



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Medicine

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 30.04, **Administration of Examinations**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) policy and procedure is to outline the responsibilities for all parties involved in administration of block, clerkship and comprehensive examinations and to provide guidance to Block/Clerkship Directors, Offices of Academic Affairs and Curriculum, and students in procedures to follow before, during, and after summative examinations.

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

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** It is the policy of The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine to administer examinations in a fair and objective manner. The Office of Curriculum will administer the school's policies regarding administration of examinations.
2. **Responsibilities of persons involved in the administration of SOM examinations.**
 - a. Block Director/Associate Block Director:
 - 1) Establish the block examination schedule, which may include faculty-written examinations and examinations from the National Board of Medical Examiners.
 - a) For Faculty-written examinations:
 - Solicit and compile exam questions and submit those questions to the Block Coordinator by the first day of the block.
 - Review each examination for accuracy and appropriate sampling of curricular content at least one week prior to the examination.
 - Coordinate categorization of each exam question according to current categorization guidelines established by the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - Obtain and prepare sufficient proctors for each exam. These proctors may be recruited from faculty, teaching assistants or staff.
 - Serve as Head Proctor for each examination and ensure that the guidelines for proctors are followed. If unavailable, an alternate Head Proctor may be designated.

- Review exam performance according to current guidelines established by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee.

b) For NBME Examinations

- Select either subject examination or customized examination format
- Construct customized examinations using procedures developed by the Office of Academic Affairs.

b. Office of Academic Affairs:

1) *Phase 1 Manager/Coordinator.*

- Prepare computer-delivered examinations by collecting questions, arranging exam previews for faculty review and loading questions into exam delivery software.
- Ensure that NBME examinations (Block examinations and Comprehensive Basic Science Examinations) are constructed (for customized examinations) and/or ordered in a timely manner to ensure that they can be administered as scheduled.
- Ensure that an emergency backup plan can be implemented in the event of computer or network problems that prevent delivery by computer. Specifically, the coordinator should have a printable version of the exam available should it be deemed necessary.
- Ensure that sufficient exam rooms are reserved for all examinees scheduled for a particular exam administration.
- Schedule alternate dates for exam make-ups, as needed.
- Maintain longitudinal archives of exam materials, including question banks, individual examinations, and all exam grades.
- Coordinate with *Educational Technology* (ET) support personnel to ensure that all accessory materials are available for examinees.
- Maintain a record of examinee issues across an academic year (i.e. tardiness, conduct issues, etc.)

2) *ET support personnel.*

- Ensure that examination rooms are set up with examination computers and additional examination materials (calculators, laminated sheets, etc.).
- Provide support prior to and during computer-delivered examinations.
- Assist faculty and staff with the analysis of exam performance and statistics.

c. Phase 2 Manager

- Ensure that all clerkship NBME examinations and comprehensive exams are ordered in a timely manner to ensure that they can be administered as scheduled on each campus.

- 2) Ensure that sufficient exam rooms are reserved for all examinees scheduled for a particular exam administration.
 - 3) Schedule alternate dates for exam make-ups, as needed.
 - 4) Coordinate with *Educational Technology* (ET) support personnel to ensure that all accessory materials are available for examinees.
 - 5) Maintain a record of examinee issues across an academic year (i.e. tardiness, conduct issues, etc.)
- d. Proctors:
- 1) *Distribution of proctors.* At least one faculty member must be present and in charge of the administration of all exams. If multiple rooms are used for an exam, at least one proctor must be present in each room, with the exception of a virtual or in-room proctor for exam rooms used for a single examinee taking the exam under accommodations previously approved in accordance with the Standards for Curricular Completion in the School of Medicine Student Handbook.
 - 2) There should be at least one proctor per 25 examinees in the exam room at all times.
 - 3) Observe exam as directed by Head Proctor.
 - 4) Once examinees are seated, ascertain that each examinee is seated at the correct station during the exam.
 - 5) Escort examinees to the lobby for bathroom breaks as directed by head proctor.
- e. Examinees:
- 1) Arrive at exam room 15 minutes before the exam is scheduled. Late arrival to the exam is defined as entering the exam room after the scheduled start of the exam. Late arrival (up to 5 minutes after the scheduled start time) to the exam may result in loss of time from the exam if an appropriate reason is not provided.
 - a) Students who arrive more than 5 minutes after the scheduled start time of the exam without a valid excuse will not be admitted to the exam. The chief proctor will be responsible for administering this aspect of the policy.
 - b) Late arrival at more than one exam in an academic year without a valid excuse will result in referral to the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.
 - 2) Present TTUHSC ID badge in accordance with [HSC OP 76.02. Identification Badges](#), for admission to exam room.
 - a) If the examinee's TTUHSC ID is not available, examinee must report to the Office of Student Affairs to obtain exam admittance form.
 - b) Place TTUHSC ID visibly on the table within the workstation.
 - 3) Comply with all policies regarding classroom behavior. These policies, which have been designed to be consistent with NBME procedures, include the following:

- a) Examinees should place all personal items in the designated storage area prior to proceeding to their assigned testing station.
- b) No personal items other than the TTUHSC ID are allowed at the testing station. These items include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Cell Phones
 - Tablets
 - Paging devices
 - iPod, radio, or media devices
 - Calculators (a calculator is built into the exam for examinee use)
 - Recording/filming devices (including Smart glasses)
 - Beverages or food of any type
 - Reference materials (books, notes, papers)
 - Watches with alarms, computer or memory capability
 - Backpacks, briefcases, or luggage
 - Coats, outer jackets, or headwear

- c) Laminated sheets and markers, and calculators (if needed) will be provided.
 - d) Ear plugs or any other noise-cancelling device must be approved by the Head Proctor.
 - e) Smart glasses (ie glasses with video recording and network connectivity) are not permitted in the exam room. All glasses are subject to inspection.
 - f) During the exam, examinees are not allowed to communicate with anyone other than the proctors or personnel responsible for the exam.
 - g) Examinees must receive proctor approval to leave the exam room by raising their hand and requesting assistance from a proctor.
 - h) Examinees who temporarily leave their exam station should partially close their computer and ensure that information on laminated sheets is not visible to other examinees.
 - i) If technical or other assistance is required during the exam, examinees must raise their hand to request assistance. Questions concerning content are not allowed.
 - j) After completion of the exam, examinees must quietly leave the exam room and immediately exit the lobby areas at the classroom entrances. Examinees should not use the restrooms adjacent to the examination room on the second floor of the Academic Classroom Building until all examinees have completed the exam.
 - k) If remaining for exam review, examinees must follow the instructions for accessing exam review and comments and complete the review. At the conclusion of the review examinees must sign out of the computerized exam review and quietly exit the exam room and leave the immediate area.
- 4) Follow instructions in [SOM OP 40.02, Student Attendance](#), in the event of absence from a scheduled exam.

3. Administration of computer examinations.

- a. An **Honor Code Statement**, followed by a restatement of portions of this policy applicable to examinees, will appear at the beginning of each computer-administered exam, quiz or exam review given by the School of Medicine. Each examinee will be required to confirm that he/she has read and agreed to these statements. For exams administered by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), examinees must accept the stipulations presented at the beginning of the exam in order to take the exam.
- b. Process of examination – opening, testing, submission:
 - 1) *Assigned seating.* For any exams given in the multi-disciplinary lab (ACB 200), examinees will sit in pre-assigned seats. Seat assignments will be posted fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of the exam. Examinees shall not change seats without permission from a proctor. All examinees must begin their examination before writing anything on paper or laminated sheets.
 - 2) A security code for entrance into computer exams will be provided once all

examinees are online and ready to begin the exam.

- 3) Exam logs will be reviewed after each exam (where available) to identify any issues with the timing of exam delivery.

4. Administration of paper examinations if computer examinations are not available.

- a. Block Coordinators will be responsible for arranging for paper copies of examinations to be printed and Scantrons to be available.
- b. Block Directors will be responsible for determining if time adjustments are necessary for exam administration. It is recommended that examinees be provided with 15 seconds extra per question to allow for manual review of questions and completion of Scantrons.
- c. Examinees will be informed of start and completion times for the examination both verbally and by projection of this information on screens or by writing this information on white boards or other media in the exam room(s). An electronic clock should be projected, if possible, to ensure that examinees can track progress.
- d. The Chief Proctor will ensure that examinees are provided with information about progress towards the completion of the exam, including at a minimum, a verbal 10-minute warning.
- e. The Chief Proctor will ensure that all exam materials are collected in a manner that maintains the security of the examination.
- f. An exam review will be arranged under the guidance of the Office of Curriculum where possible.

5. Breaks.

a. Unscheduled breaks:

- 1) If bathroom breaks are allowed due to the length of the exam, no more than two (2) examinees (one per bathroom adjacent to the exam room) at a time may be out of the room and must be escorted by a proctor.
- 2) Bathroom breaks will not be permitted for examinees who have not begun the exam OR for the first 15 minutes after beginning the exam. For the purposes of this policy, the tutorial offered by the NBME is not considered to be part of the exam.
- 3) Prior to leaving the exam room for a bathroom break, the examinee must lower the screen of their computer (or pause their exam) and ensure that information on the laminated sheets is not visible to other examinees.
- 4) A log of the bathroom breaks with the examinee's name as well as departure and return times will be kept by the proctors and returned to the block coordinator.

b. Emergency breaks:

- 1) In the event of sudden illness, a proctor will escort the student out of the room and obtain appropriate assistance.
- 2) In the event of an external emergency, such as fire or other alarm, the chief proctor will arrange for evacuation of the examinees and other personnel. The Chief Proctor should be the last person to leave the exam room and the first to

return, if that is possible.

- 3) The Chief Proctor will determine whether the security of the examination can be maintained for continuation should the emergency conclude in a reasonable time.
- c. Scheduled breaks: A scheduled break is an optional component of some examinations from the NBME. The procedure for administering examination with scheduled breaks is available in the Chief Proctors Manual from the NBME.

6. **Post-exam review.**

a. Faculty-written examinations

1) Exam feedback and comments:

- a) A post-examination review will be offered for computer exams after completion of the exam. A password will be presented to access the exam review which will be available for a specific amount of time determined by the block director.
 - b) After completion of the review, examinees will be able to access a file in which to enter comments about specific questions. A separate password will be provided for comment entry.
 - c) Discussion or creation of any form of record of the questions or answers among the examinees or with the faculty either in or outside the exam room is not allowed. Students may make appointments to visit with the faculty after the exam and exam review is over.
- 2) The Block Director will review the exam statistics and the examinee comments and follow the regrading guidance established by the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - 3) The Block Director will provide feedback to examinees regarding questions that were regraded.

b. NBME exams

- 1) NBME exam raw scores will be adjusted following Curriculum Educational Policy Committee guidance.

7. **Possible academic misconduct.** If behavior occurs that prompts a proctor to be concerned about academic misconduct, the proctor's response may include, but is not limited to the following:

- a. The proctor may issue a general caution to the class regarding the behavior in question.
- b. The proctor may ask other proctors to also monitor the behavior in question and, as appropriate:
 - 1) Caution the examinee individually in a manner as discrete as possible, if deemed warranted by the proctor(s).
 - 2) Document the alleged behavior, including, but not limited to, the name of any examinee involved with the alleged behavior, circumstances surrounding the alleged behavior, date and time of the alleged behavior, and pursue the matter

as specified under the Code of Professional Conduct and/or the [TTUHSC Student Affairs Handbook](#).

8. Related Documentation

- a. LCME Standard 9 covers the topics of Teaching, Supervision, Assessment, and Student and Patient Safety.
- a. Element 9.4, Assessment System: A medical school ensures that, throughout its medical education program, there is a centralized system in place that employs a variety of measures (including direct observation) for the assessment of student achievement, including students' acquisition of the knowledge, core clinical skills (e.g., medical history-taking, physical examination), behaviors, and attitudes specified in medical education program objectives, and that ensures that all medical students achieve the same medical education program objectives.