



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER.

School of Medicine

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 30.01, **Grading Policy**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) policy and procedure is to define the methods used for assigning grades to students in courses administered by the SOM.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each even-numbered fiscal year by the Educational Policy Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for approval and publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** This policy is intended to provide guidelines for faculty, staff, and administrators concerning procedures to be employed in assigning and recording student grades. It has been developed to help ensure the SOM maintains compliance with Liaison Committee on Medical Education standard 9.

2. **Grade Categories.**

a. Except where specifically noted in the SOM Syllabus, grades are recorded on the transcript as follows:

- 1) *Year 1 and 2.* Honors (HO), High Pass (HP), Pass (PA) and Fail (FA)
- 2) *Year 3.* Honors (HO), High Pass (HP), Pass (PA), and Fail (FA)
- 3) *Year 4.* Honors (HO), Pass (PA), and Fail (FA) unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus

b. Credit (CR) may be assigned in two situations:

- 1) *Students who have fulfilled the equivalent of required medical courses at another school or as a graduate student at TTUHSC.* This may require placement testing in addition to the prior course work experience. Transfer of credits toward the Doctor of Medicine degree is made by recommendation of the appropriate course directors through the Office of Student Affairs.
- 2) *Students who successfully remediate a grade of fail in a block in Years 1 and 2 or who complete an Independent Study course approved by the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.*

c. In-Progress (PR) is recorded only when a student has been unable to complete the full course of study at an acceptable level in the allocated time. It is not used as a substitute for an earned failing grade. The Office of Student Affairs will request reasons for the grade and for a description of the work remaining to be done. When a "PR" remains for one year without action on the part of the student, it will be changed to a failing grade.

3. **Documentation of Student Academic Performance.**

- a. Copies of grade reports for all courses are forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible after course grades are determined.
- b. The Clinical Assessment Form is required for each student at the completion of each clerkship rotation. This form or a summary narrative is included in the student's permanent file.

- c. The Year 4 Rotation Evaluation Form is required for each student at the completion of each clinical elective. The elective supervisor completes this form, and the final elective grade is submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The elective form is submitted to the Office of Student Affairs for inclusion in the student's file.
- d. Students are assigned a grade at the completion of each course. A grade, once recorded, cannot be changed without written approval of the course director.
- e. Block or clerkship directors (or their designees) will enter final grades into the institution's Banner computer system.

4. **Grade Assignment in Years 1 and 2.**

- a. Block Directors will use categories defined by the Educational Policy Committee in determining final Block grades.
- b. Block components that have numerical grades will be converted to categorical grades as defined by Educational Operations Committee policy.
 - 1) *Pass*
 - 2) *Fail*
- c. Final numerical grades will be rounded following standard mathematical procedures before conversion to categorical grades. For example, a score of 69.49 would be rounded down to a 69, while a score of 69.50 would be rounded up to a 70.
- d. Individual exam grades and final grades will be calculated and determined by Block Directors in accordance with the unique characteristics and educational components utilized in the Block.
- e. Block Directors will define methods for grade calculation and determination in the Block Syllabus including but not limited to; adjustment of exams for discarded questions, percent value of graded components, methods for grading quizzes and special projects, and attendance.
- f. For students who request and are granted a leave of absence after the mid-point of each course, course averages up to the point of leave will be considered in the same way as final course grades for purposes of this policy. Exceptions to considering course averages in this manner must be requested in writing within five (5) business days of the leave being granted and will be considered on an individual basis.
- g. The school implemented a non-compensatory grading system in 2017-2018 that requires students to remediate any failed exam during the year as described in SOMOP 30.01:Grading Policy, Appendix C.

5. **Grade Assignment in Year 3.**

- a. A final grade (either Pass or Fail in 2020-21) in each clerkship will be derived from the component scores. The major components for assessment are:
 - 1) Clinical performance
 - 2) OSCE
 - 3) NBME subject exams

Additional modes of assessment and required activities are utilized in each clerkship and are consistently utilized on all campuses. Specifically, all students must complete two observed history and physical examinations, complete a minimum number of patient notes, make a

minimum number of patient presentations and participate in a specific set of clinical encounters. These expectations are defined in each course syllabus. These components cannot elevate a student's final grade above that determined by the major components, although failure to complete these additional components can negatively impact a student grade. Progression through Years 3 and 4 of the curriculum requires that all components of each clerkship be satisfactorily completed.

- b. A final grade of PA is considered a satisfactory level of performance for a clinical clerkship. Each component of the clerkship (clinical assessment; oral, written, and/or departmental exam; NBME subject exam, etc.) must be passed with a minimum score of Pass or better.

Minimal Passing Scores for Each Component: Each student must score at or above a minimal passing score on each component to meet expectations for passing each clerkship without remediation as listed in Table 1 below. These are as follows:

Clinical Performance: A minimum score developed using a modification of the Angoff method for standard setting. These minimum scores represent the average score on all items on the clinical assessment form and increase as a student progresses through the six core clerkships. These scores will be updated annually and can be found in SOMOP 30.01: Addendum G.

OSCE: A score of 70% is required for passing the OSCE.

NBME: A score at or above the 10th percentile based on the average of national performance measures reported by the NBME.

- c. Student must meet expectations for professional behavior to complete each clerkship as described in SOMOP 30.01:Grading Policy, Appendix B. Passing grades will not be assigned to students with unremediated defects in professional behavior even if their numerical grade is above the minimum passing score.
- d. If a student experiences academic difficulty in a single clerkship as defined in Table 1, the initial course of action will be as described.

Table 1: Guidelines for Actions in MSIII Clerkships

Academic Condition	Course of Action
Failure of single component other than clinical performance (i.e., NBME exam or OSCE)	Repeat component. A four-week elective for credit in Year 4 concluded by repeat of component is recommended. Failure to remediate a failed component will result in assignment of a final grade of FA and referral to the SPPCC.
Failure of clinical performance OR failure of two or more components (including failing the same subject exam on two separate occasions)	Assign clerkship grade of FA and refer for review by campus SPPCC Year 3/4 subcommittee with options for courses of action as described in <u>SOM OP 40.04, Student Promotion</u> .
Failure of overall clerkship	Assign clerkship grade of FA and refer for review by campus SPPCC Year 3/4 subcommittee with options for courses of action as described in <u>SOM OP 40.04, Student Promotion</u>

- e. If a student is required to take a "PR" (In-Progress) in a clerkship (due to failure of NBME or OSCE), the transcript will show "PR" until the student meets the standards for successful completion. At that time, the "PR" will be removed and the transcript will show a final grade of PA. If a student fails a total clerkship with an overall grade of FA, the grade will be shown on the transcript and the notation "*successfully remediated*" will be added if and when the clerkship is successfully remediated.

- f. Clerkship grades will not be released until all student evaluations of the clerkship and clerkship faculty are completed, as defined by the clerkship department and the Office of Curriculum.

6. Grade Assignment in Year 4.

- a. Final grades are assigned based on student performance in each rotation. These grades are determined by completion of Year 4 rotation forms.
- b. The Year 4 Director in each department is responsible for ensuring that grades are assigned in a timely manner. Grades should be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs within twenty-one (21) days of the completion of the rotation.
- c. In the event that a student receives more than one Year 4 Rotation Evaluation form for a single rotation, the Year 4 Director will be responsible for reviewing the forms to ensure that there are no disparities between the assigned grades. If different final grades are recommended for the same student, the Year 4 Director will determine the final grade for this rotation.
- d. Some students may receive a grade form from another school after completing a rotation away from TTUHSC School of Medicine. If this form assigns a final grade that is not used by the School of Medicine in Year 4 (for example: High Pass), then the appropriate Year 4 Director will be consulted in order to define the appropriate final grade for this rotation.
- e. Year 4 rotation grades will not be released until all student evaluations of the rotation and rotation faculty are completed, as defined by the rotation department and the Office of Curriculum.

7. Remediation.

- a. Students who fail a single block in Years 1 and 2 may be allowed by the SPPCC to remediate that block in order to progress to the next academic year. The Block Director of the failed block will determine the remediation activities.
- b. Students may be required to remediate a failed NBME Clerkship Subject Examination by repeating the NBME exam (see paragraph 5.d.). Passing the exam on the second attempt will serve to remediate the PR grade. The method for assigning a percentile ranking for the score obtained in the repeated exam is described in Section 10, Calculation of Grades for Clerkships. A final grade of PA will be assigned if the percentile ranking is 10% or greater.
- c. Students may remediate a failing grade on a clerkship OSCE by completing a remediation OSCE designed by the clerkship director. A final grade of PA will be assigned to students who successfully remediate a clerkship OSCE.
- d. If a student successfully remediates a grade of FA in Years 1 and 2, the student will be registered for an Independent Study version of the course in the semester following completion of remediation and will be assigned a grade of CR.
- e. Failure to successfully remediate a block in Years 1 and 2 according to course standards before the start of the next academic year may result in repetition of the entire year in which the failure occurred (see SOM OP 40.04, Student Promotion, Table 1: Guidelines for Actions by SPPCC for students in Years 1 and 2).

8. Repetition of an Academic Year.

- a. The SPPCC may recommend that a student repeat an academic year due to academic difficulties. The SOM may limit the number of students who can repeat an academic year.
- b. Students who are repeating an academic year will take all courses required for other students in that academic year unless otherwise specified by the SPPCC. If a student has received a

prior grade of HO in a particular course, that course director has the option of requiring repetition of the course or substituting other work in that discipline. If the course director opts for the latter, that decision must be communicated in writing to the SPPCC and a grade will be given for this work.

- c. If a student repeats an entire academic year, the new grades are recorded on the transcript in addition to the original ones.
 - d. Students who are required to repeat an academic year may not take courses from the next academic year during the period of repetition.
 - e. Repetition of a clerkship and remedial work, as defined and prescribed above, will not be counted as elective time in satisfying the conditions for graduation.
9. **Assignment of Credit Hours.** The SOM assigns credit hours for blocks, clerkships and rotations based on the formula that one week of coursework equals one credit hour, with the following exceptions:
- a. Pre-clinical Curriculum:
 - 1) *One Contact Hour* = one scheduled hour of faculty instruction in classroom, laboratory, laboratory, small group, or clinical setting and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student preparation. Examinations and optional sessions (e.g., review sessions) are not included in calculation of credit hours. (No differential based on instructional method as methods are purposefully selected to meet educational goals and objectives and all require preparation and review on the part of learners.)
 - 2) *Twenty contact hours* = one credit hour.
 - b. Clinical Curriculum: Credit hours for required clerkships and electives in the clinical years of instruction are calculated based on the number of weeks of scheduled instruction/clinical experience with one (1) week = one (1) credit hour.
 - c. Courses such as Basic Medical Spanish and the Integration Seminar have been introduced as zero credit courses.

APPENDIX

SOM OP 30.01.A – Clerkship NBME Grading Tables

SOM OP 30.01.B – Assessment of Professional Behavior in Clerkships

SOM OP 30.01.C – Grading Policy Detail for Years 1 and 2

SOM OP 30.01.D – Grading Policy for Professionalism in Years 1 and 2

SOM OP 30.01.E - Adhering to Fair and Timely Grade Assignments

SOM OP 30.01.F - Grading Policy for OSCE

SOM OP 30.01.G – Clinical Assessment Passing Scores