

# Grading System

The Course or Clerkship Director is responsible for clearly delineating and communicating the criteria utilized for assessment and evaluation of student performance at the outset of the learning experience.

The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai transcript will reflect a complete and accurate grading history for all courses in the School.

## *Years 1 and 2 Grades*

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Course directors will complete a grade roster within two weeks of the end of course completion. Online evaluations of student performance in laboratories, clinics, small-group sessions, and/or conferences are provided by faculty supervising these activities.

Grading in Years 1 and 2 is on a Pass/Fail basis. A student who does not complete a course will receive an Incomplete. Types of situations where a student may not complete a course include illness or family emergencies. The Incomplete will change to a Pass or Fail once the student has completed the course. A student who receives a failing grade in a course will follow a remediation plan devised by the course director. Successful remediation of a failing grade results in a final grade of FP (Fail remediated to Pass).

Course Directors will identify the bottom five percent of passing students. Students in this score range will be designated internally as having received a “marginal pass” for tracking and monitoring purposes only. **Marginal grades are considered a full Pass on the transcript.** However, marginal grades are tracked by Student Affairs as part of an early warning system for students at risk of academic difficulty. As part of this system a student’s Faculty Advisor will reach out to him or her if he or she receives a marginal grade on an examination or in a course. A student who has three marginal passes in an academic year will be placed on Monitored Academic Status. See section on Academic Status for a full description.

A student who fails a course in Year 1 must remediate the course before starting Year 2. A student who fails a course in Year 2 must remediate the course before taking USMLE Step 1 and starting Year 3. The remediation process is determined by the Course Director.

## *Online Testing*

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For the purposes of this policy, “test” refers to both exams and quizzes. Tests in Year 1 and 2 are administered online through Blackboard. To avoid technical difficulties during the test taking process, students should not take their test using a wireless internet connection or a mobile device (smartphone, tablet, phablet). Students will not be able to submit answers using a mobile device’s web browser.

Students are strongly advised to take tests during times when the Help Desk is available to assist should technical problems arise. The Library help desk is open Monday through Friday 8 am – 8 pm, Saturday 9 am – 5 pm, and Sunday 12 pm – 8pm.

## **Duration of Exam Windows**

The standardized exam window for all courses opens at 4 pm on Friday and closes at 8 am on Monday. When a holiday occurs on a Monday, the exam window will be extended to close at 8 am on Tuesday. For courses that

end at a break (i.e., Winter break, Spring break, or end of Spring semester), the exam window will open immediately after the final session of the course and will close on the following Tuesday at 8 AM. Students who are not able to complete an exam in the standard window for a valid reason, as outlined in the “Missed Test Policy” below, will have the option of scheduling an alternative exam window.

## Duration of Quiz Windows

There is no standardized quiz window. The window for quizzes is determined by the Course Director and will be communicated to students in the course syllabus and on the Google calendar.

## *Exam Review Policy for Year 1 and 2 Courses*

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In an effort to provide expedited feedback to students after exams, exams administered in the first two years of medical school will be available for review online immediately after the close of an exam window. Students will be able to view their own exam, see the answer they chose and the correct answer. At the close of the exam window, the Year 1 or Year 2 Coordinator will release the exam for student viewing for one week ONLY.

Other options for reviewing exams will continue to include:

- Making an appointment to go over the exam with the Course Director
- Reviewing the exams binder in the Office of Curriculum Support (OCS), where exams are stored after they are taken down from the board in OCS.
  - To review the binder, students must make an appointment by contacting OCS at 212-241-7057.

## *Missed Exam Policy for Years 1 and 2*

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In Years 1 and 2, the ability to take a test (examination or quiz) online and in a window of time over several days provides students with flexibility about when and where they take the test. Given this flexibility, there are only a few instances when permission to take a test outside the test window may be granted by the Course Director(s) and the Office for Student Affairs. Students may request permission to take a test outside of the test window for illness or a personal emergency.

A student must request such permission from the Course Director(s) and [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu) prior to the test closing time. Should the need for permission arise suddenly and when the student cannot hear from the Course Director or the Office for Student Affairs in a timely manner (i.e., on the weekend when the exam window is open) the student may assume the request is granted. If the request is because of illness, the student must provide a physician’s note to that effect. If the request is granted, the Course Director will give the student a specified time to take the test.

## *Years 3 and 4 and the Art & Science of Medicine Grades*

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The Art & Science of Medicine (ASM) courses in Years 1 and 2 as well as the clerkships in Years 3 and 4 have a special focus on the teaching and assessment of clinical skills and may use any of the following in assessing a student's performance:

- Faculty, preceptor or resident evaluations
- Oral and/or written examinations
- NBME subject test exams
- Written or oral presentations of a specific subject related to the clerkship or course
- Exams using standardized patients or simulations
- Observed structured clinical exams

The weight given to specific parameters may vary with an individual clerkship or course.

Each Clerkship or Course Director submits a final grade plus a comprehensive narrative paragraph. The final grades and narrative paragraphs for ASM and the third-year clerkships are included verbatim in a student's MSPE.

All reports of student performance are due in the Office of the Registrar within six weeks of the clerkship's completion.

The grading system for most required clerkships is H (Honors), HP (High Pass), P (Pass), CP (Conditional Pass), and F (Fail). ASM 1 and 2 in Years 1 and 2 respectively and Critical Care and Introduction to Internship in Year 4 are graded Pass/Fail. Electives are graded on a system of Honors/Pass/Fail.

A student will receive a temporary grade of Conditional (C) in the event they fail the NBME subject exam or other final exam if other assessments and clinical evaluations are satisfactory. Upon successful completion of the failed exam, the grade is revised to a Conditional Pass (CP) or Conditional High Pass (CHP). There is no Conditional Honors. If the student fails the exam on the retake, he or she will receive an overall failing grade and will need to retake the entire clerkship and then take the NBME exam or final exam again. Students are not permitted to retake a passed NBME subject examination.

A student can fail a clerkship based on overall clerkship score, unsatisfactory clinical evaluations or a repeated failure on an NBME subject exam or final exam. Students who behave unprofessionally during the clerkship are also at risk of failing. If a student is felt to be unprofessional to the point that evaluators do not feel that the student is a reliable, accurate reporter of clinical data, and a trustworthy team member, the student will receive a failing grade. A student who receives a failing grade for a clerkship must retake all or part of the clerkship at the discretion of the Clerkship Director and the Promotions Committee. Upon successful completion of remediation a student will receive a grade of FP, and the narrative paragraph will describe the remediation.

Grade cut offs are set by each clerkship director to create a goal distribution of grades that is 25 percent Honors, 25 percent High Pass and 50 percent Pass. This distribution of grades is described in explicitly in Appendix B of the MSPE.

All students must pass all clerkships in Year 3 to advance to Year 4.

### *Missed Test Policy for Years 3 and 4*

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In Years 3 and 4, a student must request permission from the Clerkship Director(s) and [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu) to miss an NBME subject examination or other clerkship examination. The policy for making up a missed NBME subject examination is below. The Clerkship Director will schedule any other clerkship exams with the student.

## Shelf Exam Retake Policy and Guidelines

This policy applies to students taking the Shelf Exam due to:

- Shelf failure
- Excused missed test (illness, death in family, religious observance, other emergency)

Options for shelf retakes are as follows:

- During the Shelf Retake Day in July (students will not be charged for the exam)
- During elective or vacation time; Monday through Friday only (students must pay for the exam)
- Exceptions to this rule are made only under approval of a student's advisor/Student Affairs and clerkship director

Guidelines for shelf retakes:

### Shelf failures:

- Students who fail a Shelf Exam must meet with their Faculty Advisor and Clerkship Director to determine when they will retake the exam
- Deadline for shelf retakes for the academic year is the retake day which occurs in July during the Board Review course
- Student Affairs will coordinate with Jennifer Reyes ([jennifer.reyes@mssm.edu](mailto:jennifer.reyes@mssm.edu)) to help arrange for a shelf retake. The following information is needed to make the arrangements:
  - Original test date
  - Timeframe for shelf retake
  - Who is paying for exam (e.g., student, Med Ed, etc.)

### Excused absences:

- If a student anticipates that they will miss a Shelf Exam due to illness, death in family, religious observance or other emergency, they must notify the Clerkship Director and [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu). Jennifer Reyes will coordinate the shelf retake based on the 3 options above and will inform the student.

Unexcused absences:

- If you are unable to make up a missed exam on Shelf retake day in July 2018, you will be charged to cost of the exam. Please check the NBME website for current cost information.
- A check in the amount of the exam and additional fees (if applicable) is to be made out to the *Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai* and submitted to Jennifer Reyes prior to taking the exam.

## Grades and Transcripts

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Official transcripts of courses taken at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai toward fulfillment of the MD degree requirements will identify a grade for each course or clerkship as described above.

Written narrative evaluations are not part of the transcript and will not be duplicated or mailed with transcripts; however, all clinical narratives for clinical courses and clerkships completed for Year 3 are included in the MSPE.

## *Grade Appeals Policy*

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All grade change requests must be brought by the student to the course/clerkship director. If there is a discrepancy after the meeting between the student and course/clerkship director, the student should present the issue to the Senior Associate Deans of Curricular and Student Affairs.

The Senior Associate Deans of Curricular and Student Affairs will ensure that due diligence was done by the course/clerkship director and that, in fact, no error was made. The Associate Deans will also explain the grade appeals process to the student. If the student wishes to pursue a grade appeal, the Associate Deans will contact the relevant Department Chair.

The Department Chair will establish a faculty committee to address the appeal. The Department Chair or his/her designee will serve as chair of the appeals committee. The course or clerkship director cannot serve on the appeals committee. Information for the appeal will be solicited from the student, course/clerkship director, course/clerkship faculty and others as needed. Deliberation of the committee should address the student's appeal question. The decision made by the grade appeal committee is final.

The student should recognize that, following the appeals process, his/her grade may be amended in a direction that is not desired.

In all cases of grade changes following the appeals process, the student's record and official school transcript will be amended to reflect the changed grade.

A student has four (4) weeks from the date the grade is released by the course/clerkship director to make the appeal.