

Grading Policy Detail for Phase 1 / Years 1 and 2

Approved by Curriculum Educational Policy Committee, September 18, 2025

Observation

Students who fail 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 during Phase 1/Years 1 and 2 are sufficiently high to prepare them for future success. The prior structure (prior to 2017) of the grading policy for blocks in the pre-clerkship curriculum allowed students to obtain failing scores in individual exams without remediation, so long as they ultimately obtained a passing score (>70) on the block. While this was an acceptable strategy for students who obtained one or very few scores in the failing range, it was clear from analysis of students who struggled to obtain a qualifying score on CBSEs that a common feature of the majority of these students was having multiple scores per year in the failing range. The Education Operations Committee took this information into consideration to develop a grading policy that assured that students are more adequately prepared for USMLE Step 1 at the conclusion of their pre-clinical curriculum/Phase 1.

Policy

The process for utilizing information about students' overall performance that ensured that they were better prepared for USMLE Step 1 involved the requirement for remediation of failed exams, even in situations where the student ultimately obtained a passing score after completion of the block. This process employs 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 Phase 1/Years 1 and 2 of the curriculum:

Performance measure	Outcome
Failure of a single exam within an academic year (faculty written 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 a single OSCE within an academic year	Student will meet with the block director following failure to discuss documentation relevant to their performance and to review any comments or videos from the OSCE. Remediation of the complete OSCE or single component will be required. If the student passes OSCE at second attempt, a new OSCE score of 70 will be used to compute the final numerical score for the block. Student will not be eligible for HO.

Year 1: Failure of 2-3 exams within an academic year (faculty written, OSCE, or NBME) Year 2: Failure of 2 exams within an academic year (faculty written, OSCE, or NBME)	If 2 exams are failed, the student will meet with Student Affairs for advising. If 3 exams (Year 1) or 2 exams (Year 2) are failed, the student will meet with the SPPCC (or delegate). For year 1 for 2-3 failed exams, or for year 2 for 2 failed exams, and if approved for remediation by the SPPCC, each failed exam must be remediated by retaking a comparable exam. Retake may be scheduled to occur at the end of the respective block or at the next break in the curriculum, but not during a different block. All retakes must be scheduled to occur within four weeks of the last exam of the curriculum. All retake exams must be passed with a minimum score of 75% correct. After all retakes have been completed by a single attempt to retake each failed exam, the SPPCC will determine if remediation is considered completed. Remediation must be completed prior to the beginning of the next academic year. Failure to remediate would result in a meeting with the SPPCC with recommendation for repetition of the year or dismissal.
Year 1: Failure of 4 or more exams within an academic year (faculty written, OSCE, or NBME) Year 2: Failure of 3 or more exams within an academic year (faculty written, OSCE, or NBME)	Recommendation to the SPPCC for repetition of the academic year or dismissal.

Procedure for Entering Grades

1. Failure of a single exam in an academic year.

A student who has received their first failing exam score 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 following the standard grading policy at the end of the year (provided their overall score is 70 or above).

A retake of the first failed exam without subsequent failures is not required; however, students may choose to retake their first failed exam to demonstrate competency of material. They may also choose to retake their first failed exam in a timely fashion in close proximity to the course to ensure that, in the event of another test failure, their first exam has already been successfully remediated.

2. Failure of 2-3 exams (Year 1) or of 2 exams (Year 2) in an academic year.

- A. If a student receives a second failing exam score during the same academic year, then they will receive grades of PR in any course in which they have received at least one failing exam score.
- B. If a student fails two to four exams, their case will be reviewed by the SPPCC with the following recommendations: 1) remediation of all failed exams, 2) repetition of the academic year, or 3) dismissal.
- C. Once all failed exams have been remediated (with a score of 75 or above) the student will receive a grade of PA in all relevant blocks.

3. Consequences of failure to remediate.

- A. Any student who fails to remediate (as required by this Procedure) will be assigned a grade of FA for the block/s (even if their final grade is 70 or above).
- B. Such students will be recommended for repetition of the entire academic year or dismissal.

4. Failure of 4 or more exams (Year 1) or of 3 or more exams (Year 2) in an academic year.

- A. Any students who receive five or more failing scores on individual exams during the same academic year will be assigned final grades of FA in all blocks in which they received failing scores.
- B. These students will be recommended to the SPPCC for repetition of the academic year or dismissal.