Grading System

The Course or Clerkship Director is responsible for clearly delineating and communicating the criteria utilized for assessment of student performance at the outset of the learning experience. This should include the number and format of all examinations, the weighting of examinations in the determination of a final grade, and the criteria for passing.

The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai transcript will reflect a complete and accurate grading history for all courses in the medical school. This is consistent with guidelines from the AAMC and most universities and colleges.

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 successfully 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. A student receiving a marginal grade on an examination or in a course may be brought to the attention of Students Affairs for counseling in order to strategize about how to avoid future difficulties. A student who has three marginal passes in an academic year will be placed on Monitored Academic Status. See page 126 for a full description of academic status.

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 – 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. 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 you 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, ANN 1340) 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) on-line 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 (at night or on the weekend) 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 1 and 2 Grades**

The Art & Science of Medicine courses (ASM) 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 completes an individual grade sheet for each student. The sheet includes the final grade plus a comprehensive narrative paragraph. The final grades and narratives for clerkships completed before the beginning of Year 4 are an integral part of the 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 e. 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 to improve a grade.
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 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.

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

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

In Years 3 and 4, a student must request permission from the Clerkship Director(s) and 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 absence (illness, death in family, religious observance, other emergency)

**Options for shelf retakes are as follows:**

- During the Board Review Course in July (students will not be charged for the exam)
- During elective or vacation time; Monday-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 advisor and/or Shashi Anand 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
- A request from Student Affairs must be made to Jennifer Reyes (jennifer.reyes@mssm.edu) who will need the following information and subsequently arrange for the shelf retake:
  - Original test date
  - Timeframe for shelf retake
  - If rush scoring is required (fee will be charged to either the student or the Department of Medical Education)
  - Who is paying for exam: student, Med Ed, CMCA, other
**Excused absences:**

- If a student anticipates that they will be 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. Jennifer Reyes will coordinate the shelf retake based on the 3 options above and will inform the student.

**Fees for shelf exams retakes are as follows:**

- Shelf exam: $41 (as of July 1, 2014)
- Expedited fee: $150 (if order placed less than 21 business days of the exam date). If not, it will incur this expedited fee. A shelf exam that is returned without being used, for example, a student who requests to retake a shelf and then is unable to do so on the specified date, will incur a $150 from the NBME for which the student would be responsible
- Rush scoring: $100 (must be requested at time of ordering exam)
- A check in the amount of the exam and additional fees (if applicable) is to be made out to Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and submitted to Jennifer Reyes prior to taking the exam.

**Grades and Transcripts**

Official transcripts of courses taken at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai toward fulfillment of the M.D. 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 before the beginning of Year 4 are included in the MSPE.