Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Grading Policy

Purpose: To clarify both the use of the Pass/Fail and tiered grading system across the four year curriculum, and required procedures governing grade reporting to students and the registrar.

For all courses:

- The grading system, its requirements, components and their weights will be communicated to the students in the course syllabus and during the course/clerkship orientation.
- Grades for each component of the final grade (quizzes, mid-clerkship feedback, etc.) will be posted in the Blackboard grade book for each student as soon as they are available.
- Final grades must be reviewed and signed by the course or clerkship director and submitted to the Registrar within 5 weeks of the end of the course or clerkship. If the course director is unavailable, grades may be signed by the Assistant or Associate Dean for UME.

The following courses are graded Pass/Fail:

- Scientific Foundations of Medicine
- Clinical Foundations of Medicine
- Foundations in Public Health, Ethics and Epidemiology
- Genes to Society
- Scholarly Concentrations
- All TIME Courses (years 1-4)
- Longitudinal Ambulatory Clerkship
- Transition to the Wards
- TRIPLE

For courses that utilize objective, multiple-choice examinations to determine the final grade, passing score for first test administration will be the lower of either 70% or 1.5 SD below the mean. See Remediation Policy for procedures for students who fail a course or required course section. See Attendance Policy for courses in which attendance is required in order to receive a grade of Pass.

In addition to final examinations, frequent feedback (formative or summative) to learners in the form of faculty/peer assessments, self-assessments, quizzes and numerical scores on written tests is recommended.

All students must take USMLE Step 1 by September 15 of Year 3 before they can continue with the clinical curriculum. Failure to pass USMLE Step 1 will require referral to the Promotion Committee for a discussion of the student’s progress to date. The USMLE Step 1 must be passed by the beginning of Quarter 2 of Year 3 in order to continue in the curriculum (i.e. clinical clerkships/electives).

The following courses are graded Honors, High Pass, Pass, Fail:

- Core Clinical Clerkships (Medicine, Neurology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, Women’s Health)
- Emergency Medicine
- Advanced Clerkship in Critical Care
- Sub-internships
- Elective rotations

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Core Clinical Clerkships

The grading system will be consistent for all core clerkships. For core clerkships that involve multiple sites, clerkship directors will assure grading consistency between sites (for example, similar 25% weighting of NBME subject exam and final grading scale), subject to oversight from the Office of Curriculum.

Grades for core clerkships will include, at a minimum, a standardized clinical performance evaluation and a written knowledge examination. The written exam will count as 25% of the final grade. When available and appropriate, the NBME clinical subject examination will be used. Regardless of the level of performance reflected in their clinical performance evaluations, basic clerkship students must pass the written knowledge examination to successfully pass the clerkship. For NBME/USMLE clinical subject examinations, students must score $\geq 5\text{th percentile (1.65 SD)}$, based on “total year” nationally posted reference ranges for the most recent academic year reported by NBME. For JHUSOM internally-developed written examinations, a passing score will be considered any score $\geq 60\%$.

Students failing the written medical knowledge exam will have a “U – Unsatisfactory” grade submitted to the Registrar, and will be discussed at the next Promotions Committee meeting. They may sit for the examination up to two additional times within 6 months of the first attempt, providing they remain enrolled as full time JHUSOM students in good academic standing. Scheduling of these examinations will follow the guidelines for off-cycle examination administration (see below). The U will remain on the transcript until remediation is complete or an F grade is submitted. Upon successful passage of the examination grade, the student’s basic clerkship grade can be changed to no higher than Pass. If the student has not begun remediation within six months, without permission to delay from the Associate or Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or if they fail the remediation exam twice, the U grade will be changed to Fail. All students who fail the medical knowledge exam will need to repeat the clerkship.

Advanced Clerkships, Sub-Internships, Clinical Electives

Clerkship directors may design a grading schema that is appropriate to the clerkship or elective objectives, subject to the following principles:

1. The final grading scale will consist of Honors, High Pass, Pass, or Fail.
2. Grades should assess multiple competencies relevant to the practice of medicine.
3. Multiple forms of assessment should be utilized, including, if possible, objective medical knowledge examinations.
4. When equivalent clerkships are offered at multiple sites (for example, various sub-internships or different critical care units), clerkship directors will assure assessment and grading consistency between sites, subject to oversight from the Office of Curriculum.

Scheduling Off-Cycle Subject Exam Administration

Students may need to take NBME Subject (Shelf) Examinations on dates other than those administered by the course or clerkship for different reasons. In some cases, a student has failed the first administration, and needs to retake the examination to remediate the grade for the course/clerkship in a timely manner. The SOM recognizes that students in this situation may prefer to retake the examination on a day when another clerkship is not administering the Shelf Examination in order to optimize performance. At other times, students have requested to take the examination on other days for pre-approved personal reasons. Students are responsible for seeking pre-approval for off-cycle exams due to personal reasons. Students who have to remediate and retake a clerkship exam must contact the clerkship director and coordinator to make arrangements for remediation and retake of an exam. If a student does not take a Shelf exam at the scheduled time without pre-approval of the clerkship director, they may be required to pay the cost of the makeup exam.

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