

## MEDICAL STUDENT POLICY

Title: <b>Examination Policy and Procedure</b>	
Relevant LCME Element(s): 9.4: Assessment System	Last approved: <b>11/1/2023</b>

### I. **PURPOSE**

Defines policies and procedures for internal written exams, NBME shelf exams, and USMLE Step 1 and 2 exams.

### II. **PERSONS AFFECTED:**

Medical students, educational deans

### III. **POLICY STATEMENT**

For all exams, Feinberg students must abide by the:

1. Student code of conduct (<https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/md-education/current-students/policies-services/policies/student-code-conduct.html>)
2. Feinberg Standards and Suitability for the Practice of Medicine (<https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/md-education/current-students/policies-services/policies/student-standards-suitability.html>)
3. In addition, students are expected to report any witnessed inappropriate behavior (<https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/md-education/current-students/policies-services/policies/observed-misconduct-policies.html>).

#### **FSM Summative Assessments**

The examination date will be announced at the beginning of the module or clerkship. Beginning and ending times will be announced at least two days before the exam and will be strictly adhered to.

Students who arrive late for an examination will not receive additional time to complete the exam.

All students are expected to attend examinations at the scheduled time. In the event of an acute illness, death of a family member, or other crisis, students should contact the appropriate individuals **prior** to the start of the exam.

- Phase 1 students should contact, via email or phone, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs at (312) 503-0506 **AND** the Student Support and Wellness coordinator at (312) 503-8798.
- Phase 2 and Phase 3 students should contact the clerkship director **AND** coordinator.

In the emergency situation where illness or other unexpected occurrence prevents a student from sitting for an examination at the scheduled time, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the module/clerkship director will consider the situation and decide an appropriate course of action regarding postponement of the exam.

Proctors will be present during every examination. Proctors may be graduate students, staff, or faculty members.

All personal belongings, including books, jackets, hats, book bags, audio devices, PDAs, cell phones, and other electronic devices are to be removed from desktops during examinations.

Personal breaks are allowed. If a break is necessary, the student must hand their scrap papers to the proctor before leaving the room. Personal belongings cannot be taken out during the break. The length of time during which the student is out of the room should not exceed 5 minutes. Examination time will **not** be extended for a student who has taken a break. Time extending beyond 5 mins will be noted as an exam irregularity by the proctor(s).

Students must electronically attest to the Code of Conduct at the beginning of the exam. During the exam, no examination questions will be changed, corrected, or interpreted as faculty are not present during the exam administration. If the student feels a question is wrong or ambiguous, the student may email the Senior Coordinator for Assessment after the exam with the specific concern and module leaders will be notified of the concern.

If a fire alarm sounds during an examination, all students must exit the building immediately. Upon return to the examination a revised ending time will be announced.

If a student wishes to reschedule a Phase 1 examination for a non-emergent reason, the student must petition the Assistant Dean for Learning and Academic Performance in writing at least two weeks in advance of the exam, stating the need for the requested rescheduling and a proposed alternate time for the exam according to the retake dates available. The student will receive a response in writing taking into consideration the reason for the proposed rescheduling, any history of prior requests, and the feasibility of rescheduling. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, students will rarely need to reschedule module examinations.

Unexcused missed examinations will result in failure of the exam.

### **NBME Subject Examination Policy**

Students are expected to take the NBME subject examination on the scheduled day during the clerkship rotation. If a student must postpone the exam due to illness or other emergency, the student must contact the clerkship coordinator and clerkship director as soon as possible before the exam begins. The student should work with the clerkship director/coordinator and the Senior Coordinator of Assessment to schedule a time to take the examination within 7 days of the original exam date unless other arrangements are made with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Students are expected to arrive on time to the NBME subject examination. Students who are late to the exam will **not** receive additional time to complete the exam. Being late for a shelf exam is considered a violation of professional conduct and may affect the final clerkship grade at the discretion of the clerkship director.

The passing score for NBME subject examinations in Phase 2 and 3 clerkships is set at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile from the national cohort for the most recent complete academic year, as published by the NBME. This cut point will remain the same for the entire academic year.

If the student fails the NBME Subject Examination but has completed all the other requirements of the clerkship, the final clerkship grade shall be an Incomplete until the student successfully passes the NBME Subject Examination. The student should meet with the clerkship director and will be referred to the Academic Support team to create a learning plan and will be provided resources as needed. The student must retake the examination within six months of completing the clerkship, unless otherwise approved by the Assistant Dean of Learning and Academic Performance. The student must select a date from the posted available re-examination dates and provide their desired date to the clerkship director/coordinator and the Senior Coordinator of Assessment at least two

weeks in advance.

Once a retake date is chosen by the student, it should not be cancelled or rescheduled without the approval of the clerkship director. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of an AWOME dean.

The final clerkship grade for a student who has failed their first attempt at the NBME Subject Examination and passes on their second attempt will be a Pass- they will not be eligible for High Pass or Honors.

If the student fails the examination a second time, the student will be required to:

- Meet with the clerkship director
- Meet with the Dean of Learning and Academic Performance
- Make plans to participate in additional time in the clerkship (minimum of 2 weeks, up to or including, a complete retake of the clerkship at the clerkship director's discretion)

If the student successfully completes the clerkship and passes the NBME Subject Examination on the third attempt, the final grade will be "Pass." Extra time required to complete the clerkship will be designated on the transcript.

If the student fails the NBME Subject Examination a third time, their grade will be a Fail and they will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee.

All Phase 2 NBME Subject Examinations must be passed or successfully remediated prior to any approved leave of absence, independent study, or dual degree pursuit between Phase 2 and Phase 3.

### **USMLE Step Examination Policy**

All students must pass USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 CK in order to graduate from Feinberg School of Medicine.

#### **USMLE Step 1:**

Passing the USMLE Step 1 examination is a requirement for advancement to Phase 2. Phase 1b (M2) students will usually take the Step 1 examination during the month of April (prior to the start of Introduction to Phase 2). The Academic Success Team may recommend students take their Step 1 exam at a later date based on academic performance during Phase 1.

A student must schedule AND sit for the examination within 60 days of the start of Phase 2 (Students CANNOT schedule Step 1 during Intro to Phase 2 or SAM week). If a student is unable to sit within this timeframe, they must meet with the Assistant Dean of Learning and Academic Performance to extend their eligibility period. If a student is unable to sit for Step 1 within six months of initial eligibility, they must petition the SPC to extend their Step 1 study time.

Students who fail their first attempt at Step 1 may complete their current clerkship. However, students may not begin another clerkship until they retake the Step 1 examination. A student who has failed USMLE Step 1 on the first attempt must retake the examination no later than six months after receipt of the score report. If a student cannot meet this deadline, they must appear before the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) to request an extension.

Students who fail the Step 1 examination on their first attempt must meet with the Director of Academic and Learning Support to finalize a plan to retake the exam. The director will provide feedback on a student's study plan. Once the study plan has been finalized, permission will be granted for the USMLE Step 1 retake.

If the re-examination is unsuccessful, the student may complete their current clerkship. They will then take a leave of absence to engage with a study plan informed by the Director of Academic and

Learning Support. The student must appear before the SPC and request permission to retake the examination for a third time. During the SPC request, the student must present a study plan and timeline to the SPC who will either approve or deny the request for a third USMLE retake.

If a student is granted permission to take the exam a third time, the student must sit for the exam no later than six months after receipt of the second score report. Failure to do so will result in an SPC appearance at which time outcomes such as dismissal from FSM will be considered.

Any student failing the Step 1 examination a third time will appear before the SPC. The SPC will consider outcomes, including dismissal from FSM, based on academic grounds.

### **USMLE Step 2 CK**

All students must pass USMLE Step 2 CK to fulfill graduation requirements. Students are required to sit for the Step 2 CK by the end of August of the academic year in which they will graduate. Students with extenuating circumstances or who are not applying for residency after graduation may petition the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for an adjustment to this requirement timeline if needed.

Step 2 CK must be taken prior to any approved leave of absence, independent study or dual degree pursuit between Phase 2 and Phase 3, unless approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If a student is granted this approval, they must take and successfully pass USMLE Step 2 CK prior to beginning Phase 3 rotations.

Students who fail the Step 2 CK must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Director of Academic and Learning Support. If a student does not pass the Step 2 CK examination on the second attempt, they will be placed on a leave of absence to focus on a study plan with assistance from the Assistant Dean of Learning and Academic Performance. The student must appear before the SPC and request permission to retake the examination for a third time. The student will need to present a study plan and timeline to the SPC. The SPC may approve or deny the request for a third USMLE Step 2 CK retake.

## **IV. REVISION HISTORY**

11/1/2023: Updated to reflect personnel changes for student meetings, to remove remote examination policies, and to reflect the requirement to sit for Step 1 of USMLE within 60 days of the start of Phase 2 OR meet with AWOME.

11/2/2022: Added requirement that Step 2 CK must be taken by the end of August of the academic year in which a student will graduate.

5/2/2022: Changed pass/fail cutpoint of NBME shelf exams to 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (approved 12/2021).

3/2/2022: Added requirements that Phase 2 NBME shelf exams must be passed prior to an approved leave and Step 2 CK must be taken prior to any approved leave and passed prior to Phase 3 rotations.

5/5/2021: Reinstated requirement to pass USMLE Step 1 to proceed to clerkships. Changed COVID-19 addendum regarding remote examinations to "Remote Exam Policy."

1/29/2021: Removed USMLE Step 2 CS requirement.

12/3/2020: Policy regarding USMLE Step 1 timing changed for AY 2020-21.

11/4/2020: Procedures revised to accommodate change in virtual exam monitoring.

6/17/2020: Procedures revised to accommodate virtual exams due to COVID-19.

## **V. APPROVING BODY:**

Curriculum Committee