CLERKSHIP EXAM AND GRADING POLICY

Student grades for required clerkships are calculated using the following:

- Scores from NBME subject examinations or COM clerkship-specific examinations;
- Assessment of clinical performance by clerkship faculty;
- Comments and affirmations by the clerkship director;
- Completion of patient log expectations (see individual clerkship syllabi for expectations);
- Completion of required projects and activities, (see individual clerkship syllabi for expectations and timelines); and,
- Patient and staff evaluations.

Clerkship Grade Considerations:

Student NBME subject exam percentile scores are determined using the NBME Academic Year Norms for Examinee Performance tables available at the beginning of the academic year. The same norms are used throughout the academic year. All NBME percentile scores are reported to the Education Directors by the Office of Medical Education.

Percentile scores for NBME subject exams in the third year clerkships and the Advanced Internal Medicine Clerkship shall be referenced to national norms from the same quarter during which the clerkship was taken. In the event that a rotation straddles two quarters equally, the scores shall be referenced to norms from the earlier of the quarters in which 50% or more of the rotation was completed.

Scores for the NBME Family Medicine modular exam following the Advanced Family Medicine Clerkship shall be referenced to norms of students who have completed the core and chronic care modules.

Scores from “in-house exams” in Geriatrics and Emergency Medicine, shall be referenced to norms of previous students who have completed the clerkship and taken the exams. The exam scores warranting consideration for “honors” and “failing” clerkship grades will be identified in the course syllabi.

Remember that exam performance is only one component of a clerkship grade.

Competency-based clinical assessment differs from traditional clinical assessments in that competency-based assessment is referenced to particular expected behavioral milestones. These behavioral milestones form the performance criteria against which student performance is measured. The traditional norm-based designations of student performance (“exceptional” “average” and “below average”) are not based on expected behavioral milestones, but on comparing the performance of different students with each other.

We have chosen to adopt and use this new competency-based student assessment tool to assist in assigning clerkship grades and to track student performance to insure that each student completes all expected behavioral milestones prior to graduation.
Since students will develop new and more sophisticated clinical behaviors as they progress through the required clerkships, the acquisition of these expected behavioral milestones should be seen as cumulative. Simply stated, the expected clinical behaviors of students at the beginning of third year, midway through third year and at the end of third year are different. To accommodate these progressive expectations, the numbers of expected behavioral milestones used in calculating student grades will increase after a student has completed three (3) discipline-based clerkships and again after the student has completed the next three (total of 6) discipline-based clerkships.

**The Education Director in the appropriate discipline is responsible for reviewing all student assessments and assigning all clerkship grades according to the Grading Standards for Required Clerkships (below).**

If the Education Director feels that extenuating circumstances exist, he/she may request a deviation from these Grading Standards by presenting the situation and a suggested alternative grade to the assembled group of Education Directors. The Education Directors will decide whether the situation justifies a deviation from these Grading Standards, and whether the suggested alternative grade is appropriate.

**Grading Standards for Required Clerkships:**

FSU COM has adopted the following Honors/Pass/Fail grading system and uniform criteria for assigning grades to students completing required clerkships.

When the criteria refer to the “end of the clerkship,” this means 5:00 PM, local time, on the final Friday of the clerkship (unless an extension has been previously approved by the Education Director).

**Honors Criteria:**

A student will be given an “Honors” grade if the “Honors Criteria” listed below are met:

1) Receives no concerning narrative comments about his/her professional behavior;

2) Demonstrates most of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning third year student, some of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning fourth year student and at least a few of the milestones expected of the graduating student. The number/percentage of milestones in each category to achieve an “Honors” grade will be determined at different points during the Academic Year 2012-2013.

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<th>First 3 required clerkships AY 2012-2013</th>
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<th>Clerkships occurring after initial 6 clerkships AY 2012-2013</th>
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<td>To be determined by December 21, 2012</td>
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**AND**
3) Receives a narrative summary by the clerkship director documenting excellent performance and satisfactory completion of clerkship objectives by the end of the clerkship; AND
4) Scores at or above the 75th percentile for NBME shelf exam reference scores by students completing clerkships of comparable length at a similar time in the academic year; OR scores at or above a pre-determined Honors-level on the Geriatrics or Emergency Medicine exam; AND
5) Satisfactorily completes and submits required clerkship projects and activities by the end of the clerkship; AND
6) Satisfactorily completes patient log expectations by the end of the clerkship; AND
7) Receives satisfactory patient and staff evaluations.

**Pass Criteria:**

A student will receive a “Pass” grade if all of the “Pass Criteria” listed below are met:

1) Receives no concerning narrative comments about his/her professional behavior; AND,
2) Demonstrates most of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning third year student, and at least a few of the behavioral milestone expected of a beginning fourth year student. The actual number/percentage of these milestones in each category to achieve a “Pass” grade will be determined at different points during the Academic Year 2012-2013; AND

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3) Receives a narrative summary by the clerkship director documenting satisfactory performance and satisfactory completion of clerkship objectives by the end of the clerkship; AND
4) Scores at or above the 10th percentile for NBME shelf exam reference scores by students completing clerkships of comparable length at a similar time in the academic year; OR scores at or above a pre-determined minimum passing score on the Geriatrics or Emergency Medicine exam; AND
5) Satisfactorily completes and submits required clerkship projects and activities by the end of the clerkship; AND
6) Satisfactorily completes patient log expectations by the end of the clerkship; AND
7) Receives satisfactory patient and staff evaluations

**Fail Criteria:**

A student is at risk for a grade of “Fail” if any of the “Fail Criteria” listed below are met:

1) Receives narrative comments from the clerkship faculty or clerkship director that would justify failing the student for professionalism concerns; OR
2) Fails to demonstrate most of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning third year student, and fails to acquire at least a few of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning fourth year student. The actual number/percentage of these milestones in each category to obtain a “Fail” will be determined at different points during the Academic Year 2012-2013.

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<td>Students who are unable to demonstrate most of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning third year student, and acquire at least a few of the behavioral milestones expected of a beginning fourth year student are at risk of receiving a failing grade. The Education Director will identify these students after review of all available clinical performance assessments and present these students to the group of Education Directors for discussion and vote. If a simple majority of the Education Directors present agrees that the documented student performance justifies a failing grade, the Education Director will assign a grade of “fail.”</td>
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OR

3) Receives a narrative summary by the clerkship director documenting unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet clerkship objectives by the end of the clerkship; OR

4) Scores below the 10th percentile of students completing clerkships of comparable length at a similar time in the academic year on the retake of his/her NBME specialty subject exam; OR scores below a predetermined minimum passing score on the retake of the Geriatrics or Emergency Medicine exam; OR

5) Does not satisfactorily complete or submit required clerkship projects and activities by the end of the clerkship; OR

6) Does not satisfactorily complete patient log expectations by the end of the clerkship; OR

7) Does not receive satisfactory patient and staff evaluations
NOTE: Student behavior that is judged to be egregious or extremely unprofessional (examples: lying, cheating or other demonstrations of dishonest behavior or repeated unexcused absences or tardiness, etc.) may result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the clerkship by the Educational Director or Regional Campus Dean. Students dismissed from the clerkship will receive a temporary grade of “I” and will be referred to the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee.

In clerkships that use multiple clerkship faculty members to assess student performance, the assessment of the student’s clinical performance will be weighted based on the time spent with a faculty member. However, assessments by faculty who spend 2 weeks or less with a student will be used primarily for the narrative comments.

In summary: For Academic Year 2012-2013:

1) Students who clearly meet all other criteria for receiving an “honors” clerkship grade and who have a clinical performance that is seen as outstanding by the clerkship faculty, clerkship director and/or Education Director, may be awarded an “honors” grade at the end of the clerkship.

2) Students who meet one or more criteria for receiving a “fail” clerkship grade, including those who have a clinical performance at the end of the clerkship that is seen as inadequate by the clerkship faculty, clerkship director and/or Education Director, should receive a “fail” grade at the end of the clerkship.

If this “fail” grade is based solely on the student’s clinical performance, The Education Director will present the student to the group of Education Directors for discussion and vote. If the Education Directors collectively agree that the documented student performance justifies a failing grade, the Education Director will assign a grade of “fail.” Note: students who earn a failing clerkship grade for reasons other than clinical performance do not require a review by the Education Directors.

3) Students who do not fall into one of the two categories above, will be given an initial clerkship grade of “pass.” At specified times during the academic year—namely, prior to December 21, 2012 and prior to May 24, 2013—data collected about the use of the competency-based student assessment tool will be presented, analyzed and discussed by members of the year 3 and 4 committee. At those times, specific performance criteria for awarding of “honors” grades will be established. Those students with an initial grade of “pass” who retrospectively have met the specific clinical performance criteria for an “honors” grade will have their final grade changed to “honors.” Those students with a temporary grade of “pass” who retrospectively have not met the specific clinical performance criteria for an “honors” grade will have their final clerkship grade recorded as “pass.”

Criteria for a temporary grade of “IR” (“IR”=Incomplete, pending Remediation)

1. Initial failure of NBME subject exam or Geriatrics or Emergency Medicine exam:
A student who fails the initial NBME subject exam or fails to achieve a minimum passing score on the initial Geriatrics or Emergency Medicine, but performs at a satisfactory level in all other aspects of the clerkship, will receive an initial clerkship grade of “IR.”

The student will be given one opportunity to retake the examination to achieve a passing score. This retake must occur within 90 days from the date the student is notified that he/she has failed the initial subject examination, unless a different time-frame has been previously approved by the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee.

The student and regional campus dean must together determine the date of the re-take subject examination. Re-take exams will be preferentially scheduled on the dates other clerkships are ending and other students are being tested at the regional campus.

Students who retake the subject exam must achieve a score at or above the 10th percentile for the NBME subject exam reference scores by students taking the exam at a similar time in the academic year. The date of the retake exam—and not the dates of the clerkship—will establish which set of NBME norms are used. Students who retake the exam during or following the fourth quarter of their third year curriculum will have their scores referenced to fourth quarter scores.

If a passing score is achieved on the retake examination, the initial “IR” grade will be changed to a grade of “Pass.” A student who fails the initial exam cannot achieve an “Honors” grade regardless of the score on the retake exam.

If a student does not pass the retake examination or fails to retake the examination within the allotted time, the original “IR” grade will be changed to a grade of “Fail.”

2. Failure to successfully complete one or more remediable clerkship objectives/competencies by the end of the clerkship:

Students are expected to achieve all clerkship objectives by the end of the clerkship. The Education Director or the Clerkship Director will monitor and affirm that clerkship objectives have been satisfactorily completed.

An Education Director may assign an initial clerkship grade of “IR” to a student who successfully completes other grading criteria for an “Honors” or “Pass” grade, but fails to satisfactorily complete one or more remediable clerkship objectives or components. Non-NBME performance issues that may justify using an “IR” grade include: 1) A student who does not complete and turn in a required project by the end of the clerkship; 2) A student who does not complete patient log expectations by the end of the clerkship; 3) A student who was not able to have a particular, prescribed clerkship experience or encounter during the clerkship; or, 4) A student who has a recognized clinical deficit that can be quickly remedied.

Students who receive an initial clerkship grade of “IR” should be notified immediately by the Education Director, who will also report this action to the Student Evaluation & Promotion Committee (SEPC).
Remediation of this “IR” grade must be completed within 30 days from the end of the clerkship.

The Education Director will determine the structure, content and evaluation of remediation activities, and will work with the Clerkship Director and/or the Regional Campus Dean to implement these.

If successful remediation of the clerkship objectives/competencies occurs within the 30 day window, the initial “IR” grade will be changed to a grade of “Pass.” A student who receives an initial “IR” grade cannot achieve an “Honors” grade regardless of his/her NBME subject exam scores or clinical evaluation from the Clerkship Faculty.

If a student does not successfully remediate the clerkship objectives/competencies within the 30 day window, the original “IR” grade will be changed to a grade of “Fail.” The Education Director may, at his or her discretion, extend the 30 day remediation window, but under no circumstances will this remediation window be allowed to extend beyond 90 days after the end of the clerkship.

Any student receiving a grade of “Fail” will be referred to the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC).

Other situations that potentially may impact a student’s grade:

1. **Students who fail to meet patient log expectations for required clerkships:**

   Failure to comply with patient log expectations may result in a lowering of the student’s clerkship grade by the Education Director, and in cases of blatant noncompliance, may result in a student’s failing the clerkship. All entries into the patient log for a clerkship must be completed by the end of the clerkship.

2. **Students who receive poor evaluations by patients or staff:**

   Consistently low evaluations by either patients or staff may result in a lowering of the student’s clerkship grade by the Education Director, and in extreme cases may result in a student’s failing the clerkship.

**Promotion and Graduation:**

A student must receive a “Pass” or “Honors” grade for all required third-year clerkships in order to be eligible for promotion to the fourth year.

A student must receive a “Pass” or “Honors” grade for all fourth-year required clerkships and electives to be eligible to graduate from FSU COM.

A student must demonstrate each expected behavioral milestone to be eligible to graduate from FSU COM.
GRADING POLICY FOR ELECTIVES:

Similar to the grading of all required clerkships, the FSU COM has adopted an Honors/Pass/Fail grading system for all clinical electives.

All grades for elective rotations completed by students during the third or fourth year will be assigned by the Regional Campus Deans.

For all “internal” FSU COM electives, the “Evaluation of Student Performance: Elective Rotation” form (version 2011-2012) will be utilized.

When this form is completed and returned, the student will be graded by applying these guidelines:

HONORS: The student is eligible for an HONORS grade when:

- The student is rated at a 5 level in both knowledge AND professionalism; AND
- The student receives more ratings of 5 than 4; AND
- The student receives no rating less than 4.

FAIL: The student is at risk of a FAIL grade when:

- The student receives a rating of 2 or less in professionalism; OR
- The student receives a rating of 2 or less in two or more categories.

PASS: The student is eligible for a PASS grade when the ratings fall in between the guidelines for HONORS and FAIL.

The Regional Campus Deans will also take the evaluator’s narrative comments into consideration when assigning the final grade. If compelling, these comments can move a grade up or down one level.