MEDICAL STUDENT POLICY

Title: **Examination Policy and Procedure**	
Relevant LCME Element(s): 9.4: Assessment System	Last approved: **4/2/2025**

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 **and** the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in writing at least **one** week 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 no sooner than the last week of the clerkship and within the available assessment makeup dates following 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^{th} 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 Assistant 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.

IV. REVISION HISTORY

4/2/2025: Clarified timeline to take NBME shelf exams during clerkships.

11/6/2024: Moved information related to USMLE exams to separate policy.

4/3/2024: Clarified processes to schedule, reschedule, and remediate examinations.

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 10th 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