



Grading and Progression Policy

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Summary

This policy comprehensively defines the ways that medical students’ academic performance is assessed across the MD program and details requirements and procedures including progression, grade determination, remediation in the Preclerkship Phase, incomplete grades in the Clerkship and Transition to Residency Phases, and USMLE examination timelines.

Related LCME Standards

9.9 Student Advancement and Appeal Process

A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.

10.3 Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination

The faculty of a medical school establish criteria for student selection and develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student application, selection, admission, assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to medical students across all phases of the MD curriculum.

Definitions

PCAMP – Primary Care Accelerated Medical Pathway; this is a 6-year accelerated program consisting of 3 years of medical school and a 3-year residency program with the University of Arizona Family and Community Medicine (FCM) Program. The PCAMP medical school curriculum runs parallel to the 4-year MD program curriculum. PCAMP students participate in a longitudinal FCM clerkship experience, receive a contingent spot within the FCM Residency Program, and bypass part of the Transition to Residency requirements of the 4-year MD Program curriculum.

Preclerkship Phase (4-year MD Program) – For students in the 4-year MD program, this preclinical curriculum phase of study is defined as the first 18-months of medical school with focus on the eight basic sciences core courses, Doctor & Patient/Societies Course, and the Clinical Reasoning Course, including all Pathways in Health and Medicine curriculum sessions intertwined throughout the core courses.

Preclerkship Phase (PCAMP) – For students in the Primary Care Accelerated Medical Pathway (PCAMP) track, this preclinical phase begins at the start of the program through completion of the Transition to Clerkships Course in year 2. It includes the same required curriculum as stated in the 4-year MD Preclerkship Phase. As part of this accelerated program, the Family and Community Medicine and Ambulatory Medicine clerkship experiences occur during the Preclerkship Phase of PCAMP.

Clerkship Phase (4-Year MD Program) – For students in the 4-Year MD program, this curriculum phase of study is defined as the 12-months of seven core clerkship courses as well as Intersessions, Transition to Clerkships, and an ambulatory medicine clerkship.

Clerkship Phase (PCAMP) – For students in the PCAMP track, this clinical phase begins immediately after completion of the Transition to Clerkships Course and ends following completion of Semester E and consists of the remaining six core clerkship courses as well as Transition to Clerkships and Intersessions I.

Transition to Residency Phase (4-Year MD Program) – For students in the 4-year MD program, this curriculum phase of study is defined as the final 14-months of clinical curriculum, including core subinternship, electives, surgical subspecialty, Emergency Medicine/Critical Care clerkship, and Transition to Residency Bootcamp selectives.

Transition to Residency Phase (PCAMP) – For students in the PCAMP track, this final clinical phase begins immediately following completion of Semester E and ends following the completion of Semester F. This phase includes Intersessions II, core subinternship, surgical subspecialty, Emergency Medicine/Critical Care clerkship, and Transition to Residency FCM Bootcamp.

Longitudinal Courses – In the Preclerkship Phase, longitudinal courses, including the Doctor and Patient course and the Clinical Reasoning course, are designed to span the entire duration of this phase, covering three semesters. These courses are structured to support the continuous development and assessment of students' clinical skills and clinical reasoning abilities. Students receive a grade for each of the three semesters, reflecting their ongoing progress. The goal is to ensure that students are thoroughly prepared for the Clerkship Phase and subsequent stages of their medical education.

Selectives – A curated set of elective courses or clinical experiences within the MD curriculum that students select from a predetermined list. These opportunities offer structured, in-depth exposure to specific areas of medicine, helping students align their educational experience with personal career goals and program objectives.

Workplace-Based Assessment (WBA) – The designated assessment method used across all clerkships to evaluate students' progression in selected Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) that are critical to the skill development expected at the medical student clerkship level. WBAs provide real-time, context-specific evaluations of students' clinical performance and professional behaviors, ensuring that students are developing the competencies necessary for advancing in their medical education. These assessments are integral to monitoring and guiding students' growth in clinical skills throughout the Clerkship Phase.

Policy Statement

I. Preclerkship Phase

A. Required Survey Completion

- 1) Students must complete assigned program evaluation surveys for all required blocks and courses in the preclerkship curriculum.
 - a) Students who do not complete assigned surveys will receive a deduction from their professionalism grade in the subsequent block.
 - b) **4-Year MD Program:** Students who do not complete assigned surveys for the last course or block of the preclerkship curriculum during Year 2 are required to complete them before beginning the clerkship curriculum.
 - c) **PCAMP:** Students who do not complete assigned surveys for the last course or block of the preclerkship curriculum are required to complete them before beginning their Clerkship Phase.
- 2) Students must complete assigned end-of-year 1 and end-of-phase surveys on the Preclerkship Phase.
 - a) Students will be provided with dedicated sessions to complete these surveys, during the last preclerkship block in their first year, and during the Transition to Clerkships Course at the beginning of the Clerkship Phase.

B. Determination of Grades

- 1) Grades in the Preclerkship Phase (including grades in blocks, longitudinal and semester-long courses) are based on a student's performance in assessments designed to measure their progress toward achieving mastery in the six competencies established by the COM-T faculty. These competencies are detailed on the college's [Competencies and Education Program Objectives \(EPOs\) webpage](#).
- 2) Different blocks and courses may assess different combinations of the Competencies. Decisions about which competencies will be assessed will be made by the Tucson Educational Policy Committee (TEPC).
- 3) Policies and procedures concerning the number, frequency, weighting, format, and grading of exams will be established by the TEPC.

- 4) In the preclerkship curriculum, the student will receive a grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F) for each course.
 - a) **Pass grade:** To receive a grade of Pass, the student must demonstrate satisfactory performance in each competency that is assessed in that block or course by meeting the established performance standard for that competency.
 - b) **Fail grade:** The student will receive a grade of Fail if they fail to meet the performance standard in any competency that is assessed in that block or course, after a retake examination.

C. Unsatisfactory Performance in the Professionalism Competency in a Block

- 1) If a student does not meet the performance standard for the Professionalism competency in a block, they will receive an Unsatisfactory for that competency and an Incomplete grade for the block. The student's performance in that competency will be reassessed in the subsequent block.
 - a) A student failing the Professionalism competency will meet with the director of the block in which they failed this competency to develop a remediation plan. The block director may consult with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs regarding remediation. The student may also be directed to meet with their House Dean to include the remediation plan in future performance criteria for the subsequent block(s).
 - b) The block director that develops the remediation plan with the student will share this plan with the director of the subsequent block.
- 2) If the student achieves satisfactory performance in the Professionalism competency in the next block, then they will be deemed to have met the performance criteria for that competency in the first block.
 - a) If the student had achieved satisfactory performance in the other competencies in the first block, the overall grade for the first block will be changed from Incomplete to Pass on the student's transcript.
 - b) For purposes of evaluating the student's academic progress, a record of the initial Unsatisfactory in the first block will be kept.
- 3) If a student does not achieve satisfactory performance in the Professionalism competency in the subsequent block, then grades of Fail will be entered in the student's transcript for both blocks.
 - a) This will constitute failure of two courses/blocks, which will halt the student's academic progress.
 - b) The Associate Dean of Student Affairs will report the failures to the Student Progress Committee, which will then take over and proceed according to the rules and procedures established in the [Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#).

D. Unsatisfactory Performance in the Professionalism Competency in a Longitudinal Course

- 1) If a student does not meet the performance standard for the Professionalism competency in the first two semesters of the Clinical Reasoning Course (CRC) or the Doctor and Patient (D&P) Course, they will receive an Unsatisfactory for that

competency and an Incomplete grade for that semester of the course. The student's performance in that competency will be reassessed in a subsequent semester of the course.

- a) A student failing the Professionalism competency will be referred to the student's House dean and/or Societies mentor. The student is expected to meet with their House dean and/or Societies mentor to develop a plan to satisfactorily meet the Professionalism performance criteria in the next semester of the course.
- 2) If the student achieves satisfactory performance in the Professionalism competency in the next semester of the course, then they will be deemed to have met the performance criteria for that competency in the previous semester and that course grade will be changed from Incomplete to Pass on the student's transcript.
 - a) For purposes of evaluating the student's academic progress, a record of the initial Unsatisfactory in the first semester of the course will be kept.
- 3) If a student does not achieve satisfactory performance in the Professionalism competency in the subsequent semester of the CRC, then a grade of Fail will be entered in the student's transcript for both semesters.
 - a) This will constitute failure of two courses, which will halt the student's academic progress.
 - b) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will report the failures to the Student Progress Committee. The Student Progress Committee will meet with the student to design an academic support plan.
- 4) If a student does not meet the performance standard for the Professionalism competency in the third semester of the CRC or D&P Course, the failure will be reported to the Student Progress Committee. The Student Progress Committee will meet with the student to design an academic support plan.

E. Foundations of Medical Science Exams

1) Exam Scores

- a) A passing score on a high-stakes written exam is 70% or higher.
- b) Any student who scores <70% on a high-stakes written exam must meet with the respective block director to review their performance.
- c) Any student who scores <75% on any high-stakes written exam is required to work with the Office of Student Success to develop and follow an approved individualized study plan. Refer to Section I.G. [Required Participation in Academic Support Programs](#).

2) Exam Review

- a) Students may review high-stakes written exams with a learning specialist.

3) Eligibility for Retake Exam

- a) For all blocks except **Foundations**:
 1. A student will be given the opportunity for an optional retake exam if the student receives a score <70% on no more than 1 high-stakes written exam *and* receives an overall block/course MK score <70%.
 2. A student who scores <70% on 2 or more high-stakes written exams with an overall MK score <70% is not eligible for a retake exam and will

receive a grade of “Fail.” The student then must remediate or repeat that block/course.

- b) For the **Foundations** block, all students will be given the opportunity for an optional retake exam if they score <70% on 1 or more high-stakes written exams *and* receive an overall block/course MK score <70%.
- c) The block/course director will inform the student if they are eligible for a retake exam.
- d) The score on the Retake Exam must be greater than or equal to 70.0% to pass the block/course.
- e) If the student chooses not to partake in a Retake Exam, a grade of “Fail” will be recorded on the student’s transcript. The student will be required to remediate the course or else must repeat that course. Refer to Section I.F. [Unsatisfactory Performance in Medical Knowledge](#).

4) Format for Retake Exam

- a) The retake exam should be cumulative for the block. Each year, block directors will remove at least 10% of their vetted questions from block exams and will use those questions exclusively in the retake exams. An additional 10% will be replaced each subsequent year for a minimum of 3 years.

5) Timing of Retake Exam

- a) The retake exam for a given block will be administered on the Monday morning immediately following the end of that block, as specified by the college’s [Preclerkship Retake/Remediation Schedule](#).
- b) All students taking a retake exam for a block will do so at the same time and date, in accordance with the dates published in the college’s [Preclerkship Retake/Remediation Schedule](#).
- c) Retake exams scheduled to occur during the summer break will be administered within 2 weeks after the end of the curricular year. This facilitates implementation of summer remediation (if necessary) and the student’s subsequent curricular progress.
- d) Students who are eligible for a retake exam will be informed of the date of the retake exam by the block director.

6) Grade on Retake Exam

- a) An overall score of 70% or greater constitutes a passing score for the retake exam.
- b) A passing score on the retake exam will result in a satisfactory grade in Medical Knowledge, and a subsequent “Pass” as the block grade.
- c) A failing grade on the retake exam (below 70%) will result in an unsatisfactory grade in Medical Knowledge, and a “Fail” will be recorded on the student’s transcript.
- d) Scores on a retake exam will be posted in MedLearn within 24 hours after the exam has been administered. Students will be notified of their score and their block grade by the block director.

7) Limit to Number of Retake Exams

- a) A student who becomes eligible for a retake exam in a second block in an academic year will appear before the Student Progress Committee to discuss their progress and plans for improvement.
- b) A student who requires retake exams in two blocks in one academic year may meet the conditions for academic probation. Refer to the [Academic Probation Policy](#).

F. Unsatisfactory Performance in Medical Knowledge

1) Overall Medical Knowledge Score

- a) Students must receive an overall block/course Medical Knowledge (MK) score equal to or greater than 70% to receive an overall block/course grade of Pass.
- b) MK scores will not be rounded up under any circumstances.

2) Opportunity for Remediation

- a) A student who fails a block due to Unsatisfactory performance in Medical Knowledge will be given the opportunity to remediate that block unless the Student Progress Committee determines otherwise.
- b) Only one block per academic year can be remediated.
- c) A student is allowed only one attempted remediation per block.
- d) If the student passes the remediation, the original Fail grade for the block will remain on the student's transcript. The block will be entered on the transcript a second time at the next offering of the block with a grade of Pass.
- e) If the student fails the remediation, the student will be required to repeat the block during the academic year.
 - 1. Failure of the remediation is not recorded on the student's transcript.
 - 2. Failure of the remediation does not constitute a separate block failure for purposes of the policy on academic dismissal.
 - 3. Failure of the remediation will be reported to the Student Progress Committee.
 - 4. **PCAMP:** The student must meet with the Student Progress Committee to design an academic support plan.

3) Process for Remediation

- a) Remediation of a first-year block will take place during the summer break. Remediation of a second-year block will take place during the Step 1 study period. This allows 4–8 weeks for a remediation program.
- b) The format of remediation will be developed by the block director and a content expert(s) from the block and an educational expert from the Office of Student Success.
- c) At the end of the remediation, the student must take a comprehensive exam. The structure of the exam will be determined by the block director in consultation with the Office of Student Success. The remediation exam may be written by block faculty or may be a shelf exam.
- d) A summer remediation final examination must occur at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the upcoming academic year.

- e) All students taking a remediation exam for a block will do so at the same time and date. If a student is unable to take the remediation exam when scheduled, the student must follow the [Attendance and Absence Policy](#).
- f) Resources for content questions will be provided on a periodic schedule during the remediation period.
- g) Scores on the remediation comprehensive exam will be posted in MedLearn within 24 hours after the exam has been administered. Students will be notified of their score and their block grade by the block director.
- h) Block directors will provide feedback to the student about their progress toward passing the remediation at the mid-point of the remediation.

G. Required Participation in Academic Support Programs

1) Requirements to Develop an Individualized Study Plan

- a) Once a student has received a score below 75% on any block exam (excluding any standalone practical exam) during the Preclerkship Phase, the student is required to work with the Office of Student Success to develop and follow an approved individualized study plan.
- b) This individualized study plan may include participation in some or all of Student Success academic support services.
- c) Any exception to this plan must be discussed with and approved by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and is subject to approval by the Student Progress Committee.

2) Requirement for USMLE Step 1 Preparation

- a) The Office of Student Success will identify MS2 students at risk of failing the USMLE Step 1 board exam using a combination of the following data: MCAT scores, cumulative Medical Knowledge (MK) score of less than 75% across all blocks at the end of Advanced Topics, NBME practice exam performances based on national data recommendations, and other data sources not listed.
- b) These students will be required to develop an individualized study plan that may include participation in resources recommended to prepare for the USMLE Step 1 board exam.
- c) Scores from re-take exams will not be used to calculate the cumulative MK score.
- d) Any exception to this plan must be discussed with and approved by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and is subject to approval by the Student Progress Committee.
- e) Any failure to abide by this policy will result in a meeting with the Student Progress Committee at which the student will be required to explain their plan for academic success.

3) Procedures

- a) **Individualized Study Plan:** A student who scores less than 75% on a block exam is notified by the block director that the student is required to meet with a learning specialist in the Office of Student Success (OSS) to develop an individualized study plan. The Block Director also notifies the learning specialists in the OSS. The learning specialists notify the Student Affairs House

Dean assigned to the student at the weekly Student Success meeting where the individualized study plans are discussed and reviewed. In addition, the student and the student's Societies mentor review the grade entered in MedLearn and meet to discuss the student's academic difficulty.

- b) **USMLE Step 1 Preparation:** At the end of Advanced Topics, Curricular Affairs will provide the OSS with a list of students who have scored less than 75% on the MK competency across all blocks. MCAT and NBME practice exam scores will also be collected and analyzed for all individuals preparing for USMLE Step 1. Upon final analysis based on national data recommendations, the OSS will contact the students to inform them of their requirement to develop an approved individualized study plan.
- c) The OSS will provide students with meeting dates, times, and locations. Each student will be required to reply and state that they understand they are taking responsibility for their academic success by adhering to the approved study plan.

H. Repeating an Academic Year

- 1) A student who meets any of the following conditions will be deemed to not be making acceptable academic progress. The student will be required to withdraw from the academic year and repeat the year at a time decided by the Student Progress Committee (SPC), in consultation with the student.
 - a) The student fails any two preclerkship blocks in 1 year or the same course twice at any time during the Preclerkship Phase.
 - b) The student receives unsatisfactory performance in the same competency twice in 1 year.
 - c) The student receives unsatisfactory performance in two different competencies within 1 year.
- 2) This policy includes unsatisfactory performance in either a single course or multiple courses, including consecutive, non-consecutive, and concurrent courses.
- 3) For the Medical Knowledge competency, unsatisfactory performance for the sake of this policy is determined after any retake exam.
- 4) For the Professionalism competency, unsatisfactory performance is determined before reassessment.
- 5) If a student meets the conditions to repeat an academic year as outlined by policy, the student will be invited to meet with or submit a personal statement to the SPC within 45 calendar days to discuss their progress and academic plan.
- 6) A student required to withdraw and repeat an academic year may appeal to the Student Appeals Committee within 5 business days of receiving the Notice to Repeat an Academic Year from the SPC. Appeals must follow the parameters outlined in the [Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#) and the [Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#).

II. Clerkship and Transition to Residency Phases

A. Required Survey Completion

- 1) Students must complete assigned program evaluation surveys for each clerkship, preceptor, and assigned site within a clerkship and for all clinical electives supervised by University of Arizona faculty.
 - a) Not completing assigned evaluations may impact a student's Professionalism grade for that clerkship or elective.
- 2) Students must complete assigned program evaluation surveys for required courses in the Clerkship and Transition to Residency Phases.
- 3) Students must complete assigned end-of-phase surveys on the Clerkship and Transition to Residency Phases.
 - a) Students will be provided with dedicated sessions to complete these surveys, during Intersessions II for the Clerkship Phase survey, and during a required course in the last semester of the program for the Transition to Residency Phase survey.

B. Grading in the Transition to Clerkships Course

- 1) The two grades available for this course are Pass and Fail.
- 2) The student's grade is based on their attendance and participation.
- 3) A student must receive approval from the course director for any absence in the course.
- 4) If a student has an excused absence for a session, the student must arrange with the course director to make up the session.
- 5) An unexcused absence can result in a failure of the course at the discretion of the course director.
- 6) A student may not progress to Clerkships until they pass the Transition course.

C. Mid-Clerkship Formative Feedback in Clerkships

- 1) Formative feedback for each student is required and must occur at the midpoint of each clerkship rotation that is 4 weeks or longer. This is documented in the Mid-Clerkship Formative Feedback form and must include narrative assessment (i.e., written comments from faculty that assess student performance and progress toward meeting specific objectives in the clerkship).
- 2) The student's performance must be reviewed in a face-to-face Mid-Clerkship Feedback Session with a clinical instructor.
 - a) During this session, the instructor and student will review the Mid-Clerkship Formative Feedback form.
 - b) The student and clinical instructor must sign the Mid-Clerkship Formative Feedback form.

D. Grading in Clerkships

- 1) The grade in a clerkship is based on a student's performance in the competencies.
- 2) The grade is a composite grade, using various assessment tools that are approved by the Tucson Educational Policy Committee (TEPC).
- 3) If the student is at a community clerkship site and there is only one evaluator, a grade of Incomplete (I) is recorded until the evaluation is received.
- 4) The clerkship grading options for the final composite grade are Honors, High Pass, Pass, or Fail (H, HP, P, F).

- a) **Effective for the Class of 2027 (beginning March 3, 2025):**
 - 1. The composite clerkship grade of “Honors” is awarded to students with composite grades in the top 30% of all student scores.
 - 2. “High Pass” will be awarded to those students whose score falls in the top 30–60% and meets one of the following conditions:
 - a. Excelled in either the exam or the clinical grade but not both, or
 - b. Is outstanding in all areas and is close to an Honors score but does not achieve it.
 - b) **Effective for the Class of 2026 and Prior Classes:**
 - 1. The composite clerkship grade of “Honors” is awarded to students with composite grades in the top 25% of all student scores.
 - 2. “High Pass” will be awarded to those students whose score falls in the top 26–50% and meets one of the following conditions:
 - a. Excelled in either the exam or the clinical grade but not both, or
 - b. Is outstanding in all areas and is close to an Honors score but does not achieve it.
 - c) The Tucson Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee (TCCS) will annually review procedures for determining Honors and High Pass and revise as needed.
 - d) A student must achieve at a minimum a “Meets Expectations” assessment in every competency on the clinical assessment form in order to receive either a P, HP, or H for the clerkship. Receiving “Below Expectations” or “Far Below Expectations” in any competency will result in a failing grade (F) in the clerkship.
- 5) The composite grade is comprised of four components that sum to 100%.
- a) **15% summative medical knowledge exam component**
 - 1. Each clerkship will set the minimum passing score on its exam.
 - 2. The exam must be an NBME shelf exam or self-designed.
 - b) **15% clerkship activities component (e.g., case presentations, professionalism, etc.)**
 - 1. Activities are set by the clerkship director and must be approved by the TCCS and TEPC using the Clerkship COYOTE (Course Oversight & Yearly Operational Tracking Evaluation) Form.
 - 2. These activities must be clearly and transparently communicated to faculty, residents, and students at orientation to the rotation and in the clerkship syllabi.
 - c) **50% clinical assessment form**
 - 1. Comments on the clinical assessment form must achieve the following:
 - a. Incorporate specific narrative examples of the competencies being assessed.
 - b. Align with and clearly convey the overall grade of H, HP, P, or F.
 - d) **20% workplace-based assessment (WBA)**
 - 1. Students will receive either 20% or 0% for this component of the composite grade.

2. To receive 20% for the WBA component of the composite grade, students must:
 - a. Obtain a minimum of one WBA form per week for each week of patient interaction in the clerkship rotation.
 - i. A minimum of two faculty members and two residents must complete WBAs for the learner. If no resident is present in a clinical rotation (e.g., rural rotations, some community clinic rotations), then only the attending assesses the learner.
 - b. Be assessed on their progression in a minimum of four different Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) by the end of each clerkship rotation. Each clerkship director sets the specific EPAs, which are documented in the syllabi and communicated to teaching attendings, preceptors, resident educators, and students.
3. A student will receive 0% for the WBA component of the composite grade if they meet either of the following conditions:
 - a. One or more of the requirements, stated above, are not met.
 - b. A party other than the faculty or resident in the rotation completes the WBA (e.g., peer, friend, family member, etc.). This constitutes academic dishonesty and is subject to consequences outlined in the [Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#).
- 6) The clerkship director is responsible for the final determination of each student's grade. The comments submitted with the final grade must incorporate specific narrative examples of the competencies being assessed that align with and clearly convey the overall grade of H, HP, P or F.
 - a) All final composite grades and comments must be submitted within 6 weeks of the rotation block ending.
 - b) All grade changes following the posting of the final grade must follow the [Grade Appeals Policy](#).
- 7) Clerkship Exams: Failures and Retakes**
 - a) **4-Year MD Program:** If a student fails a clerkship exam, they have one opportunity to retake the exam.
 1. With the one exception outlined below (see a2), if a student needs to schedule a retake clerkship exam during the Clerkship Phase, the exam must be scheduled at the next Winter or Spring academic break.
 - a. The "next" break will be determined by the timing of the results of the first exam and the time it takes to order a new exam.
 - b. If a student is scheduled for their Ambulatory Medicine clerkship before their next Winter or Spring academic break, the student can request to the Assistant Dean, Clinical Competency to retake a shelf exam on the last Friday of the Ambulatory Medicine clerkship. The request must be approved by the

Assistant Dean, Clinical Competency and Ambulatory Medicine clerkship director. Requests to retake an exam during the Ambulatory Medicine clerkship must be received by the Assistant Dean, Clinical Competency a minimum of 14 days before the proposed exam date.

2. A retake clerkship exam cannot be scheduled during a clerkship, except for the Ambulatory Medicine clerkship as outlined above, or Intersessions I or II.
 3. If a student needs to schedule a retake clerkship exam during the Transition to Residency Phase of the curriculum, the student will arrange their schedule to accommodate a week without curricular requirements and will schedule the retake clerkship exam at the end of that week. Possible exam retake dates can be provided by Curricular Affairs.
 4. A student who requires retake exams in any two clerkships (including the same clerkship twice) may meet the conditions for academic probation. Refer to [Academic Probation Policy](#).
 5. A student who fails a second clerkship exam before completing the retake clerkship exam for a previous failure must stop academic progress and meet with the Student Progress Committee to agree on a plan for the student to complete the retake clerkship exams. If a student must schedule multiple retake clerkship exams, the student must pass all exams before resuming clinical training.
- b) **PCAMP:** If a student fails a clerkship exam, they have one opportunity to retake the exam.
1. If a student needs to schedule a retake clerkship exam during the Preclerkship Phase, then the exam must be scheduled at the next Winter or Spring academic break.
 - a. The “next” break will be determined by the timing of the results of the first exam and the time it takes to order a new exam.
 2. A retake clerkship exam cannot be scheduled during a clerkship or Intersessions I.
 3. If a student needs to schedule a retake clerkship exam during their third academic year, then the exam must be scheduled during their final semester.
 4. Possible exam retake dates can be provided by Curricular Affairs.
 5. A student who requires more than one retake exam during clerkships must meet with the SPC to design an academic support plan.
 6. A student who requires retake exams in any two clerkships may meet the conditions for academic probation. Refer to [Academic Probation Policy](#).
- c) A student who passes a retake clerkship exam will receive a grade of Pass and will not be eligible for Honors or High Pass.

- d) **4-Year MD Program:** If a student fails a clerkship retake exam, the student will receive a grade of Fail in the clerkship and will be required to repeat the clerkship.
- e) **PCAMP:** If a student fails a clerkship retake exam, the student will receive a grade of Fail in the clerkship and must meet with the Student Progress Committee to design an academic support plan, which may include de-acceleration of their MD program.

8) Repeating a Clerkship

- a) A student who is repeating a clerkship must complete all components and requirements for the clerkship regardless of whether the student completed those components during the initial attempt at the clerkship. Previous work cannot be resubmitted. Students repeating a clerkship are eligible for final clerkship grades of "Honors" and "High Pass."

E. Grading in Interessions

- 1) The Interessions I course is 1 week long and the Interessions II course is 2 weeks long, and each are graded independently.
 - a) The final grading options are Pass or Fail.
 - b) Assessment is based on performance in each competency.
 - c) If a student receives an Unsatisfactory in any competency, the student has failed the course.
- 2) Attendance is required at all activities.
 - a) The course director must approve any absence.
 - b) If a student has an excused absence for a session, the student must arrange with the course director to make up the session.
 - c) An unexcused absence can result in a failure of the course at the discretion of the course director.
- 3) The Medical Knowledge (MK) competency is based on exams, administered at the end of Interessions week(s).
 - a) If there is more than one exam, each exam will contribute equally toward the final MK grade.
 - b) If at the end of the course the student has not met the criteria for satisfactory performance in MK, they will be offered one opportunity to take another examination, called a retake exam.
 - c) The retake exam will be comprehensive, covering Interessions material addressed across the week(s).
 - d) The retake exam will be scheduled by the course director.
 1. **4-Year MD Program:** The retake exam will be scheduled within 4 weeks after the end of Interessions
 2. **PCAMP:** The retake exam for Interessions I will be scheduled within 4 weeks after the end of the course. The retake exam for Interessions II will be scheduled before Interessions II has ended.
 - e) Passage of the retake exam will result in satisfactory performance in the MK competency.

- f) Failure of the retake exam will result in unsatisfactory performance in MK and therefore failure of the Interessions course.
- 4) **4-Year MD Program:** If a student fails one of the Interessions courses, the student must repeat the failed Interessions course in the Transition to Residency Phase.
 - a) The student, in conjunction with their House Dean and in consultation with the Office of Student Records, will designate week(s) in their 4th year that is/are equivalent to the duration of the Interessions course. During that time, the student cannot be enrolled in other medical curriculum courses.
 - b) The student will be required to submit one to three papers on topics decided by course director. The topics will cover broad integrative content areas from the Interessions course.
 - 1. The student will be expected to review relevant podcasts and MedLearn materials from the Interession course, and the student will be required to research additional information from literature sources (articles, textbooks, etc.).
 - 2. The paper will be evaluated by relevant faculty and given a grade of Pass/Fail. The paper(s) must be scholarly and include references.
 - 3. The student can receive either a Pass or Fail grade for the repeat of the Interessions course and must pass the written paper.
 - 4. If a student fails the repeat of the Interessions course, it will be a second failure of the same course and the student would be subject to academic dismissal, as per the [Policy on Dismissal from the College of Medicine](#).
- 5) **PCAMP:** If a student fails one of the Interessions courses, the student will be required to meet with the Student Progress Committee to develop an academic support plan.

F. End-of-Clerkship OSCE Examination

- 1) Students must independently pass both the Arizona Clinical Interview Rating (modified) (ACIRm) and Integrated Clinical Encounter (ICE) components of the end-of-clerkship OSCE exam. The passing score on each component shall be 65%.
- 2) The end-of-clerkship OSCE exam will take place twice each year, approximately 6 months apart. The first administration of the exam will be scheduled at the end of the Clerkship Phase (Interessions II); the second administration of the exam will occur approximately 6 months later.
 - a) If a student has not completed their clerkships by Interessions II, they will take the exam during the second administration.
 - b) If a student is unavailable to take the OSCE due to a clinical elective, this will need to be discussed with the House Dean, and a special accommodation will be designed in collaboration with the Director of OSCE, Director of Interprofessional Clinical and Professional Skills (ICaPS), Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs, and the respective House Dean.
- 3) A student may retake the end-of-clerkship OSCE under the following circumstances:
 - a) If a student does not pass the end-of-clerkship OSCE on the first attempt (as outlined above—passing both ACIRm & ICE), they will retake the exam during the second administration.

- b) If a student does not pass the exam on the second attempt, they may sit for an OSCE retake in the B semester of their fourth year with the third-year class.
- c) The inability to pass the third attempt may result in postponing graduation. Successful passage of the end-of-clerkship OSCE is a graduation requirement (see Section I. Graduation Requirements in the [Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#)).

G. Grading in Electives

- 1) The final grade in an elective course is based on a student's performance in all the competencies.
 - a) A student must achieve satisfactory performance in every competency, as a minimum requirement, to receive a "Pass" for the elective. Unsatisfactory performance in any competency will result in a failing grade in the elective.
 1. All electives must complete a final grade report form that includes the Final Report of Faculty Assessment of Student Performance in an Elective at the end of the elective.
 - a. The final grade report form must contain narrative assessment of student performance.
 - b. The final grade report form is stored by the Department, a copy is submitted to the course administration system for recording the final grade on the student's transcript, and a copy is included in the student's file.
 - c. Information on the final grade report form will be used in the Dean's letter.
- 2) The four grading options for electives are Honors, High Pass, Pass, or Fail, which are submitted on the final grade report form.
 - a) The grade will be a composite grade, using the standard final grade report form, and other evaluation tools that are approved by the Tucson Electives Subcommittee.
 - b) An elective will determine its own formulas for calculating the composite score. The formula must be documented and communicated to students in the orientation materials for the elective.
- 3) A failure in an elective course is recorded on a student's transcript and its units do not accrue toward graduation requirements.
 - a) If a student fails a selective that is required for graduation (e.g., Surgery Subspecialty or Subinternship), the student must pass a selective in the same subspecialty that fulfills the specific requirement. However, the remedial selective rotation may be taken at a different site from the original selective.
 - b) If a student fails an elective that accrues generally toward the total number of units needed for graduation, the student must complete and pass another elective to meet the required number of units.
 - c) **PCAMP:** A PCAMP student who fails an elective course must meet with the SPC to design an academic support plan.

H. Incomplete Grades

- 1) The grade of Incomplete (I) may be awarded only at the end of a course when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Students must be passing the course at the time the I grade is awarded. The I grade is not to be awarded in place of a failing grade or when the student is expected to repeat the course; in such a case, a grade other than I must be assigned. Students must make arrangements with the course director to receive an I grade before the end of the course.
- 2) Curricular Affairs, course directors, and students must complete and sign the Report of Incomplete Grade Form. The form outlines what course work must be completed by the student for the I grade to be removed and replaced with another grade. On the form, the instructor states: 1) which assignments or exams should be completed and when; 2) how this work will be graded; and 3) how the student's grade will be determined after the required work has been completed and assessed. If the student needs to complete work other than taking or retaking an exam, then both the course director and student sign the agreement, and both should retain copies. A copy of the signed agreement is also sent to the Office of Curricular Affairs and becomes part of the student's academic record.
- 3) After the coursework is completed, the course director assigns the appropriate grade in Oasis and on the UAccess Grade Roster.
- 4) If the I grade is not removed within 1 year from the last day of the course, the I grade will convert to a failing grade. The 1-year limit may be extended for 1 additional year if approved by the course director and associate dean of curricular affairs. A request to extend the assigned deadline must be put in writing by the student and submitted to the course director and associate dean of curricular affairs at least 14 business days before the assigned I grade becomes a failing grade. The request must provide the reason as to why a deadline extension is requested and must include appropriate documentation. Only one request for an extension will be considered.
- 5) All time limits are inclusive of leave(s) of absence.

III. Timing and Completion of USMLE Examinations

A. NBME Comprehensive Exam

- 1) Students in the preclerkship curriculum must take two formative assessments of their exam preparedness (commonly referred to as the "Mock USMLE exams") in advance of the actual Step 1 examination. A student must take the exam at the time assigned to them by the College of Medicine – Tucson. In the case of a student taking a leave of absence or some other extraordinary circumstances, the student must be excused in advance by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Students requiring rescheduling of exams may be charged a fee.
- 2) This policy on NBME comprehensive exams is in place for the benefit of students and for curricular evaluation purposes. Preclerkship students will be required to take diagnostic exams constructed by the NBME. Exam results will not be recorded in official records or affect student progress, and students will not be asked to do any preparation for the tests other than what they are already engaged in for their current courses. By taking the exams, students will be given exposure to the USMLE testing methods, and their

performance will provide them with some guidance as to their readiness for the Step exams. The exam items have been normalized against a national population, based on subsequent Step 1 and 2 results, thus students will be able to compare their performance against a reliable standard.

B. 4-Year MD Program: Timing of USMLE Step 1

- 1) All students must take the USMLE Step 1 within 3 years of the initial date of matriculation. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the College of Medicine – Tucson.
- 2) All students must complete the USMLE Step 1 for the first time 8 calendar days prior to the start of their first clerkship.
- 3) All students are encouraged to take the Transition to Clerkships course offered at the beginning of the Clerkship Phase. Students can take the Transition to Clerkships course offered at the beginning of the Clerkship Phase even if they have not completed their first attempt at the USMLE Step 1.
- 4) Students cannot take the USMLE Step 1 while enrolled in the Transition to Clerkships course.
- 5) Extensions to take the USMLE Step 1 are limited to:
 - a) Students who need to remediate preclerkship coursework after the completion of the Preclerkship Phase.
 - b) Students on an academic delay as approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.
 - c) Students on a Non-Medical Leave of Absence approved by the Student Progress Committee (SPC).
 - d) Students on a Medical Leave of Absence approved by Campus Health Services.
- 6) Any student who postpones taking the USMLE Step 1 without the approval of SPC and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs will be dismissed from the College of Medicine – Tucson.
- 7) All students must pass the USMLE Step 1 before taking the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK).
- 8) Enrollment in courses following an initial attempt at USMLE Step 1:
 - a) A student who has completed Step 1 may begin their first clerkship rotation while their result is pending.
 - b) In the case of a student in a dual-degree program, the student must take the USMLE Step 1 before beginning any coursework toward their non-M.D. degree.

C. PCAMP: Timing of USMLE Step 1

- 1) PCAMP students must take and pass the USMLE Step 1 in the 2nd year of their program, before beginning their Clerkship Phase. Failure to do so will require a student to meet with the Student Progress Committee to develop an academic support plan.
 - a) A PCAMP student who has completed Step 1 may begin their Clerkship Phase while awaiting their exam results.
- 2) All PCAMP students must pass the USMLE Step 1 before taking the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK).

D. Non-Progression Following Failure of First Attempt at Step 1

- 1) A student who does not achieve a passing score on the student's first attempt at the USMLE Step 1 may not enroll in any medical school curricular course, including any course for any dual-degree program, until after the student has taken the Step 1 exam a second time. The sole exception is that the student may enroll in courses that are approved by the Office of Student Success and that serve to prepare for another attempt at Step 1.
- 2) If, while in clinical training, a student learns of a failure on the student's first attempt at Step 1, the student must meet with Student Affairs and the Office of Student Success. The student may continue clinical training until the end of the block in which the student is enrolled. Decisions on continuation of clinical activity will be tailored to the needs of the student, based on academic and non-academic factors. At the end of the clinical activity/clerkship in which the student is enrolled, the student may not advance to another clinical activity/clerkship until the student has retaken Step 1. If the student is enrolled in a course, the student may complete the course, but then must stop.
- 3) After completing a second attempt at USMLE Step 1, the student may enroll in a new clerkship rotation, as determined by Student Affairs and the Office of Student Success, while awaiting the student's score on the second attempt. The student may not enroll in any course contributing to a dual-degree program, however, until a passing score has been posted.
- 4) If the student learns of a failure on the student's second attempt at Step 1 while in clinical training, as with failure of the initial attempt, the student may continue clinical training until the end of the block in which the student is enrolled. Decisions on continuation of clinical activity will be tailored to the need of the student, based on academic and non-academic factors. At the end of the clinical activity/clerkship in which the student is enrolled, the student may not continue in a subsequent clinical activity/clerkship rotation until a passing score has been posted.
- 5) The student is expected to actively engage in remedial efforts to improve the student's performance on the USMLE Step 1. For example, the student may enroll in a Step 1-preparation course offered by the University or outside the University. If needed, the student will be enrolled in an independent study and will be supervised by the Office of Student Success. As part of the independent study, the student will be required to meet weekly and have their study supervised by the Office of Student Success.

E. Limitations on Multiple Attempts at USMLE Step 1 Exam

- 1) A student must obtain approval from the Student Progress Committee before scheduling a third or any additional attempts at the USMLE Step 1.
- 2) The Student Progress Committee will consider the following criteria in deciding whether to approve a request:
 - a) Progress on Q bank questions and practice exams.
 - b) Recommendations of the student's Learning Specialist and House Dean.
 - c) The student's previous efforts in preparing to successfully pass the USMLE Step 1, including their ability to meet benchmarks of their study plans.
- 3) If an additional attempt is approved, the Student Progress Committee will review the student's study plan and set a deadline for the next attempt at the exam.

- 4) All students must pass the USMLE Step 1 within 1 calendar year (12 months) after the date of their first attempt. A student who has not passed 1 year after their first attempt may be subject to academic dismissal.
 - a) The exact deadline for a calendar year will be postponed only until a pending score is posted for an exam that was taken before the 1-year deadline. No further attempts after the 1-year deadline will be allowed.

F. Timing of USMLE Step 2 CK

- 1) **4-Year MD Program:** Students must take the USMLE Step 2 CK for the first time by Friday of the 3rd week of August of their 4th year to ensure score availability for the residency application cycle.
 - a) In the case of a student taking a leave of absence that has been approved by the Student Progress Committee, they must take the USMLE Step 2 CK by another time determined by the Student Progress Committee.
 - b) If a student wishes to take the USMLE Step 2 CK after mid-August, the student must meet with their House Dean and obtain their approval.
- 2) **4-Year MD Program:** Every student must have passed the USMLE Step 2 CK within 1 calendar year (12 months) after the date of their first attempt. A student who has not passed within 1 year of their first attempt will be subject to academic dismissal.
 - a) The exact deadline for a calendar year will be postponed only until a pending score is posted for an exam that was taken before the 1-year deadline. No further attempts after the 1-year deadline will be allowed.
- 3) **PCAMP:** Students must take and pass the USMLE Step 2 CK by December 31 of their third year to ensure completion of their program within the allotted 3-year period.

IV. Required Academic Timeframes

A. 4-Year MD Program

1) Effective with the Class of 2027:

- a) All students must satisfactorily complete the Preclerkship Phase within 3 years of their matriculation date.
 1. A student will be deemed to have completed the Preclerkship Phase upon an initial attempt at the USMLE Step 1. Progress in the clerkships may halt if a student fails to pass the USMLE Step 1. See Section III.B. [4-Year MD Program: Timing of USMLE Step 1](#).
- b) All students must satisfactorily complete all clerkships and Transition to Residency clinical experiences and electives and pass the USMLE Step 2 CK within 3 years of beginning the Clerkship Phase.
- c) All time limits are inclusive of leaves of absence, a repeat of an academic year, and retakes or remediation of any course, exam, or other requirement.

2) Effective for the Class of 2026 and Prior Classes:

- a) All students must satisfactorily complete the Preclerkship Phase within 3 years of their matriculation date.
 1. A student will be deemed to have completed the Preclerkship Phase upon an initial attempt at the USMLE Step 1. Progress in the clerkships

may halt if a student fails to pass the USMLE Step 1. See Section III.B. [4-Year MD Program: Timing of USMLE Step 1](#).

- b) All students must satisfactorily complete all graduation requirements within 6 years from their original matriculation date.
- c) All time limits are inclusive of a repeat of an academic year, and retakes or remediation of any course, exam, or other requirement but exclusive of leaves of absence.
- d) **Exception:** Dual-degree students in a College of Medicine – Tucson MD-PhD or MD-MPH program may exceed the 6-year limit to satisfy the requirements for the MD degree. However, dual degree students must satisfactorily complete the Preclerkship Phase within 3 years of matriculation and must satisfactorily complete all clerkships and Transition to Residency clinical experiences and electives and pass USMLE Step 2 CK within 3 years of beginning clerkships.

B. PCAMP

- 1) Students must satisfactorily complete the Preclerkship Phase strictly according to the timeframe stated in their academic calendar. See also Section III.C PCAMP: Timing of USMLE Step 1.
- 2) Students must satisfactorily complete all required clerkships and Transition to Residency clinical experiences and electives within 3 years of their matriculation date. See also Section III.F. [Timing of USMLE Step 2 CK](#).

Procedures

None

Related Information

Policies

- [COM-T Policy 1-102: Academic Probation Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-103: Policy on Dismissal from the College of Medicine](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-106: Student Progress Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-107: Student Appeals Committee Procedures](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-108: Grade Appeals Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 1-110: Curriculum Enrollment and Graduation Requirements Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 2-101: Attendance and Absence Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 2-102: Leave of Absence Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 3-104: Narrative Assessment Policy](#)
- [COM-T Policy 4-101: Honor Code Policy and Committee Procedures and Process for Dismissal](#)

Resources

- [Curriculum Resources \(Academic Calendars, Retake and Remediation Schedules\)](#)

Forms

- Report of Incomplete Grade

Revision History

2025/05/28: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to add required completion of required Clerkship/T2R course evaluations and to clarify the requirement for mid-clerkship formative feedback.

2025/03/13: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to add a requirement that a student meet with the block director following exam failure, clarify language regarding eligibility for retake exams, add a new section on Required Academic Timeframes to include progression requirements previously contained in the Dismissal Policy, and other minor edits and reorganization.

2024/12/11: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to the policy to change the clerkship grade distribution beginning with the Class of 2027's Clerkship Phase (effective March 3, 2025).

2024/9/24: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to the policy to include the Primary Care Accelerated Medical Pathway, move the Protocols and Standards for Exams to a standalone document, clarify required survey completion in all phases, and other policy upkeep/maintenance.

2024/3/27: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Limitations on Multiple Attempts at USMLE Step 1 Exam and Timing of the Step 2 CK Exam.

2024/1/31: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Grading in Clerkships and Timing and Completion of USMLE Examinations.

2023/8/9: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved adding a policy for Incomplete Grades in clerkship and transition to residency.

2023/3/31: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Timing of USMLE Examinations.

2023/3/22: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Repeating an Academic Year in preclerkship.

2022/4/28: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Intersessions Grading.

2021/10/13: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Required Participation in Academic Support Programs and Repeating an Academic Year in preclerkship.

2021/7/14: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions End-of-Clerkship OSCE Examination.

2021/7/14: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to Limitations on Multiple Attempts at USMLE Step 1 Exam and Timing of the Step 2 CK Exam.

2021/2/3: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions Grading in Clerkships.

2018/2/21: Revisions to Required Survey Completion (preclerkship).

2018/2/12: Revisions to Foundations of Medical Science Retake and Remediation.

2018/2/7: Revisions to Timing of USMLE Examinations.

2017/12/6: Revisions to Grading Policies for Electives.

2017/10/5: Revision to Foundations of Medical Science (Preclerkship) Retake and Remediation.

2016/11/2: Revisions to Non-Progression Following Failure of First Attempt at Step 1.

2016/8/3: Revisions to Timing of USMLE Examinations.

2016/6/1: Revisions to Limitations on Multiple Attempts at USMLE Step 1 Exam.

2014/6/4: Revisions to Required Survey Completion (preclerkship).

2014/3/5: Revisions to Required Participation in Academic Support Programs (preclerkship).

2013/10/16: Revisions to Required Survey Completion (clerkship and transition to residency).

2013/6/20: Policy revised.

2013/4/3: Revisions to Required Participation in Academic Support Programs (preclerkship).

2012/10/17: Policy revised.

2012/7/27: Policy revised.

2012/6/20: Revisions to Grading Policies for Transition to Clerkship Course.

2012/2/15: Policy revised.

2011/6/15: Revisions to Grading Policies for Transition to Clerkship Course.

2011/4/20: Policy revised, including Addition of Limitations on Multiple Attempts at USMLE Step 1 Exam.

2010/5/19: Policy revised.

2010/4/28: Policy revised.

2010/3/17: Revisions to End-of-Clerkship OSCE Examination.

2010/1/1: Addition of policy for NBME Comprehensive Exam.

2009/9/16: Initial policy approved to take effect 7/1/2010.