

## **I. POLICY**

General Assessment Principles

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the purpose and procedures of academic assessment for the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program.

## **III. RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The Assistant Dean for Assessment and Learning Outcomes and Associate Dean for Educational Assessment and Evaluation will review this document annually. The Medical Education Committee shall review this document as needed, with input from the Curriculum Policy Subcommittee.

## **IV. ACCREDITATION REFERENCES**

LCME 8.2	Use of Medical Education Program Objectives
LCME 9.6	Setting Standards of Achievement
LCME 9.8	Fair and Timely Summative Assessment
LCME 11.5	Confidentiality of Student Educational Records
LCME 11.6	Student Access to Educational Records
SACSCOC 12.3	Student Rights
SACSCOC 12.4	Student Complaints

## **V. DEFINITION(S)**

**Assessment:** “The systematic use of a variety of methods to collect, analyze, and use information to determine whether a medical student has acquired the competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes) that the profession and the public expect of a physician” (2022-23 Liaison Committee on Medical Education [LCME] Data Collection Instrument for Full Accreditation Surveys, p. 146)

## **VI. DESCRIPTION**

### **General Assessment Principles**

Candidates for the MD degree must demonstrate the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined in the medical education program objectives. They must also demonstrate the judgment necessary for the safe and effective practice of medicine. Students will be regularly assessed during their training, both with regard to their academic performance and their professional development.

Assessments will be based on the goals and objectives of the curriculum and will serve the following purposes:

- Provide early detection of unsatisfactory or marginal performance in order to assist students to meet acceptable academic standards, or if necessary, to redefine educational and career goals.
- Document distinguished performance in a manner that benefits students' further educational and career planning.
- Certify students for graduation by documenting and ensuring students have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment essential for the practice of medicine.
- Document institutional progress toward educational goals and objectives and provide the information necessary to modify and strengthen the curriculum.

### **Holistic Assessment of Medical Students**

EVMS students are assessed throughout M1-M3 in six Areas of Distinction (AoDs). Not all six AoDs are reflected in the student transcript but the Medical Student Performance Evaluation will recognize student achievements in these six AoDs.

The six Areas of Distinction are:

- Clinical Skills
- Professionalism
- Medical Knowledge
- Scholarship/Research
- Leadership and Innovation
- Service to the Community

This Holistic Assessment approach is designed to recognize EVMS students' individual achievements when applying for residencies. Holistic Assessment creates formal recognition of skills, experiences, and attributes that are highly valued by EVMS. See the Holistic Assessment of Medical Students Policy.

### **Assessment Methodology**

Standards of acceptable performance are communicated to students at the beginning of each module, clerkship, course, and elective. Students may also need to meet specific program requirements (e.g., United States Medical Licensing Examinations [USMLE]) to progress in the curriculum. Student success in meeting these standards will inform student progress decisions (e.g., USMLEs, Clinical Skills Assessment, professional conduct, etc.).

In support of students' preparation for the USMLEs, M1, M2, and M3 written examinations are comprised of multiple-choice questions written by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).

At least one Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA) will be administered during the M1, M2, and M3/M4 years to ensure students have the requisite skills outlined in the medical education program objectives. For the CSA, the following domains may be used to assess student performance: Clinical Reasoning, Communication, Cultural Humility, Data Gathering (History-Taking and/or Physical Exam, Hypothesis-Driven History and Physical Exam).

When feasible, standardized assessment instruments are used across learning experiences to measure achievement of common objectives.

### **Program, Faculty, and Student Responsibilities for Assessment**

Multiple entities at EVMS have a role in the implementation of successful assessment practices.

The Medical Education Committee (MEC) is responsible for the following:

- Approving Pre-clerkship and Clerkship phase syllabi for academic experiences reported on the transcript.
- Developing and regularly reviewing an integrated curriculum that meets medical education program objectives and the standards of the LCME.
- Reviewing all modules and clerkships on a regular basis to determine effectiveness and ensure a quality experience for students and faculty.
- Reviewing courses and threads to determine effectiveness and ensure a quality experience for students and faculty.
- Developing an integrated assessment system that gives the student an opportunity to build on strengths and correct weaknesses, particularly in relation to skills that are common to several disciplines (e.g., problem-solving and physical examination skills).
- Providing regular review of the guidelines for assessment and program evaluation, in consultation with Medical Education.
- Providing a systematic, legally acceptable appeals process for reviewing a student's failure to meet the institution's academic and/or professional standards.

The Medical Education Assessment Subcommittee (MEAS) is responsible for the following:

- Developing the program assessment plan and report documenting performance on the Medical Education Program Objectives (MEPOs).
- Approving MD phase requirements and expectations to be included in syllabi; MD Phase Requirements must meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - Align with LCME standards.
  - Support program assessment reporting needs.
  - Prepare students for future assessments in the curriculum.

Educational Assessment and Evaluation is responsible for the following:

- Facilitating timely submission of grades.
- Verifying final module, course, and clerkship grades in consultation with the module, course, or clerkship director and in accordance with the MEC approved syllabus.
- Approval of module, course, and clerkship final grades prior to their transfer to the Student Information System (SIS).
- Notifying the Associate Dean for Educational Assessment and Evaluation and relevant administrators if grades are at-risk of not posting in a timely manner.

The module, course, or clerkship director is responsible for developing and overseeing the assessment process for students for that particular experience. The syllabi must outline the assessment and grading expectations. These responsibilities are outlined in the Roles and Responsibilities documents, which are approved by MEC.

Students are responsible for the following:

- Obtaining the written goals, objectives, standards of acceptable performance, and assessment policy for each module, course, clerkship, elective, and program requirement.
- Complying with assessment requirements established by the institution.
- Reviewing their performance results posted on Blackboard, eValue, and the EVMS MyPortal for accuracy and notifying Educational Assessment and Evaluation of any discrepancies.
- Seeking faculty assistance and complying with specific requirements to correct unsatisfactory or marginal performance.
- Initiating the institutional appeals process if the student objects to the institution's response to his/her failure to meet the institution's academic and professional standards.
- Completing required evaluations.

### **Examination Administration Procedures**

Examination procedures may be subject to change at any time. Students will receive email notification of any changes to published guidelines.

Educational Assessment and Evaluation is responsible for administering all computer-based/web-based summative assessments, including NBME examinations. Examination sessions administered by Educational Assessment and Evaluation are recorded.

Students are required to arrive at the Testing Center, badge in, and be seated no later than 15 minutes prior to the exam start time. Students are required to have screens ready for exam

passwords 5 minutes prior to the beginning of the exam. Time is determined by the main testing center computer in the examination room. For remotely proctored exams, students are required to be logged in and ready to begin the pre-exam process (e.g., showing the proctor a 360-degree view of the testing area) at least 15 minutes before the exam begins. Students who arrive less than 5 minutes prior to the start of the exam will not be allowed to test at their scheduled time. Tardiness and unexcused absences will be addressed according to the Professionalism and Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors Policy and the Attendance of Academic Responsibilities Policy. Two unexcused absences for the same exam will result in a zero on that exam.

Students will not be permitted to ask questions about exam content during the examination. For testing center exams, students will be provided with a laminated sheet during the examination for notes and calculations. These sheets must be returned to the examination administrator prior to exiting the Assessment Center. For remote proctoring these processes will be adapted.

If a student experiences technical difficulties during a written exam, they should immediately alert the proctor. They should also inform the supervising faculty (e.g., Module Director, Clerkship Director, Course Director) following the exam; similarly, if a student experiences an irregularity in testing during a Clinical Skills Assessment or Standardized Patient Assessment, they should alert the SP educator (or designee) and the supervising faculty (e.g., Director of Clinical Skills, Clerkship Director). Technical difficulties and/or other irregularities in testing that result in a request for a retest will be addressed through the Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy. If a retest is approved, the retest score will be reported for grading purposes.

### **Reporting of Assignment and Examination Scores**

Assignment and exam grades will be regularly updated so students may assess their standing. Any challenges to an academic decision must follow the Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy. If an error was made in calculating scores or grades, the student will be allowed to keep the higher score or grade (e.g., earned or incorrectly calculated) if (1) the calculation error was not identified within 120 days of being reported or prior to graduation, and (2) the student did not originally earn a score below competency on the impacted assignment, domain, and/or overall course, module, clerkship, or elective grade.

In the event of an assignment or exam failure, the most recent score, up to the minimum passing score, will be reported for resubmissions or retests. Students who have demonstrated competency (minimum passing score) on any assessment are not eligible to retest or resubmit an assignment for a higher grade.

In the event that a request for re-evaluation in accordance with the Appeal and Complaint Procedure Policy is approved by the MD Appeals Subcommittee, the most recent score will be reported for grading purposes.

### **Reporting of Final Module, Course, and Clerkship Grades**

Where applicable, performance in domains (i.e., Applied Learning, Clinical Evaluation, Medical Knowledge, and Professionalism) is used to determine the overall final grade. Final grades from the Pre-clerkship and Clerkship Phases of the curriculum must be posted to the SIS within six weeks of the final day of the module, course, or clerkship. The information posted in the SIS is the single source of information for maintaining and reporting student performance data. Results posted on any other sites or locations are not considered officially reported scores. Educational Assessment and Evaluation will enter the overall final grades into the SIS for transfer to student transcripts. Once the grades are transferred, the Registrar is responsible for any grade changes.

### Reporting Overall Final Grades on Student Transcripts

Only the overall final grade is reported on the transcript. If a student fails a module, course, clerkship, or elective and is allowed to remediate, their overall final grade will be determined based on the following:

- The specifics of the remediation plan (e.g., required to repeat an entire module, course, clerkship, or elective vs. remediate a component)
- When remediation takes place
- Outcome of remediation

The MD program uses the following grade designations depending upon the grading system for the academic experience:

- Grades are reported as: Pass (P), Fail (F), or Fail/Pass (F/P), for modules, courses and select electives.
- Grades are reported as: Honors (H), High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Fail (F), Fail/Pass (F/P), for required core clerkships and select electives.

A Fail may be reported if a student was enrolled after the add/drop period and failed one or more domains prior to completing all the requirements (e.g., Clinical Evaluation, Medical Knowledge, Professionalism).

If there is an exceptional circumstance beyond a student's control that significantly disrupts EVMS academic operations and negatively impacts student performance, a special designation may be used on the transcript with approval from MEC and the Registrar.

A “Withdraw” is assigned to students enrolled in the academic experience after the add/drop period who are unable to complete the module, course, clerkship, or elective within the same academic year. This designation must be approved by Student Affairs and reviewed by program leadership. For M1 & M2, a “Withdraw” must be reviewed by the Assistant Vice Dean for Pre-Clinical Education. For M3 & M4, a “Withdraw” must be reviewed by the Assistant Vice Dean for Clinical Education. If a student has completed all requirements of a module, course, clerkship, or elective, or failed due to not meeting competency in one or more domains, they are not eligible for a “Withdraw.”

An “Incomplete” is a temporary notation indicating that a grade could not be determined by the time grades were due because the student had not completed all requirements for a module, course, clerkship, or elective. Requirements include activities and assessments listed in the domain-based grading table and the MD Phase Requirements section of the syllabus. The “Incomplete” designation should be avoided when possible and requires approval from program leadership. For M1 & M2, Incompletes must be reviewed by the Assistant Vice Dean for Pre-Clinical Education. For M3 & M4, Incompletes must be reviewed by the Assistant Vice Dean for Clinical Education. An Incomplete not addressed by the date set by the module, course, or clerkship director becomes a grade of “Fail.” A student with two “Incompletes” on their transcript will not continue with future coursework until they have resolved the “Incompletes.”

For the Pre-clerkship Phase, an overall grade of “Fail/Pass” will be reported for successful remediation. If remediation is unsuccessful, an overall grade of “Fail” will be retained. If a student is required to repeat a module or course, two course records will be created on the transcript to account for the different course enrollment dates. The earned grade for each module or course will be recorded.

In the instance of M1 or M2 failures, module or course directors are responsible for notifying (1) students who failed, (2) the Assistant Vice Dean for Pre-Clinical Education, and (3) the Assistant Vice Dean for Student Affairs. See the Pre-clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy for details about remediation.

For Clerkship and M4 Elective Phases, an overall grade of “Fail/Pass” will be reported for successful remediation of Applied Learning and/or Professionalism domain(s). If remediation is unsuccessful, an overall grade of the “Fail” will be retained. If a student is required to repeat the Medical Knowledge and/or Clinical Evaluation domain(s) of the clerkship or elective, two course records will be created on the transcript to account for the different enrollment dates. The first record will include the earned grade of “Fail.” The second record will be recorded as a “Pass” if remediation is successful.

In the instance of M3 or M4 failures, clerkship or course directors are responsible for notifying (1) students who failed, (2) the Assistant Vice Dean for Clinical Education, and (3) the Assistant Vice Dean for Student Affairs. See the Clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy or M4 Elective Phase Assessment and Grading Policy for details about remediation.

#### Reporting Grades on Medical Student Performance Evaluations (MSPEs)

Domain and overall grades from the Clerkship Phase are reported on the MSPE. If a student fails a clerkship and is allowed to remediate, their overall and domain grade will be determined based on the following factors:

- The specifics of the remediation plan (e.g., required to repeat an entire clerkship versus remediate a component)
- When remediation takes place
- Outcome of remediation

#### *Clerkship Remediation during Same Academic Year*

Domain and overall grade of “Fail/Pass” will be reported for successful remediation of Applied Learning and/or Professionalism domain(s). If remediation is unsuccessful, a domain and an overall grade of the “Fail” will be retained.

#### *Clerkship Remediation during Different Academic Year*

If a student is required to repeat the Medical Knowledge and/or Clinical Evaluation domain(s) of the clerkship, two clerkship summaries will be created on the MSPE to account for the different enrollment dates. The earned domain and overall grades will be recorded for the first summary. The second summary will record a “Pass” for each domain and overall grade if remediation is successful.

#### Reporting Retests, Delayed Exams, and Missed Assignments on MSPEs

A special note may be included in MSPEs for the following scenarios, pending Student Review and Advisory Committee approval:

- Required multiple retests
- Used 3 or more leave days on scheduled exams
- Missed deadlines
- Other professionalism concerns

#### **Access to Individual Student Assessment Results**

Access to individual student assessment results (e.g., score, pass/fail, feedback) is governed by Family Educational Privacy and Rights Act (FERPA) and EVMS policies. As such, individual assessment results are confidential and only available to the student and those with a

legitimate educational interest as defined by FERPA. All other requests for student assessment results must be referred to the Registrar.

### **VII. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy  
Holistic Assessment of Medical Students Policy  
Pre-clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
Clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
M4 Elective Phase Assessment and Grading Policy  
Professionalism and Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors Policy  
Standards for Advancement and Graduation Policy

### **VIII. HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES**

The following list documents policy approvals and updates by oversight authority, date, and summary of changes. This policy is housed on the MD Student Handbook webpage.

- On June 29, 2020, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to separate the policy from the MD Student Handbook; to reference the roles and responsibilities of the module, thread, and clerkship directors; to change the frequency of grade updates; to add exam remote testing procedures; and to change Incomplete grade designation.
- On December 9, 2020, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to clarify that grades must be posted to the SIS within 6 weeks of the final day.
- On May 27, 2021, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to add the procedures for reporting of grades on the transcript and MSPE following a failure as well as policy around the "Withdrawal" designation.
- On July 14, 2021, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to describe when a grade would be maintained despite determination of an error in grade calculation on an exam or assignment.
- On May 11, 2022, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to include the potential domains tested on CSAs, requirement for MEC to approve syllabi for all experiences included on the academic transcript, the role of MEAS, the procedure for technical difficulties/disruptions in the testing center, the change to reporting the most recent score for a retest/reassessment, add that a student cannot have two incompletes and progress in the clerkship phase, add instances where a special note may be included in the MSPE, and clarify access to individual student assessment results.