



University of the Virgin Islands School of Medicine

Policy Name and Section: <i>UVISOM Policy on Medical Student Assessment</i>	Effective Date:	UVISOM Policy Number: <i>017</i>
Responsible Authority: <i>Curriculum Committee</i>	UVISOM Document where Policy is Available: <i>UVISOM Student Handbook, UVISOM Faculty Handbook</i>	Approval Body and Date: <i>Executive Council, Self-Study Committee, Curriculum Committee March 2016</i>

Each department or teaching program shall determine for each course the most appropriate method for evaluation of student achievement, based on the nature of the course and on defined course objectives. Such methods as written examinations, oral examinations, literature reports, case reports, problem solving, or other reasonable means by which the student may demonstrate his or her knowledge of the subject under consideration may be employed at the discretion of the Course Director. Participation in clinical rounds is always taken into consideration for grades on clerkships and senior selectives. Each Course Director shall present to the students, in written form on the first day the course meets formally, a statement describing course requirements, evaluative methods to be used, and criteria for awarding specific grades.

Each department will also present, in writing, on the first day of class, its specific course requirements which may in any way deviate from the overall grading policy. For example - A student must successfully complete the laboratory phase of the course in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to successfully complete the laboratory phase will result in a grade of "Temporary Repeat," even though the overall grade point average is 70 or higher.

A grade describing the student's performance shall be awarded to each student enrolled in each course. Depending on the nature of the course, this grade may simply reflect the student's achievement on objective evaluative instruments, or may also include evaluation of non-cognitive qualities and skills. The specific grade awarded to each student shall be based on the following criteria. (Note that where specific numerical grades or grade ranges are cited below for awarding letter grades, these should be considered as suggested guidelines rather than as inflexible rules. Each Course Director has the authority and responsibility for the final determination of letter grades for each student.)

- All preclinical courses are graded Pass/Fail or Temporary. Upon remediation, Temporary grades are converted to P or F.

PRE-CLINICAL YEARS GRADING SCALE

GRADE	DEFINITION	CRITERIA
P	Pass	Should be awarded to a student whose performance in the course met or surpassed the minimum standards required by the faculty. In courses for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Pass" generally corresponds to a grade in the range 70 – 100.
T	Temporary	In pre-clinical courses, "Temporary" should be assigned to a student whose performance was marginal. In pre-clinical courses for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Temporary" generally corresponds to a grade in the range 65 - 69. It may also be assigned to a student who failed to meet the minimum standards required in one or more sections of a course, despite an overall, final passing average (e.g., a student who scored well on written examinations but who did not perform satisfactorily in the laboratory component). Invariably, this grade constitutes an academic deficiency requiring remedial work, at least passing a repeat comprehensive final examination and possibly successful repetition of the course.
F	Failure	Assigned to the student whose performance did not meet the minimum standards required by the faculty for this course. In pre-clinical courses or in clinical clerkships for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Failure" might correspond to grades below 65.

- All Clinical Courses are graded Honors, High Pass, Pass, Temporary, or Fail. Upon remediation, Temporary grades are converted to P or F.

CLINICAL YEARS GRADING SCALE

GRADE	DEFINITION	CRITERIA
H	Honors	Should be awarded to a student whose performance in all phases of the course surpassed the minimum standards required by the faculty and was clearly superior to that of the average student taking the course. In courses in which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Honors" might correspond to a grade of 94 (on a scale of 100) or higher.
HP	High Pass	Should be awarded to a student whose performance surpassed the minimum standards required by the faculty and was distinctly above average for students taking the course. In courses for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "High Pass" might correspond to grades in the range 86 – 93. This grade may also be awarded in the case of a

		student whose performance was uneven in different phases of the course (e.g., a student who achieved high scores on objective examinations but whose ward or laboratory work was unremarkable).
P	Pass	Should be awarded to a student whose performance in the course met or surpassed the minimum standards required by the faculty. In courses for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Pass" generally corresponds to a grade in the range 70 – 85.
T	Temporary	In clinical clerkships, "Temporary" is assigned to students whose performance on the wards or in other clinical aspects of the clerkship was satisfactory but who failed the final comprehensive examination. In such cases, the deficiency must be cleared by passing a repeat examination. A student may earn H, HP, P, or F on the repeat examination.
F	Failure	Assigned to the student whose performance did not meet the minimum standards required by the faculty for this course. In clinical clerkships for which an overall, final numerical grade is derived, "Failure" might correspond to grades below 65. In clinical clerkships, "Failure" should be assigned to students whose performance on the ward or in other clinical aspects of the clerkship was unsatisfactory, irrespective of their having passed the final comprehensive examination.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE GRADING SCALE

<u>Note:</u>		"Temporary" grades are noted on the transcript with a "T." When the temporary grade is cleared, the "T" is converted to a "P", or converted to an "F" if the student fails the remediation work. A student can receive a "Pass" in clearing a deficiency by remediation examination or retaking the course. Remediation plans are determined by the module or clerkship director and approved by the Committee on Student Progress. A student must earn a 70 on the remediation examination. If a student must repeat the course rather than take the remediation exam, the student must pass the course with a 75. The grade that a student received on remediation exam, or course, is reported on the transcript. Thus, a student can receive "Honor" on a course after clearing a Temporary grade.
<u>Note:</u>		When a student "fails," the "F" remains on the transcript. The course is listed again with a passing grade when the student passes the course, and the actual grade earned is recorded. Thus a student can "Honor" a course after failing it the first time. The student must make a minimum of 75 for the course to pass a course that is repeated.
I	Incomplete	Assigned in cases where there is an unavoidable delay, caused by illness or other emergencies, in completion of course requirements. This grade will be assigned at the end of the course(s) when all but a minor portion of the course requirements have been completed. The "I" is a temporary grade and will be replaced on the transcript with the grade earned by the student when the course requirements are completed. The student must satisfactorily complete the course requirements, thus earning at least a

		passing grade, before being eligible for promotion to the succeeding year of study. All incompletes must be completed within six months of receiving the incomplete grade. After six months, incomplete grades are converted to failures.
W	Withdrawn	Assigned for all courses currently being taken in cases where a student must be placed on leave-of-absence for a medical or psychiatric condition, as certified by a physician and approved by the Dean, or in cases where the student is suffering serious personal difficulties, as judged by the Dean or his appointed delegate, and is thus unable to complete course requirements. Generally, a "W," as opposed to an "I," will be recorded on the transcript in cases where the student is forced to discontinue studies before completing approximately two-thirds of the course requirements. The "W" is also assigned in all courses currently being taken when the student voluntarily and permanently withdraws from the School of Medicine.
Note:		The School of Medicine reserves the discretion to determine the time frame distinguishing between the grades of "I" and "W," as described above. This determination will be made by the Dean or his appointed delegate in consultation with the Course Director(s).

APPEAL PROCESS FOR GRADES

A student may appeal his or her module or clerkship grade, or any component of the module or clerkship (e.g., exam grade, narrative evaluation, project, etc.) if he or she feels that the grade was assigned in a manner not in accordance with the module or clerkship statement of policy distributed at the beginning of the module or clerkship. This is not a process for appeal of established module or clerkship grading policies.

A student who believes that his/her grade or evaluation is the result of prejudice or caprice or is otherwise improper shall first discuss the matter directly with the instructor involved. If the student and instructor do not reach a satisfactory agreement, the student may submit, within fifteen business days following reporting or posting of the grade or evaluation in question, an appeal in writing to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

The written appeal submitted to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions should provide an account of the facts pertinent to the awarding of the grade and the reasons why the student believes the grade or evaluation to be the result of prejudice or otherwise improper conduct. The student should be as specific as possible.

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions may investigate the matter without interviewing either party, may interview both parties in the case separately, or may interview the student and the faculty member in the presence of each other. After collecting the pertinent facts, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions will make their final determination about student's appeal. The determination will be communicated in writing to the student within fifteen business days of receipt of

the appeal. A copy of the determination is also submitted to the Dean. The Associate Dean's finding is considered final, however the Dean retains authority to overturn any finding that is not deemed to be consistent with UVISOM grading policy.

Final Appeal

If the grievant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Grade Appeal procedure, he/she may file an appeal in writing to the Dean of the School of Medicine within 5 business days of receiving the decision. The Dean shall make a final decision on the matter within 30 business days of receipt of the student's written request for review. The Dean may act on the appeal directly or choose to have the appeal heard by a special ad hoc committee appointed by the Dean. The decision of the Dean, or of the special ad hoc committee appointed by the Dean, is final and not subject to appeal.

*NOTE: Students follow this appeal process in the event that they want to challenge their educational records as reported by the UVISOM Registrar.

ACADEMIC DEFICIENCIES

An emphasis solely on academic performance alone runs contrary to the fundamental conviction of the faculty and administration at UVISOM. Grades do not provide the sole criteria to determine the future performance of a physician; nevertheless, the academic standards of the School of Medicine must be maintained in consideration of the responsibility to the public.

A "Failing (F)" or "Temporary (T)" grade in any course or clerkship constitutes an academic deficiency and requires review by the Committee on Student Progress, which must approve the course or module director's recommendation on how the deficiency is to be made up, or, if the student has more than one deficiency, what the student's promotional status may be. Deficiencies may be made up by repetition of the course or by re-examination given on a scheduled date immediately prior to the beginning of the next school year. For the preclinical years (M1 and M2), all academic deficiencies must be removed before a student can advance to the next year. Once a student receives two Temporary grades in the clinical curriculum, the student must stop clinical rotations until these grades are remediated. In the clinical years (M3, M4), students must remediate deficiencies by October in order to insure graduation in May.

If for any reason a student must repeat a course or courses, or an entire semester due to academic deficiency, appropriate tuition and fees based on the academic year of repetition will be charged.

Passing grades in all major required courses of the current year are necessary for advancement to the succeeding year. Academic reasons for requiring a student to repeat a year include: incurring more deficiencies than can be cleared in one summer, as determined by the Faculty; one or more academic deficiencies accompanied by generally marginal performance; failure to remove an academic deficiency during the summer.

Warning (Academic and Non-Academic)

Students may be placed on academic or non-academic warning. While on academic or non-academic warning, students are expected to limit their participation in extracurricular activities. In particular,

students are not permitted to run for, or hold, any student officer or committee positions (including student organizations, the UVISOM Student Council, Curriculum Committee and subcommittees, and any other committee, organizations, or council positions). Students who already hold such positions at the time that they are placed on academic or non-academic warning are required to relinquish the position(s). Exceptions may be granted under special circumstances by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Once the requirements for warning status have been satisfied and the warning status has been lifted, the student will once again be eligible to participate fully in extracurricular activities, including holding officer and committee positions. The warning status is an internal designation and will not be reflected on a student's official transcript.

Academic Warning

Academic warning is a designation given to students who are not performing adequately. It is a signal that the student is in danger of dismissal.

A student who has been placed on academic warning will remain on warning status until deficiencies are removed and/or any other requirements have been completed. Students are expected to resolve all deficiencies within one calendar year. During this period, the Committee on Student Progress will continually review the student's performance. If any new deficiencies are recorded during this time, the Committee on Student Progress will take whatever action is deemed appropriate for the individual student. Removal of academic warning will occur only when all deficiencies are removed and any other requirements have been completed. If a student has not been removed from academic warning after one year, the student may be subject to dismissal from the UVISOM.

- A student who withdraws from the academic year while failing to take a leave of absence shall be placed on academic warning.
- A student who is required to repeat an academic year will be placed on academic warning.
- A student who has two or more deficient grades (F, I or T grades) may be placed on academic warning at the discretion of the Committee on Student Progress.

Non-Academic Warning

Non-academic warning is a designation given to students who are not performing adequately outside of the learning environment. This designation applies to issues with professionalism and other standards of behavior. A student who has been placed on nonacademic warning will remain on warning status until deficiencies are removed and/or any other requirements have been completed. Students are expected to resolve all deficiencies within one calendar year. During this period, the Committee on Student Progress will continually review the student's performance. If any new deficiencies are recorded during this time, the Committee on Student Progress will take whatever action is deemed appropriate for the student. Removal of non-academic warning will occur only when all deficiencies are removed and any other requirements have been completed. If a student has not been removed from non-academic warning within one year, the student may be subject to dismissal from the UVISOM. Removal of non-academic warning will occur after one year if no other incidents are reported, OR when professionalism

behavior has improved as judged by the Committee on Student Progress, or by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions.

Dismissal and Re-Admission

Reasons for dismissing a student include incurring excessive academic deficiencies as judged by the Committee on Student Progress; failure to remove academic deficiencies; failure of one or more courses in a repeated year; multiple and repeated academic disciplinary action; and/or unprofessional conduct.

Rules established by the Faculty, combined with existing precedents regarding dismissal, are consistently enforced. These include:

1. No student may repeat the same course more than once.
2. No student may repeat more than one year.
3. In repeating a course, the student must earn a grade of 75 or more (failing to do so results in dismissal, because of rule #1 above).
4. Failure in two courses in a given year results in the necessity to repeat the entire year.
5. A student cannot proceed in the clinical curriculum with two or more deficiencies until each deficiency is resolved. The student must take a leave of absence to remedy the deficiencies.

A student who has been dismissed may apply for re-admission by submitting a request for re-admission directly to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. If the Associate Dean finds merit in the request, the matter is remanded to the Committee on Student Progress. The Committee will entertain the request and all evidence, including verbal testimony relative to the request, and make a recommendation either favorable or unfavorable to the Dean, who makes the final decision.

Retention

The Committee on Student Progress reviews the academic records of all students who accrued deficiencies. Students who have the credentials for admission to UVISOM certainly have the capability of successfully completing the curriculum and graduating; so retention is one of the top priorities of the Committee, and of the administration and faculty of the school. All extenuating circumstances are taken into account, and each student who has failed a course or a clerkship is permitted to repeat, but only once. A student who has multiple failures in one academic year may be permitted to repeat the course work during the next academic year. Academic failure upon the repetition of the course may lead to dismissal. Counseling services for students with academic problems are available and in some cases the Committee on Student Progress may require a student to utilize such services.

Leave of Absence

Students who are unable to continue enrollment or complete required instructional modules or clerkships due to illness, maternity leave of absence, hardship or special circumstances should immediately contact the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.

Leaves of absence will generally be granted for one year. Students may request one additional year of leave. A student requesting a leave of absence must submit a letter outlining the reasons for the request and timetable for return directly to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. Any

incomplete course work must be completed by the time specified in the letter to the student sent by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions.

Leaves of absence will not be granted for additional time after two years have been granted. Students failing to report following a leave of absence will be dismissed. All reasonable attempts will be made to notify students that an approved leave of absence is nearing expiration. Note that for purposes of deferring repayment of student loans during a school-approved leave of absence, federal regulations limit the leave to six months.