

MEDICAL STUDENT POLICY

Title: Assessment Policy for Phase 1	
Relevant LCME Element(s): 9.4 Assessment System 9.7 Formative Assessment and Feedback	Last approved: 5/7/2025

I. **PURPOSE**

Outline how passing scores of summative assessments and Phase 1 grades are determined.

II. **PERSONS AFFECTED:**

Medical students, module leaders, element/thread leaders, Assistant Dean of Assessment

III. **POLICY STATEMENT**

Assessments

Summative assessments evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing the student's score against a standard or benchmark. Students are expected to achieve passing scores on all summative assessments including, but not limited to, written examinations, oral examinations, and performance assessments (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations, Clinical Performance Assessments, and practical exams). Faculty determine the passing scores for each assessment, which will vary by module and type. Students who do not pass a summative assessment must remediate it.

Curricular element and thread leaders may, with committee approval and data supporting need, elect to institute a cumulative performance benchmark when content is dispersed across the curriculum. Students not meeting the cumulative benchmark by the end of a phase will be given opportunity for additional practice.

Leaders of modules four weeks or longer in length are required to provide students with formative feedback on their knowledge acquisition at or around the mid-point of the module.

Peer feedback is considered to be formative in nature and does not count towards the final block grade.

Grades

Grades, which will be recorded on the official transcript, are determined at the conclusion of each academic block (each block is comprised of 2-4 organ-based modules). A composite score is calculated incorporating data from the assessments administered within each module. The percentage contribution toward the grade will vary according to the relative contribution of each Element/Thread; contribution is indicated in the block assessment blueprint distributed at the beginning of each block. The block faculty and faculty from the Assessment Subcommittee conduct a standard setting exercise to set the passing cut point for each block.

Grades Earned: Students whose composite block scores are greater than the passing cut point will receive a grade of "Pass" for the block. Students whose composite scores are below the passing cut point will meet with AWOME faculty to develop a study plan. If the work has been successfully remediated within the same academic year, a grade of "Pass" will be entered on the student's

transcript. If a student is not able to successfully remediate the work within the same academic year and must return to repeat all or some of the curriculum, an “Incomplete” will be recorded for the course(s) and the student will be reenrolled in the coursework in an upcoming academic year. If the coursework is then successfully remediated, “Pass” will be recorded for the second enrollment of the coursework and “Incomplete” will remain on the student’s transcript for the initial enrollment(s). A grade of “fail” will only appear on the transcript if a student is unable to successfully pass the required block remediation after multiple attempts or if a student does not participate in the approved study plan. Students who are marginally above the passing cut point will be notified that their performance was very close to the cut point and will be recommended to meet with AWOME faculty to develop an improvement plan. The internal designation of “pass with notification” is known to the student but does not appear on their official transcript.

Students with a repetitive pattern of poor academic performance will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee. Please see the SPC policy for more details.

(<https://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/md-education/current-students/policieservices/policies/student-promotions-committee-policy.html>)

IV. REVISION HISTORY:

5/7/2025: Detailed how “Incompletes” may appear on transcripts.

8/3/2022: Added description of how cumulative performance benchmarks may be set for elements and threads.

V. APPROVING BODY:

Curriculum Committee