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 medical school.

**Years 1 and 2 Grades**

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 5% 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**

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.

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 – 8 pm.

**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. 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

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 24 hours ONLY.

Other options for reviewing exams will continue to include:

- Making an appointment to go over the exam with the Course Director;
- Reviewing the exam hard copy that is posted on the bulletin board in the Office of Curriculum Support (OCS, Annenberg 15-40) for 2-3 days after the exam window closes;
- Reviewing the exams binder in OCS, where exams are stored after they are taken down from the board in OCS. A student must make an appointment to review the binder and can do so by contacting the Office of Curriculum Support at 212-241-7057.

Missed Test Policy for Years 1 and 2

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 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

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.

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