



## **COURSE AND CLERKSHIP GRADING POLICY FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

*Dated:* January 3, 2020

*Supersedes:* *Course and Clerkship Grading Policy for the NYMC SOM* dated June 15, 2015

*Related Policies:* *Academic Requirements for Advancement and Graduation* dated June 9, 2015; *Time Limitations for Completing Portions of the Curriculum* dated June 9, 2015; *Grade Appeal Policy* dated November 17, 2015; *Academic Dismissal and Appeals Guidelines* dated June 9, 2015 and *USMLE and Clinical Competency Examination Requirements* dated June 9, 2015

### **I. POLICY**

It is the policy of New York Medical College, School of Medicine (NYMC SOM) that at the end of each course, each student's performance is evaluated and recorded. The faculty determines a student's final course/clerkship grade after evaluation of the student's performance in all aspects of the coursework, including achievement of course and college objectives/competencies in all domains (as example - knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors).

Final grades should be provided to students as early as possible. Grades for non-clinical pre-clerkship courses in years one and two should be posted to the learning management system within seven (7) business days of the final block exams. Grades for clinical pre-clerkship courses (years one and two) and for clerkships (year three) must be posted to the learning management system within six (6) weeks of the end of the course/ clerkship.

Students can view all of their course/ clerkship grades in the student progress report and/or official transcript.

Criteria for assigning grades are established by the faculty responsible for the course according to parameters determined by the Education and Curriculum Committee (ECC). Guidelines for grading are reviewed periodically by the ECC and, as for all academic policies, are subject to change without prior notice.

- Any student who fails one or more courses/clerkships and/or faces significant academic difficulty at the midpoint of longitudinal courses (receiving grades of "F," or "CP") will be referred to the Student Academic Performance Review Committee (SAPRC) for review and recommendations made regarding academic support services and monitoring.
- In cases where remediation is required, the remediation must be completed to the satisfaction of the course/clerkship director (if a single course remediation) and/or the SAPRC prior to issuance of a passing grade and promotion of the student into

the next academic year. This remediation can include a repeat of the entire or portion of the course/clerkship or equivalent, as determined by the SAPRC with input from the course/clerkship director.

- If a student does not successfully pass a course remediation, the student will be subject to additional actions by the SAPRC, including dismissal from the NYMC SOM.
- During all phases of study, a faculty member that is providing ongoing medical, personal or psychiatric care for a student is not allowed to participate in the summative evaluation of that student for any course/clerkship.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent guidelines for grading in courses and clerkships.

## **III. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students and faculty in the School of Medicine.

## **IV. DEFINITIONS**

*Competency-based grading* - assessment of student achievement using pre-defined standards

Grade abbreviations include the following:

- “F” – Fail
- “P” – Pass
- “CP” – Conditional Pass
- “WF” - Withdraw Failing

## **V. PROCEDURE**

### **A. Guidelines for Grading Policy: First and Second Year Courses**

1. Effective AY 2018-2019 and starting with the First Year Class, all First and Second Year Courses will be graded as Pass/Fail.
2. The accepted passing standard for Year 1 and 2 courses is “70” rounded to the nearest whole number and include a requirement to meet minimum competency benchmarks on NBME exams (as relevant) and SOM Clinical Competency Assessments.
3. Course directors will include class average and standard deviation when posting grades to the learning management system.
4. All course directors must utilize ExamSoft’s reporting capabilities for Strengths and Opportunities for Improvements.
5. Course directors will submit each student’s numerical course average to the Registrar, but only P or F will be recorded on the transcript.

6. All basic science courses that utilize a National Board of Medical Examiners subject examination (NBME) will utilize a predefined threshold that is determined by the course director prior to the beginning of the course, which will be documented in the course syllabus.
  - a. Students who meet the passing standard of the course but fail to meet the minimum competency for the NBME exam, will have the opportunity to retake the exam during a designated retake period, which is typically after the last course of the academic year.
  - b. Students may remediate up to two NBME exams per year or be subject to additional actions by the SAPRC.
  
7. Use of the “CP” Grade in Years 1 and 2
  - a. The “CP” Grade in Years 1 and 2 is given to a student who has an overall passing grade in a course but who fails a single element on which a separate defined passing grade is required (e.g. NBME Subject Examination or an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)). “CP” is also used in longitudinal courses for which both sections bear credit and are issued a final numeric letter grade for students whose course average is between a 66.5 and 69.4. In this case, the “CP” will designate a student on monitored academic status, requiring discussion by the SAPRC.
  - b. When a grade of “CP” is issued:
    - i. A retake examination and/or program is defined by the course director and approved by the SAPRC or relevant subcommittee.
    - ii. A “CP” grade must be converted to another grade (“P” or “F”) prior to the start of the subsequent academic year. If not converted to another grade within 12 months, or in the case of longitudinal courses, the student is unable to complete or pass the second semester of the course, the grade will automatically be changed to a final grade of “F” for the course.
    - iii. A student who is issued two or more “CP” grades during an academic year will be reviewed by the SAPRC, where the entirety of the student’s record will be assessed.
    - iv. While awaiting results of a retake, a student may be “conditionally” enrolled in courses in the subsequent academic year, if approved by the Senior Associate Dean for School of Medicine Student Affairs
    - v. “CP” grades (even after changed to “P”) will be recorded and tracked on the student’s internal transcript

and considered as an “academic deficiency” for purposes of the SAPRC.

- c. In the case of a withdrawal, the student will receive a “WF” annotation on his/ her transcript.

B. Guidelines for Grading Policy: Third-Year Clerkships

1. The distribution of grades for each clerkship in Third Year will be reviewed annually by the ECC using cumulative data each academic year.
2. Third year students are assessed using a competency-based grading system for required clerkships. Elective courses in year three are graded as Credit/ No Credit.
  - a. Competency-based grading assesses students’ achievement using pre-defined standards including: a summary clinical evaluation, a professionalism evaluation, the NBME Subject examination, and other clerkship specific components unique to the course and pre-defined by the clerkship director.
  - b. These additional components include but are not limited to any or all of the following items: patient encounter tracker (PET), mid-clerkship feedback form, weekly quizzes, observed History and Physical (H&P), on-line cases, case presentations, oral examinations, and OSCEs.
3. The passing standard for NBME subject examinations will be determined by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Clinical Years Subcommittee based on the NBME Standard Setting Panel’s recommended passing score. This will be reviewed on an annual basis as new recommendations become available.
4. A grade of Fail on the clinical component of any clerkship will result in an automatic clerkship grade of “F”, regardless of how the overall clerkship grade is determined.
5. Use of the “CP” Grade in Year 3
  - a. A grade of “CP” in Year 3 is applied under the following circumstances:
    - i. A student who passes all elements of a clinical clerkship except one of the final examinations (e.g. NBME Subject Examination or OSCE) may be issued a “CP” grade for the clerkship and retake the examination at a time designated and coordinated by the Office of Medical Student Affairs.
    - ii. Any “CP” grade must be converted to another grade (“P” or “F”) prior to the start of the subsequent

- academic year. If not otherwise converted within 12 months, it will be changed to an “F.”
- iii. A student who is issued two or more “CP” grades during an academic year will be reviewed by the SAPRC, where the entirety of the student’s record will be assessed. The committee will decide the appropriate action with options including, but not limited to, repeating a portion or the entirety of the academic year or dismissal from the School of Medicine.
  - iv. The highest grade that may be assigned to a student after successfully completing a retake examination is a “P.” If the student fails the makeup exam, the student receives an “F.”
  - v. With approval from the Office of Medical Student Affairs, a student may be conditionally enrolled in Year 4 electives pending the results of retake examinations. However, such enrollment shall *not* be constituted as promotion to the 4th academic year.
  - vi. “CP” grades (even after changed to “P”) will be recorded and tracked on the student’s internal transcript and considered as an “academic deficiency” for purposes of the SAPRC.

C. Guidelines for Repeating Clerkships

1. If a student is required to repeat a clerkship in its entirety because of academic deficiency, the student is eligible to earn any grade in that clerkship for the repeated coursework. Recognition of the prior unsatisfactory performance will be noted on the official school transcript and in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE).
2. If a student does not successfully pass a clerkship remediation (including performance on the NBME Subject Examination upon repeat attempt), the student will be subject to additional actions by the SAPRC, with options including, but not limited to, repeating a portion or the entirety of the academic year or dismissal from the School of Medicine.

D. Guidelines for Fourth-Year Courses

1. Required courses and clinical electives in Year 4 are graded as Honors, High Pass, Pass, and Fail.
2. Research, international, and medical education elective courses are graded as Credit/ No Credit.
3. A grade of “Fail” on the clinical component of any fourth year course will result in an automatic clerkship grade of “F”, regardless of how the overall clerkship grade is determined.

E. Competency-Based Assessment and use of NBME subject examinations in Third Year Clerkships

1. All third year medical students are assessed using a competency-based grading system.
2. A student’s final grade in each competency domain will be determined by one of two pathways:
  - a. Pathway 1
    - i. Honors: At least 3 clinical competencies at or above category “7” (eight point scale); no more than one competency at or below category “5” and NBME score >70<sup>th</sup> percentile
    - ii. High Pass: At least 3 competencies at or above category “5”; no more than 2 competencies at or below category “4” and NBME score >45<sup>th</sup> percentile
    - iii. Pass: At least all competencies at or above category “2” and NBME score above passing threshold.
    - iv. Fail: Any grade in the “does not meet expectations” category
  - b. Pathway 2
    - i. Honors: At least 4 competencies at or above category “7” and NBME score >60<sup>th</sup> percentile
    - ii. High Pass: At least 4 competencies at or above category “5”; no more than one competency at or below category “4” and NBME score >35<sup>th</sup> percentile
    - iii. Pass: All competencies at or above category “2” and NBME score above passing threshold.
    - iv. Fail: Any grade in the “does not meet expectations” category
3. In addition, the following refers to the role of the NBME subject examination in determining a student’s final grade:

- a. A passing standard for NBME subject examinations is determined by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Clinical Years Subcommittee.
- b. Students taking the assessment during the first quarter of the year will use first quarter percentile data for the determination of grade benchmark standards; “total year” percentile data will be used for the remainder of the year.
- c. Students who fail to meet the minimum competency for the NBME exam will have the opportunity to retake the exam during designated retake periods.
- d. Students may remediate up to two NBME exams per year
- e. For the purposes of defining NBME examination cut-offs, “Quarter 1” refers to the first three months of the academic year for on-cycle students. For off-cycle students, Quarter 1 is defined by the student’s actual start date for Year 3 clerkships

## **VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective as of July 1, 2019.

## **VII. REFERENCES**

- A. NYMC SOM Student Catalog: Policies and Procedures
- B. LCME Standard 9.9: Student Advancement and Appeal Process; a medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.
- C. LCME Standard 10.3: Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination; The faculty of a medical school establish criteria for student selection and develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student application, selection, admission, assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters.
- D. LCME Standard 12.5: Non-Involvement of Providers of Student Health Services in Student Assessment/Location of Student Health Records; The

health professionals who provide health services, including psychiatric/psychological counseling, to a medical student have no involvement in the academic assessment or promotion of the medical student receiving those services. A medical school ensures that medical student health records are maintained in accordance with legal requirements for security, privacy, confidentiality, and accessibility.

#### **VIII. POLICY MANAGEMENT**

- Responsible Executive: Dean of the School of Medicine
- Responsible Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education
- Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education