

Policy Title: Grading Policy and Appeals Process

Policy Number (relate to LCME Element as applicable): UCF COM Policy 9.9.3

Applies to: All medical students at the University of Central Florida College of Medicine (UCF COM).

Date: 8/1/2019

1.0 Purpose:

This policy relates to LCME Element 9.9 which states that: “medical education program has a single standard for the advancement and graduation of medical students across all locations.”

2.0 Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to define fair and consistent criteria for advancement of medical students, including grading policies and processes, and appeals process.

1. Policies, Procedures and Due Process

Individual module or clerkship directors, with their faculty, define the criteria for acceptable academic performance in their respective module/clerkship. Evaluation of academic performance may include, but is not limited to: measuring the student’s knowledge; measuring how the student applies such knowledge to specific problems; evaluating the judgment a student employs in solving problems, and assessing the quality of the student’s psychomotor skills; professional conduct, ethical behavior; and interpersonal relationships with medical colleagues, patients, and patients’ families. All grade options for the program are approved by the M.D. Program Curriculum Committee.

2. Grading Policy

Students’ performance in academic course work is evaluated by assignment of letter grades of (A) Excellent Performance, (B) Good Performance, (C) Passing Performance, in order of excellence. The (F) grade (Unacceptable Performance) is given to students who fail a module/clerkship, who demonstrate inappropriate professional behaviors, or who fail to attend or participate in required course activities. Other grade actions include an (I) showing incomplete work, a (W) indicating that a student withdrew from the module/clerkship, and a (T) used as a “temporary grade” for performance that requires some additional work before the student progresses to the next academic year. Faculty may specify that some programs (selectives/electives/modules) can be graded using a (P) pass/(F) fail or (H) honors/(P) pass/(F) fail grade designation, if approved by the M.D. Program Curriculum Committee.

The instructor assigns an I (incomplete grade) when a student is unable to complete a module or clerkship due to extenuating circumstances, and when all requirements can clearly be completed in a short time following the close of regular classes. When a student receives an (I) grade, the student will be provided with a deadline for completion of coursework by the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC). All students receiving financial assistance (federal and institutional loans), will be cautioned that the terms of the assistance require that the (I) grade must be made up by the agreement date. Additionally, the outstanding module/clerkship requirements for (I) grades must be addressed satisfactorily within one calendar year, or the grade will be converted to an F grade. Exceptions to the (I) grade completion time requirement must be granted by the SEPC. Minimal competency in each module/clerkship is defined as an (A), (B) or (C) grade or Honors/Pass.

A (T) entry identifies students whose performance, although within the passing range, requires study and re-evaluation in one or more areas within the module/clerkship. A (T) is used as a “temporary grade” for module grades when students have achieved an overall score that would indicate a passing grade, but they have shown weak or marginal performance in one or more of the traditional subject areas that are included in the overall module. A (T) grade in the clerkship is given when the NBME Subject Exam is failed but other assessed components are passed. Assigned (T) grades with annotations are used by the SEPC in its review of an individual student. The overall performance of students receiving a (T) in lieu of a final grade is reviewed by the SEPC with the module/clerkship director to determine how the student may improve their fund of knowledge in the identified subject area(s). The (T) grade is replaced by the final module/clerkship grade when remediation is successfully accomplished in knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behavior. Unsuccessful remediation may result in a failing grade.

The final grade assigned for the module or clerkship is recorded on the official transcript. While some module/clerkship directors will include grades in Webcourses during the course of a module or clerkship, the student should check the student portal (<https://my.ucf.edu>) for the final official letter grade. All final grades and evaluation reports become the permanent academic record maintained in the Office of the M.D. Registrar.

Evaluation Methods for Years One and Two

Students are evaluated using multiple methods of assessment, and evaluation includes academic and professionalism domains. Examinations are given at periodic intervals during the pre-clerkship portion of the curriculum. The content and time of each examination is established by the module directors and coordinated by the assistant dean of medical education. The questions are generally multiple-choice and computer graded, but may include other formats (e.g., including laboratories, small group and team-based learning activities, projects and other formats). There are opportunities for self- and peer assessment of performance that are supplemented by written narratives from faculty. Students who fail to meet established standards of professionalism may be assigned yellow or red cards by the faculty. Examples of behaviors that may lead to a yellow or red card are listed in the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee Policy (Policy 9.9.2).

It is the responsibility of each module director to establish the criteria for the awarding of module grades, the format of the examination, the role of examinations and other graded work in the determination of the grades, and the communication of this information to students on the first day of each module. Any concerns relative to the assignment of a grade should be directed to the appropriate module director within ten business days of receipt/notification of the final module grade.

Students are expected to take examinations as scheduled. Students unable to take an examination as scheduled because of an emergency situation (e.g., significant illness, hospitalization, or death in the family) must notify the Office of Student Affairs and the module director prior to the examination.

Evaluation Methods for Years Three and Four

Student evaluation in the clerkship portion of the curriculum includes written examinations as well as other forms of evaluation. The format of clerkship examinations may include multiple choice exams obtained from the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCE), simulation exams, presentations, projects or other formats. Some clerkships may use oral examinations administered by faculty, or faculty and house staff together. In addition, attending faculty and house staff evaluate clinical performance. Evaluation in the clerkships also includes the assessment of professionalism. Students who fail to meet established standards of professionalism may be assigned

yellow or red cards by the faculty. Examples of behaviors that may lead to a yellow or red card are listed in the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee Policy (Policy 9.9.2).

It is the responsibility of each clerkship director to establish the criteria for the awarding of clerkship grades, and to communicate these criteria to students on the first day of the clerkship. Examples of these evaluation areas include:

- Patient Care – medical interviewing; clinical practice; procedural skills
- Medical Knowledge – fund of knowledge; clinical reasoning
- Professionalism – team relationships; humanism and ethics
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Systems Based Learning
- Practice-Based Learning and Improvement – application of evidence; initiative and interest

Students are expected to take examinations as scheduled. Concerns regarding the assignment of a grade (including narrative comments) must be directed to the appropriate clerkship director, within six weeks of receipt/notification of the final clerkship grade. Evaluation of students in the selectives and electives may or may not include a written examination. The evaluation method is established by the clerkship or elective director and is provided to the student on the first day of the rotation/block.

Evaluation Methods for Professionalism

Students learn about the UCF Golden Rule and College of Medicine Honor Code during orientation to medical school. The major tenets of medical professionalism are taught early in the M-1 year and are reinforced throughout the formal curriculum. Multiple methods that are based on observation of student behaviors during all educational and patient care settings are used to assess professionalism. Methods include the use of direct observation rubrics with behavioral subcomponents, reflective exercises, narrative feedback, and oral feedback. Respectful communication to all members of the community, reliability in the completion of assigned tasks, timely attendance at mandatory events, fulfillment of patient care responsibilities, ability to receive feedback, taking responsibility for errors, and showing high levels of engagement are common surrogate measures of professionalism. Adherence to all COM policies including excused absences, research protocols, HIPPA, and conflict of interest are further indicators of professionalism. Breaches in the Honor Code represent a lack of professionalism and may be documented using yellow and red card warnings that result in remedial or disciplinary actions (see SEPC Policy). The list of professionalism violations in the SEPC Policy is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to provide examples of professionalism violations.

3. Grade Appeal Process

Basis for Appeal

A student may **only** appeal his or her module or clerkship grade, or any component thereof (e.g., exam grade, narrative evaluation, project, etc.) if he or she alleges that 1) the grade was assigned in a manner not in accordance with the statement of policy distributed at the beginning of the module or clerkship, 2) there are errors in the application of the grading procedures, and/or 3) a grade was lowered for non-academic reasons, including discrimination. The established module or clerkship grading policies themselves may not be appealed.

Guidelines for the Appeal Process of an Assigned Grade

The following procedure provides guidelines for the grade appeal process. Please note that the timeframe for initiating an appeal varies by academic year:

- M-1/M-2 Year: the grade appeal process must be initiated within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grade.
- M-3 Year: the grade appeal process must be initiated within twenty (20) business days of grades posted in the student portal (myUCF).
- M-4 Year: the grade appeal process must be initiated within twenty (20) business days of grades posted in the student portal (myUCF).

Appeal to the Module/Clerkship Director

- Within the timeframe specified above, the student may submit a written appeal to the appropriate module/clerkship director via e-mail regarding any assigned grade that they dispute that meets the basis of appeals described above. The student shall include all relevant information with the appeal to the module/clerkship director. The associate dean for students must be copied on all communications regarding grade appeals.
- The module/clerkship director will review the grading policy with the student to ensure that the process is understood and has been followed. If the module/clerkship director determines there was a grading error, the grade was not assigned in accordance with that module/clerkship's grading policy, or the grade was lowered for non-academic reasons (e.g., discrimination), then he or she will initiate the appropriate grade change within ten (10) business days.
- The module/clerkship director will respond in writing to the student within ten (10) business days of the student's request for review, with a copy to the associate dean for students.

Appeal to the Assistant Dean(s) of Medical Education

- I. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved with the module/clerkship director, the student may appeal to the assistant dean of medical education within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written decision of the module/clerkship director. The associate dean for students must be copied on all communications regarding grade appeals.
- II. For appeal of grades in the M-1 or M-2 years, the appeal is directed to the assistant dean of medical education (M-3 and M-4). For appeal of grades in the M-3 or M-4 years, the appeal is directed to the assistant dean of medical education (M-1 and M-2).
- III. The assistant dean of medical education will review all relevant information to this point and confer with the student, involved faculty members, and the module/clerkship director. The assistant dean of medical education will provide a written response within ten (10) business days of receiving a written appeal, with a copy to the associate dean for students. The appeal to the assistant dean is only a recommendation to the module/clerkship director, who has ten (10) business days in which to make a decision regarding whether to change the grade. The student should be notified of this decision in writing, and the associate dean for students should be copied on all communication regarding the appeal.

Appeal to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs

- I. If resolution of the issue is not made to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written appeal to the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs stating the reasons for the appeal. Copies of all relevant information mentioned above shall be sent to the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs. This appeal must occur within ten (10) business days of receipt of the module/clerkship director's written decision regarding the recommendation of the assistant dean for medical education. The appeal shall be prepared in writing by the student, who

may seek guidance from the assistant or associate dean for students of the College of Medicine. The associate dean for faculty and academic affairs may discuss the case with the student, any involved faculty members, the module/clerkship director, the assistant dean(s) for medical education, and the associate or assistant dean for students. The associate dean for students must be copied on all communications regarding grade appeals.

- II. Following these discussions, the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs will provide a written response within ten (10) business days of receiving a written appeal, with a copy to the associate dean for students.

Appeal to the College Dean

- I. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the student may appeal to the dean of the College of Medicine. A student wishing to appeal to the dean concerning the recommendation must make a written appeal request, with a copy to the associate dean for students, within ten (10) business days of receipt of written notification of the response from the Office of Faculty and Academic Affairs. Acting as the university president's representative, the dean of the College of Medicine shall make a final decision on the matter within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the student's request for review. The decision of the dean is final and not subject to appeal. This decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the associate dean for students.

4. Citation/Professionalism Appeal Process

A student may **only** appeal a yellow/red card professionalism citation **if the student wishes to provide information directly related to the citation that was not previously available.**

Guidelines for the Appeal Process of Yellow/Red Card (Professionalism) Citations

The following procedure provides guidelines for the appeal process for yellow/red card (professionalism) citations. Please note that the grade appeal process must be initiated within ten (10) business days of receipt of the yellow/red card.

Appeal to the Assistant Dean(s) of Medical Education

- I. The student may appeal a yellow/red card citation to the assistant dean of medical education within ten (10) business days of receipt of the notice of the citation. The associate dean for students must be copied on all communications regarding yellow/red card appeals. For appeal of a citation in the M-1 or M-2 years, the appeal is directed to the assistant dean of medical education (M-3 and M-4). For appeal of a citation in the M-3 or M-4 years, the appeal is directed to the assistant dean of medical education (M-1 and M-2). The assistant dean of medical education will review all relevant information to this point and confer with the student, any involved faculty members, the module/clerkship director, the assistant dean(s) for medical education, and the associate or assistant dean for students.
- II. The assistant dean of medical education will provide a written response within ten (10) business days of receiving a written appeal, with a copy to the associate dean for students. If the student is not satisfied with the response from the assistant dean of medical education and elects to continue with an appeal, copies of all relevant information mentioned above shall be sent to the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs.

Appeal to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs

- III. If resolution of the issue is not made to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a written appeal to the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs stating the reasons for the appeal. The associate dean for students must be copied on all communications regarding yellow/red card appeals. Copies of all relevant information mentioned above shall be sent to the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs. This appeal must occur within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written decision of the assistant dean of medical education. The appeal shall be prepared in writing by the student, who may seek guidance from the assistant or associate dean for students of the College of Medicine. The associate dean for faculty and academic affairs may discuss the case with the student, any involved faculty members, the module/clerkship director, the assistant dean(s) for medical education, and the associate or assistant dean for students.
- IV. Following these discussions, the associate dean for faculty and academic affairs will provide a written response within ten (10) business days of receiving a written appeal, with a copy to the associate dean for students.

Appeal to the College Dean

- I. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the student may appeal to the dean of the College of Medicine. A student wishing to appeal to the dean concerning the recommendation must make a written appeal request, with a copy to the associate dean for students, within ten (10) business days of receipt of written notification of the response from the Office of Faculty and Academic Affairs. Acting as the university president's representative, the dean of the College of Medicine shall make a final decision on the matter within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the student's request for review. The decision of the dean is final and not subject to appeal. This decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the associate dean for students.

3.0 Definitions:

N/A

4.0 Responsibilities:

The Student Evaluation and Promotion Committees are responsible for adherence to this policy.

5.0 Monitoring Procedures:

The application of this policy is monitored by the M.D. Registrar's Office and the Associate Dean for Students.

6.0 Related Policies:

UCF COM Policy 9.9.1: Standards for Promotion and Graduation

UCF COM Policy 9.9.2: Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee

UCF COM Policy 9.9.4: Leave of Absence

UCF COM Policy 9.9.5: Impaired Students and Substance Abuse

UCF COM Policy 9.9.6: Good Standing

7.0 Key Search Words:

Promotion	Advancement	Graduation
Grading	Due process	Appeal

8.0 Revision History:

Version	Date Approved	Modifications
V1	2009	Original
V2	6/30/2017	Minor edits
V3	6/19/2019 by CCoM	Streamlined grade appeals process Defined reasons for appeals Revised appeals process timelines

9.0 References:

N/A

Responsible Office: Office of Faculty and Academic Affairs

Policy Contact: Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs; Associate Dean for Students

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