

Medical Student Grading Policy

Effective Date: May 21, 2013

Responsible Party: University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Contacts: [Kevin Leon, MD](#), Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

POLICY ABSTRACT

This policy details the authority of course directors to determine the final course grade for medical students listed on official academic transcripts in accordance with established grading procedures. Academic transcripts from the UAB Heersink School of Medicine will contain an unabridged summary of a medical student's academic history. Grading categories used in pre-clinical and clinical courses are detailed and defined.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy establishes the final authority for grade determination and the grading categories utilized by the Heersink School of Medicine in both pre-clinical and clinical coursework.

SCOPE

The policy applies to all medical students who attend the Heersink School of Medicine.

POLICY

Grade Determination: The final course grade for a student is determined by the course director in accordance with established grading procedures. A number of methods of evaluation may be used to make this assessment, including but not limited to, written examinations, oral examinations, direct observation of students, written reports, oral presentations, and evaluations of professional conduct. Students should review the course syllabus for detailed information about grading for an individual course.

Appeal Process: Students have the right to appeal any grade/clinical evaluation up to 2 weeks following the posting of the assessment grade/clinical evaluation. This appeal should be first made to the course or clerkship director who will then consult with faculty involved in the course and other school administration. The course or clerkship director will inform the student of the decision. The student may appeal the course/clerkship director's decision to the associate dean for undergraduate medical education within 2 weeks following the course or clerkship director decision. The associate dean will review the information from the student and the course/clerkship director.

PROCEDURE

Academic Transcript: The Heersink School of Medicine academic transcript is an unabridged summary of the student's academic history. As such, all final course grades are recorded and posted to the student transcript.

Grade Definitions: The following grades and notations may appear on official transcripts:

Grade	Definition	Notes
P	Pass	<p>Preclinical Courses: Raw score 70 or higher on both the knowledge and individual and group performance component portions of the course. (Note: Raw scores range from 0 - 100)</p> <p>Clerkships have two major components: 1) Clinical performance and (2) NBME subject examination performance. Pass earned on both components. See Clerkship grading criteria.</p>
HP	High Pass in core clerkships	<p>Clerkships have two major components: 1) Clinical performance and (2) NBME subject examination performance.</p> <p>Students must pass both components, and achieve Honors in one to receive a grade of HP (High Pass);</p>
H (clerkship)	Honors in core clerkships	<p>Clerkships have two major components: 1) Clinical performance and (2) NBME subject examination performance.</p> <p>Students must achieve Honors in both components to receive a grade of H (Honors).</p>
H (pre-clinical)	Preclinical Honors	<p>Begins with Class of 2019. Students with a weighted raw score average of 92.0 or higher on all pre-clinical coursework are awarded Pre-clinical Honors. This Honors designation is based upon cumulative student performance in those pre-clinical courses that report a raw score (modules and Introduction to Clinical Medicine); overall cohort performance may also be considered. Courses in the pre-clinical curriculum which do not report a raw score (Patient, Doctor, and Society; Fundamentals; and Evidence-Based Medicine) are excluded from this calculation.</p>
F	Fail	Raw score less than 70
I	Incomplete	<p>A temporary notation assigned at the discretion of instructor, and only if the following three conditions are met: (1) The student, for nonacademic reasons beyond his or her control, is unable to complete course requirements; (2) The student is, according to the instructor's assessment, currently passing or has the potential for passing the course; and (3) The</p>

		student has made arrangements with the instructor, prior to the grade submission deadline, for completing course requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange with the instructor whatever action is needed to remove the Incomplete at the earliest possible date. A student cannot graduate with an Incomplete on their academic record.
N (clerkship)	Remediation required on NBME subject examination	Unsuccessful first attempt on NBME subject examination. N will be replaced with N/P or N/F depending on the outcome of second attempt of the same examination. N/P is considered a passing grade for the course; N/F is considered a failing grade for the course and no credit is given for any portion of the course. If the NBME subject exam is not retaken within the approved period of time, the student may retake the course. The original course grade remains an N. The student is not eligible to receive a grade of honors or high pass in the repeated course.
NC	No credit	A temporary notation used when unsuccessful attempt(s) on USMLE Step 1 preclude posting of a grade in a clerkship or clinical course. NC will be replaced with a grade upon receipt of a passing score on USMLE Step 1. A student cannot graduate with an NC on their academic record.
W	Withdrawn	Given only if the following two conditions are met: (1) A student opts to remain in coursework pending the decision of the Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC) and any subsequent appeal, and (2) The ultimate outcome of the SASC decision and/or appeal requires the student to end active enrollment prior to such a course's end date. No credit is given for any portion of the course.
WP	Withdrawn passing	Given at the discretion of the Course Director to students withdrawing from coursework prior to course completion. WP is typically given when the student could potentially pass the course if they remained enrolled. No credit is given for any portion of the course.

WF	Withdrawn failing	Given at the discretion of the Course Director to students withdrawing from coursework prior to course completion. WF is given when there is no way that the student could pass the course if they remained enrolled. Equivalent to a grade of F. No credit is given for any portion of the course.
X	Exempt	Satisfactorily completed equivalent medical school course previously
V	Waived	Granted for comparable academic experience or coursework

Preclinical Grading: In some preclinical courses, grading consists of scores on two components, the Knowledge component (typically assessed through examinations and quizzes) and the Individual and Group Performance component (typically assessed on skill-based activities, participation, professionalism, small group work, laboratory experiences, and projects). In preclinical courses where grading consists of a Knowledge component and an Individual and Group Performance component, students must pass both components in order to receive a passing grade for the course. A student who fails the Knowledge component (raw score below 70) will receive a grade of F for the course; a student who fails the Individual and Group Performance Component will receive a grade of F for the course.

In preclinical courses without separate Knowledge and Individual and Group Performance components, students must pass the course according to the grading system employed in the course (see course syllabus for details).

Begins with Class of 2019. Students with a weighted raw score average of 92.0 or higher on all pre-clinical coursework are awarded Pre-clinical Honors. This Honors designation is based upon cumulative student performance in those pre-clinical courses that report a raw score (modules and Introduction to Clinical Medicine); overall cohort performance may also be considered. Courses in the pre-clinical curriculum which do not report a raw score (Patient, Doctor, and Society; Fundamentals; and Evidence-Based Medicine) are excluded from this calculation. See also [Grades Other than Passing Policy](#).

Clerkship Grading: Clerkship grades (Pass, High Pass, Honors, or Fail) and numerical raw scores (0 – 100) will be based on two components: (1) Clinical performance (which may include an oral exam) and (2) NBME Subject Examination performance.

Students must pass both components to receive a grade of P (Pass); students must achieve Honors in one of the two components to receive a grade of HP (High Pass); students must achieve Honors in both components to receive a grade of H (Honors).

Note that clerkships may have additional clinical requirements that must be met to pass the clerkship (e.g., completing specific required clinical encounters, completing online modules).

The criteria for Clinical Honors and NBME Honors are specific to a graduating class. Links to documents describing graduating class Honors criteria are located on the [Policies & Procedures](#) page under the Academic tab in the Grading section. Each document also contains the passing score criterion for that graduating class and an explanation of raw score calculation.

HISTORY

A pass-fail grading system was instituted effective July 1, 2006, for the 2006-07 academic year for all courses offered by the School of Medicine at all campuses. Raw scores ranging from 0 to 100 continued to be assigned for administrative purposes, internal use, and individual student feedback only. They are not reported on transcripts or shared on Medical Student Performance Evaluations. All academic grades earned prior to this date remained as earned.

Created: May 21, 2013

Approved:

Revised: January 01, 2022

University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the medical school community.