

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

SUBJECT: Grading Criteria in Pre-clerkship Courses Policy
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I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. To provide UH College of Medicine students and faculty with guidelines related to grading criteria for pre-clerkship courses, excluding Clinical Focus Sessions.
- B. To ensure the College of Medicine complies with Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation standards 9 and 9.7 for the medical education program.

II. BACKGROUND

As stated in the policy entitled *Timely Grade and Mid-Course/Clerkship Feedback Reporting*, the responsibility for assessing students rests with the faculty of the UH College of Medicine. Faculty have an obligation to the students, to the college, and to the larger society to set standards of achievement and award passing grades only to those students who have demonstrated mastery of the course material. In addition to assessment of students' knowledge and skills, the faculty have the obligation to determine whether students' behavior or conduct is consistent with professional standards and suitable for the practice of medicine. Furthermore, it is also the responsibility of the faculty to ensure students are clear as to the expectations for each course and how passing grades will be earned. This document, created by the Office of Medical Education and approved by the Curriculum Committee, outlines the grading criteria for UH College of Medicine pre-clerkship courses to ensure clarity and equity while awarding grades based on demonstration of mastery of content, not accumulation of points.

III. POLICY

Pre-clerkship Courses will have **two sets of course requirements**: (1) course assessments (both summative and formal formative) and (2) course professionalism (both attendance and conduct). Final grades for UH College of Medicine pre-clerkship courses will be “Pass” or “Fail” based on fulfilling course requirements for (1) course assessments (both summative and formal formative), (2) with no persistent or egregious issues for course professionalism (both attendance and conduct). See Table below. Students must pass requirements for both summative and formal formative to pass the course.

Course Assessments*	Description	Determination of “Pass”	Remediation
<p>Summative Assessments Examinations for performance grades</p>	<p>Exams <i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSCE (XX% of course grade) • Written exam (MCQ) (XX% of course grade) 	<p>Performance grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUST PASS cumulative final summative with score ≥ 70% <u>AND</u> • MUST PASS combination of all summative exams with score ≥ 70% (weight of each delineated in syllabus) 	<p>Remediation re-test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take and pass comparable cumulative assessment with score ≥ 70%

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<p>Formal Formative Assessments Required assignments for “formal formative feedback” ratings: “ME” (meets expectations), “BL” (borderline), or “DN” (does not meet expectations)</p>	<p>Required assignments <i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz • Simulation lab/ clinical skills sessions • SP checklist • Scholarly project activities 	<p>Performance feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Meets expectations (ME)”: Optional meeting between student and Course Director if student has any questions/comments/concerns • “Borderline (BL)”: Optional meeting between student and Course Director if student or Course Director has any questions/comments/concerns. Recommended if the student has received multiple BL ratings. • “Does not meet expectations (DN)”: Recommended meeting between student and Course Director or their designee to identify student deficits in learning and to determine academic or personal needs and appropriate remediation activities. 	<p>Remediation activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Student Feedback Form will be completed by faculty when appropriate and loaded into the student’s eMedley file. • Submission of this form will send an automatic alert to the Offices of Student Affairs and Academic Support and the Learning Community Mentors who will perform appropriate follow-up with the student if indicated.
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*Students must successfully complete requirements for both summative and formal formative assessments to pass the course.

<p>Professionalism**</p>
<p>Student Attendance Students must know and adhere to the UH College of Medicine Attendance Policy (located in UH College of Medicine Student Handbook), which includes showing up on time for course activities and submitting an Absence Report Form and emailing the Course/Clerkship Director as soon as students know that they will miss course activities.</p>
<p>Student Conduct Students must know and adhere to the UH College of Medicine Code of Professional Conduct (located in UH College of Medicine Student Handbook), which includes participating appropriately in all course activities.</p>

**Because of the integral nature of professionalism to all coursework and medical practice, students may fail a course due to persistent or egregious professionalism issues despite passing requirements for both summative and formal formative assessments.

A. Course Assessments - Summative

1. Purpose of summative assessments
 - Summative assessments are required and graded critical assessments/exams to demonstrate student mastery of content.
2. Structure for summative assessments
 - Summative assessments can be multiple choice exams (MCQs), short-answer questions, essay questions, Observed Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs), laboratory practicals, other, or a combination.

3. Grading for summative assessments
 - Students will earn performance grades (points or percentages) on summative assessments.
 - If the final summative assessment is cumulative [i.e., includes topics throughout course ($\geq 15\%$) and/or course material in which later information is dependent on knowing earlier information], students must earn a passing grade on the cumulative final to show mastery of course material.
 - If there is no cumulative final summative assessment, students must earn a passing grade for each summative assessment to show mastery of material throughout the course.
 4. Determination of passing requirements for summative assessments
 - Criteria for passing summative assessments includes (1) earning $\geq 70\%$ on the final exam and (2) earning $\geq 70\%$ across all summative assessments. The Course Director will define the weights of each exam and these will be delineated on course syllabus.
 - All quantitative grades will be reported to the hundredth decimal point. A score of 0.01-0.49 will be rounded down to the nearest whole number; a score of 0.50-0.99 will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Thus, a score of 69.50 should be rounded up to a passing 70. A score of 69.49 should be rounded down to a failing 69. There are no exceptions.
 5. Remediation for summative assessments
 - Students will be allowed a onetime re-take of a summative examination or comparable examination at a date to be specified by the Office of Medical Education.
 - Students must achieve a score of $\geq 70\%$ on the re-take examination to receive a passing grade regardless of scores on other graded assignments in the course.
- B. Course Assessments - Formal Formative
1. Purpose of formal formative assessments
 - Formal formative assessments are periodic required assignments throughout the course to provide student formal formative feedback so the student can measure their progress in learning to allow for sufficient time for remediation.
 2. Structure for formal formative assessments
 - Formal formative assessments will vary per course and may consist of case-based learning (CBL), problem-based learning (PBL), team-based learning (TBL), small group, lab activity, homework, MCQ quiz, standardized patient checklist, simulation lab activities, clinical skills trainings, student presentation, student project, other, or any combination of these.
 - Formal formative feedback can be verbal, written, categorical, or numerically scored with designated levels for the following ratings: “meets expectations,” “borderline,” or “does not meet” expectations” and will be consistently applied and documented for all students within courses at least once and by mid-course (see policy, *Timely Grade and Mid- Course/Clerkship Feedback Reporting*).
 - Faculty may provide students with additional informal opportunities for formative assessment (i.e., not required or graded) such as on-the-spot feedback, ungraded preparatory work, or individual self-assessments throughout courses, but these will not be considered formal formative feedback nor considered in the final course grade of “Pass” or “Fail.”
 3. Grading for formal formative assessments
 - Formal formative assignments are required activities.
 - For each formal formative assignment, students will not receive a quantitative

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grade per se which counts towards their final course grade. Rather, they will receive formal formative feedback in terms of ratings for “meets expectations (ME),” “borderline (BL),” or “does not meet expectations (DN)”.

- Course Directors have the responsibility for acting on this information to include determining appropriate remediation activities and documenting meetings with the student (see below).

The following actions may be taken by the Course Director:

- “Meets expectations (ME)”: Optional meeting between student and Course Director if student has any questions/comments/concerns
- “Borderline (BL)”: Optional meeting between student and Course Director if student or Course Director has any questions/comments/concerns. Recommended if the student has received multiple BL ratings.
- “Does not meet expectations (DN)”: Recommended meeting between student and Course Director or their designee to identify student deficits in learning and to determine academic or personal needs and appropriate remediation activities. .

4. Determination of requirements for Formal Formative assignments

- See standards for ratings above in section III.

5. Remediation for formal formative assessments

- Course Directors will meet with students as needed to discuss academic needs and to determine academic or personal needs and appropriate remediation activities.
- Appropriate documentation of the Course Director-Student meeting including discussion and necessary remediation activities, and/or need for referral to the Office of Student Affairs will be submitted on a Formal Formative Review form in the learning management system.
- Submission of this form will send an automatic alert to the Offices of Student Affairs and Academic Support and the Learning Community Mentors who will perform appropriate follow-up with the student if indicated.

C. Professionalism

1. Student Attendance

- The Office of Medical Education (OME) will be responsible for auditing and documenting student attendance for course activities.
- OME and Student Affairs will address violations of the UH College of Medicine Attendance Policy (located in the UH College of Medicine Student Handbook) with students and make the determination for excused or unexcused absences as well as course of action including make-up work or sessions.

2. Student Conduct

- Professional behavior is outlined in the UH College of Medicine Attendance Policy and UH College of Medicine Student Code of Professional Conduct.
- Faculty should address specific student conduct issues in their courses/clerkships.
- Faculty may document via email to OME and/ or Student Affairs, or on the Formal Formative Review form.
- Persistent and egregious violations of the UH College of Medicine Code of Professional Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Affairs (see *SPAC policy*).

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IV. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

- A. Course Directors are responsible for listing course requirements, which include both summative and formal formative assessments, on the syllabus (see policy for *Timely Grade and Mid-Course/Clerkship Feedback Reporting*).
- B. The Assistant Dean for Assessment will ensure Course Directors have both summative and formal formative assessments listed on course syllabi and will make use of both summative and formal formative grades by courses for program evaluation.

V. DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.	
Summative assessment	Required and graded critical assessments or exams to show mastery of content
Performance grade	Points or percentages earned for summative assessments
Formal formative assessments	Required assignments to provide uniform individual student feedback for quality of performance while learning
Feedback for formal formative assessment	Feedback may be categorical or numerically scored with designated minimums for, and provision of, one of the following feedback categories: “Meets expectations,” “Borderline,” or “Does not meet expectations”
Remediation	Assessment of student deficits and suggested activities for correction of deficits

Approval History		
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