

Grading Policy Detail for Years 1 and 2

Approved by Education Operations Committee, June 15, 2017

Approved by Educational Policy Committee, July 13, 2017

Observation

Students who underperform on USMLE Step 1 are at increased risk of being unsuccessful in the Match. The School of Medicine is responsible for providing students with a learning experience that prepares them for success on these licensing examinations, including ensuring that the standards to which they are held in the first two years are sufficiently high to prepare them for future success. The current structure of the grading policy for blocks in years 1 and 2 allows students to obtain failing scores in individual exams without remediation, so long as they ultimately obtain a passing score (>70) on the block. While this is probably an OK strategy for students who obtain one or very few scores in the failing range, it is clear from analysis of students who struggle to obtain a qualifying score on CBSEs that a common feature of the majority of these students is having multiple scores per year in the failing range. EOC has taken this into consideration and submits the following possible changes to the grading policy in order to assure that students are more adequately prepared for USMLE Step 1 at the conclusion of their pre-clinical curriculum.

Policy

One way to utilize this information to ensure that students are better prepared for USMLE Step 1 would be to require remediation of failed exams, even in situations where the student ultimately obtains a passing score after completion of the block. This proposal seeks to find a reasonable approach to this issue that does not overburden the faculty and administration but provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they have satisfactorily acquired the knowledge to meet the learning objectives covered in exams on which they have underperformed.

The following guidelines would apply within each of the first two years of the curriculum and matches procedures currently used in the M3 curriculum:

Performance measure	Outcome
Failure of a single exam within an academic year (block or NBME)	No remediation will be required provided the student has a final average of 70 or higher. Final grade of PA or HP for the relevant block will be assigned based on the student's numerical average; however HO will not be available for these students.
Failure of 2-4 exams within an academic year	Review by SPPCC. If approved for remediation by the SPPCC, each failed exam must be remediated by retaking a comparable exam at the end of the academic year. Remediation must be completed within 4 weeks of the last exam in the curriculum. All exams must be passed with a minimum score of 75% correct after a single attempt. Failure to remediate an exam would result in a recommendation for repetition of the year to the SPPCC
Failure of >4 exams within an academic year	Recommendation for repetition of the academic year to the SPPCC

Exception: Although a single failed NBME exam in an academic year may be remediated, any student with more than one failed NBME would be recommended for repetition of the year.

Procedure for Entering Grades

A student who has received their first failing grade will be assigned a block grade of PR for the relevant course. If they do not receive any more failing scores, the PR is converted to PA or HP following the standard grading policy at the end of the year (provide their overall score is 70 or above). These students will not be eligible for Honors.

Once a student receives a second failing grade, then they will receive grades of PR in any course in which they have failed at least one failing grade. If they end up with two to four (2-4) failing grades, they will be reviewed by the SPPCC and recommended for remediation or repetition of the year. Once all failing grades have been remediated (with a score of 75 or above) then the student will receive a grade of PA (HP and HO will not be available in these cases). Any student who fails to remediate a single exam will be assigned a grade of FA for the course (even if their final grade is 70 or above) and will be recommended for repetition of the year.

Any student, who receives five (5) or more failing grades on individual exams, will be assigned final grades of FA in all courses in which they received failing scores. These students may be recommended for repetition of the academic year or, in extreme cases, for dismissal.