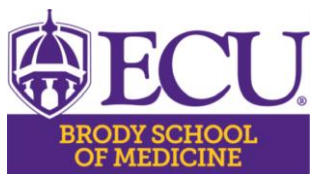
- You will not be able to complete any non-clinical electives in the M3 year.
- You will need to complete a clinical elective after your OB and Psychiatry clerkships which will afford you 2 weeks of non-clinical elective time in the M4 year for the mandatory capstone in Block 13A.
- You will only have 2 weeks of non-clinical time in the M4 year. This time must be allotted to complete the mandatory Distinction Track capstone Block 13A.
- You must fulfill all Distinction Track program requirements on time including completion of assignments upon your return to the curriculum.

In the event you need to utilize two weeks of elective time in the M3 year to remediate a shelf failure, you have the following options:

1. Utilize 2 weeks of flex time to complete the mandatory capstone elective in Block 13A
2. Appeal to the Clinical Curriculum Committee for additional 2 weeks of non-clinical elective time
3. Complete 2 weeks of clinical elective after graduation ceremony date
4. Withdraw from track as you will be unable to fulfill the distinction track program requirements

Additional Leave of Absence Guidance for Medical Education and Teaching Distinction Track Scholars:

- You will not be able to complete any non-clinical electives in the M3 year.



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- You will only have 2 weeks of non-clinical time in the M4 year. This time must be allotted to complete the mandatory Distinction Track Capstone Block 13A.
- You will need to utilize 2 weeks of flex time to complete the independent study capstone elective (student selected).
- If you are unable to utilize an additional 2 weeks of flex time, you can choose to complete an additional Education for Healthcare Professions approved program elective in the M3 or M4 years.

In the event you need to utilize two weeks of elective time in the M3 year to remediate a shelf failure, you have the following options:

1. Utilize 2 weeks of flex time to complete the mandatory capstone elective in Block 13A.
2. Appeal to the Clinical Curriculum Committee for additional 2 weeks of non-clinical elective time.
3. Complete 2 weeks of clinical elective after graduation ceremony date.
4. Withdraw from track as you will be unable to fulfill the distinction track program requirements.

Professionalism

I. Time Management

- We have made an effort to schedule track activities around exams and other curricular priorities.
- You are responsible for and expected to effectively manage individual track related activities such as assignments, project development, and mentor meetings.
- You are expected to be on time to each scheduled meeting or event. If you are going to be late you must let your track leader and the Distinction Track Program Administrator know as soon as possible. Tardiness will result in a meeting with your track leader.

II. Communication

- Communication is essential and expected. You are responsible for communicating all aspects that may impact or impede your distinction track participation to your track director and/or the distinction track program administrator. This includes but not limited to, academic standing concerns (i.e. exam failures), absences, tardies, mentor concerns/updates, assignment completion, etc.



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III. Dress Code

- Business Casual attire is acceptable for most events (lectures, small group sessions, etc.)
- White Coats and professional dress (including closed-toe shoes) for clinical settings, guest speakers, presentations, etc.
- Activity-specific attire for service events (i.e. leadership development activities, active service events, community clean up, food bank sorting, etc.)
- Refer to the Student Affairs [Standards of Professional Dress](#) for additional information.

IV. Assignment Deadlines

- As a part of Distinction Track participation, there are certain required pre- and post-assessments, progress reports, or other assignments that must be completed. Completion of assignments and surveys is essential to determine programmatic outcomes. Assignments will be posted on your Track's learning management page with a deadline. Failure to adhere to deadlines for required work may result in dismissal from the Track. Additional information can be found in the Academic Standing section.

V. Use of Artificial Intelligence

- Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2) on assignments in this course. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

VI. Attendance

- Attendance at ALL Track events is **REQUIRED**. DO NOT schedule other events at the same time as Distinction Track events, including summer immersion, M2-M4 progress meetings, and the capstone elective at the end of the M4 year. This is particularly applicable if you serve on other committees (Class Officer, Medical Student Council, Interest Group meetings/officer duties).
- If you are aware of a conflict that cannot be modified, you must submit an absence request form: <https://redcap.ecu.edu/surveys/?s=98X7ETARYTTX48MM> and notify your Track leader and Distinction Track Program Administrator/Course Coordinator as soon as possible.



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- Failure to obtain an excused absence and/or communicate with track leadership/program administration in a timely manner may result in dismissal from the track. See page 3 of this document for additional information regarding dismissal.
- Some track activities cannot be made up due to staffing, logistical or other reasons. Although every reasonable effort will be made to afford students the opportunity to make up activities missed, the Distinction Track syllabi addresses how excused absences will be treated when the track related activity cannot be made up.
- You must notify your Track Leader and the Distinction Track Program Administrator of any leave of absence requests that have been approved by Student Affairs (or Promotion and Review).
- The Brody School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs has established attendance procedures that support physical and emotional wellness as well as learning and success for all medical students, including Distinction Track Scholars. Please refer to the [Student Attendance Procedure](#) for more information and to view the categories of excused absences.
- Students who demonstrate a pattern of unprofessional behavior may be referred to OSSaW to develop an action plan to remediate these behaviors. Ongoing issues or particularly egregious lapses in professionalism will result in referral to the promotion and review committee.
- As a Track participant you must adhere to the following policies as defined by the Brody School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs.
[ECU/BSOM Code of Conduct](#)
[Code of Student Conduct](#)
[Code of Student Professional Conduct](#)
[USMLE Exam Procedure](#)

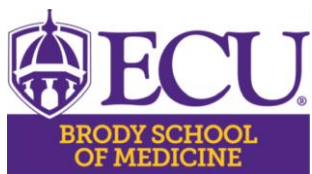
Scholarship Etiquette

VII. Authorship Guidelines

- <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

VIII. Presenting Work

- Abstracts submitted for presentation at a meeting should be based on your own work.
- Under no circumstances may you submit an abstract using someone else's ideas or results.



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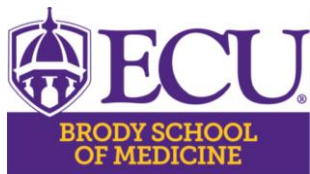
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- All project collaborators, at any stage, should be notified and invited to be involved in formulating the presentation of that work.
- If you are planning to submit an abstract, it is recommended that you notify your mentor and work with them to write and review the submission. Notify your Track leader and the Distinction Track Program Administrator of your intent to submit.
- Most meetings will require that 1 person be the presenter of note. In the event that multiple students are involved on a project to be presented, a discussion of the presenter of note should take place before the abstract is written.

Representing Track

IX. Interacting with the Media

- All external communication regarding official Track activities, including announce messages about upcoming Track-sponsored events **MUST** be approved by your Track leader **before** being sent for general distribution. Please also send a copy of the communication to the Distinction Track Program Administrator.
- All media requests need to go through ECU Health Science Communications' Office. If you want to notify the media about a Distinction Track-related activity or event, you must contact Bobby Ampezzan at ampezzanb24@ecu.edu or 252-744-2232. If the request is urgent or time sensitive, please also copy the Distinction Track Program Administrator to assist in processing the request.
- Interviews with the media are great opportunities to tell the ECU/BSOM/Distinction Track story and to raise positive awareness for our institution and its programs. Be sure to take your time and craft thoughtful answers.
- If a reporter contacts you directly, let the reporter know that all media requests must go through the ECU Health Sciences Communications' Office, contact Bobby Ampezzan at ampezzanb24@ecu.edu or 252-744-2232. Try to respond as quickly as possible but know that accuracy in your response is more important than timeliness.
- When you speak with a reporter, remember that you are representing the university, BSOM and your Track. Be careful not to convey individual opinions that are contrary to the values of these institutions. Assume that everything you say is "on the record" and being recorded. Be mindful of patient privacy considerations. Use humor carefully; what some people consider funny may offend others, especially if taken out of context.
- If you're being interviewed on ECU Health Sciences property, you must be accompanied by a representative of ECU Health Sciences Communications and your Track or faculty



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mentor or their designees. This is due to patient privacy concerns and is an ECU requirement.

- Be yourself and enjoy the interaction, but always feel free to refrain from answering any question with which you are uncomfortable.
- If you are responding in writing, ask a mentor and/or a staff member in ECU Health Sciences Communications to review your response before sharing it.

X. Social Media

- When you are representing the institution, be cautious about posting to social media. You should not share pictures or descriptions of alcohol, “parties” or other compromising or controversial pictures. Residency programs, potential employers, peers and regulatory bodies will be viewing your posts. For additional information, please refer to ECU’s Social Media Policy: <http://www.ecu.edu/PRR/08/10/02>.
- There is a X account for the distinction track programs. You may request to post your work to the @BrodyDistinctly account by completing the following form:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbp6dIdHHFsyresOzb3A6X3IKysr3OkCwBjKbwNtrEvVaWPQ/viewform>
 - X Handle: @BrodyDistinctly
 - X Name: Distinctly Brody

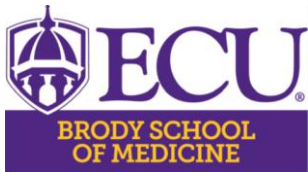
XI. Community Presence

- You are an ambassador of the institution. Choose your words carefully to ensure that what you intend to be helpful advice isn’t misconstrued as criticism. Remember that your actions speak volumes.

Travel Protocol, Requirements, and Distinction Track Funding

XII. Travel Funding Requests

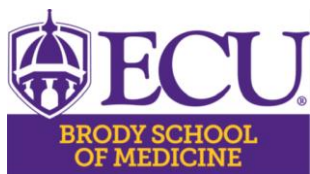
- As a Distinction Track Scholar, you are eligible to apply for funding to support travel to present distinction track related work at local, regional, and national conferences.
- An absence request must be submitted and approved before any travel arrangements are made. **It is recommended that the excused absence is submitted in conjunction with the abstract submission for conference presentation.** Please refer to the Student Affairs [absence policy](#) for more information.
- Excused Absence Request Form: <https://redcap.ecu.edu/surveys/?s=9DL4RRAM97>



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- Once an excused absence is submitted and approved by Student Affairs, complete the funding request form: <https://redcap.ecu.edu/surveys/?s=WFCE8R7ATFF8WLLL>.
- You will need to prepare the following information as it will be required in order to submit a funding request form. Please use the travel checklist provided on the Distinction Track website to ensure your request is accurately prepared.
 - Abstract Acceptance Notification
 - Conference Agenda
 - Registration Information
 - Flight, Mileage, or Rental Car Information
 - Hotel Information
- Once your funding request is approved, an OME staff member will confirm your pre-travel documentation and submit the pre-travel approval in Chrome River.
- You will need to approve your pre-travel request in Chrome River within 24 hours of receiving.
- Once your pre-travel request is approved in Chrome River, an OME team member will process your travel (i.e. registration, flight, hotel) using the documentation you provided in your travel funding request.
- While you are travelling, keep track of all expense receipts. Which may include but are not limited to:
 - Taxi, Uber, Lyft
 - Baggage Fees
 - Final Hotel Folio
 - Parking
- Submit each of your expense receipts separately through the process outlined below:
How to Submit your Receipts:
 - You may forward electronic receipts to the email address below
 - You may take a photo of hard copy receipts and email to the address below
 - Chrome River only accepts PDF or JPG files
 - Submit each expense receipt separately
 - Ensure the receipt shows the total amount paid with a zero balance (Hotel Folio)
 - Send each receipt to <mailto:receipt@ca1.chromeriver.com> **from your ECU email address**
 - Chrome River will automatically store the receipt in your Chrome River account



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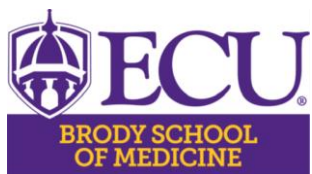
- All travel documentation must be submitted to the Distinction Track Program Administrator within ONE WEEK of the return travel date. Failure to submit travel documentation will result in refusal of reimbursement.
- An OME representative will prepare your travel for reimbursement in Chrome River.
- Once you receive an email to approve your expense report, review your travel expense report in Chrome River for accuracy.
- Approve your travel expense report in Chrome River within 24 hours of receiving.
- Failure to review your expense report for accuracy can result in a rejected expense report.
- All travel requests must be submitted 30 days prior to travel dates to be eligible for funding.
- The amount of funding you will receive for travel is depended upon fund availability. You may submit multiple travel funding requests, pending fund availability.
- Additional travel requests may be submitted and will be considered pending fund availability.
- You are only allowed to request Distinction Track funds for track related activity. Funding requests for activities outside of your distinction track work should be requested through Student Affairs.
- You are responsible for any expenses that exceed the funding amount for travel in which you are approved.

XIII. Project Funding Requests

- You are eligible to apply for funding to support their distinction track related project. A funding request form must be completed by the student and submitted to the Distinction Track Program Administrator.
- Project funding request form: <https://redcap.ecu.edu/surveys/?s=WFCE8R7ATFF8WLLL>
- The form is also on the distinction track website and your distinction track program LMS page.
- Project funding requests may be submitted at any time.
- Funding amount and approval is dependent upon fund availability.
- You may submit multiple requests pending fund availability.

Capstone Schedule Requirements

- As a Track participant, you should plan to take up to 4 weeks of capstone elective time in the M4 year that can be scheduled as two separate 2-week blocks.



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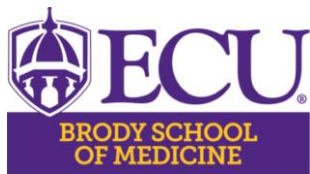
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- **Medical Education and Teaching Distinction Track** scholars are required to take the full four weeks of Distinction Track capstone elective time as the Distinction Track Capstone counts as the third elective for the Education for Healthcare Professions Graduate Certificate.
- If you are progressing well on your project/distinction track, you can choose not to enroll in the first two-week block and use this time for another elective. Additionally, you may choose to take the first two-week block in the M3 year if your schedule permits. You must have written approval from the track leader, and you will be responsible for completing all track requirements in order to graduate with distinction.
- The mandatory two-week Distinction Track Capstone block will be scheduled centrally around the time of the transitions to residency, near the end of the M4 year.
Attendance for the entire two weeks of the capstone is mandatory.
- The capstone course elective is scheduled like the other special permission elective selections in the scheduling software through Student Affairs.
- The capstone elective time may be split into two, two-week blocks or taken as one four-week block. Your track leader and faculty mentor will help guide the time frame for this elective.

General Capstone Information

Independent Self-Study Two Week Block:

- This 2-week block is designed to give you time to finalize your longitudinal projects, analyze data, or begin to draft your manuscript submission for your project.
- There are no true “assignments” during this 2-week block. The activities are self-driven.
- At least TWO-weeks before the START of your 2-week self-study block, you MUST:
 - A. Notify your Track leader of the date you are starting your 2-week self-study block.
 - B. Schedule a meeting with your mentor prior to entering the block to develop a plan for the work during the 2-weeks. This time is NOT to be used as free time, completion of other electives, or to do other things. The mandatory attendance 2-week portion of this Capstone (at the end of the M4 year) arrives quickly and you will be expected to have a near-final draft ready to present during that mandatory block. The mandatory capstone block is not the time to get the ball rolling, but rather to be tying up a few loose ends.
 - C. Submit a timeline for tasks/deliverables that will be completed during the two-week block.



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Mandatory Distinction Track Capstone Block (end of M4 year):

- Attendance is mandatory for all scheduled sessions.
- This is a face-to-face course, you must be present (in Greenville) for all capstone programming.
- General Capstone Requirements include:
 - Publishable Manuscript or Project Report
 - Completion of Program Evaluations
 - Completion of Distinction Track Curricular Assessments
 - Participation in Distinction Day
 - All distinction track scholars will prepare and present a poster
 - Select distinction track scholars from each track will also prepare and present a podium presentation
 - Additional assignments and deliverables may be scheduled by your individual track leader as applicable

Schedule for Review and Update

This procedure is reviewed and revised by the Distinction Track Leadership Committee as necessary, but at least every year.