

Grades Other Than Passing Policy

Effective Date: 1999

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

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POLICY ABSTRACT

Students at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine must pass all required courses and curriculum components to graduate. Additionally, students must pass the minimum number of weeks credit for each curriculum component required for graduation. The Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC) determines all statuses and actions related to grades other than passing in one or multiple courses.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy establishes that students at the UAB Heersink School of Medicine must pass all required courses and curriculum components to graduate. It also specifies the available options in the case that a required course or curriculum component is not passed. This policy meets the requirements set forth by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) as follows:

Element 10.3: Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination

"The faculty of a medical school...develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student...assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters."

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Heersink School of Medicine students.

POLICY

Students must pass all courses and curriculum components used to fulfill graduation requirements.

Students receiving a grade other than passing in a required course or program must successfully complete that course or program to graduate. If the course is an elective, acting internship, or special topics course, the student must either successfully complete



the same course or successfully complete a different course that meets the same graduation requirement.

The Student Academic Standing Committee (SASC) reviews all instances of grades other than passing and determines progression, statuses, and actions related to such grades. All decisions regarding student status, course remediation, course completion, course repetition, recycling, dismissal, completion of required program components, and academic progression are approved by the SASC.

See also <u>Medical Student Grading Policy</u> See also <u>Medical Student Academic Progress Review</u>

PROCEDURE

1. Definitions. The following course grades are considered grades other than passing. Detailed definitions can be found in the Medical Student Grading Policy.

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F	Failure	
Ι	Incomplete	
Ν	Remediation required on National Board of	
	Medical Examiners (NBME) subject examination	
WP	Withdrawn passing	
WF	Withdrawn failing	
W	Withdrawn	
F/P or F/F	Preclinical, learning community, and scholarly	
	activity courses which are remediated appear on	
	the academic record as F/P or F/F as appropriate	
N/P, N/HP* or N/F	Clerkship courses remediated by repetition of the	
	NBME subject examination appear on the	
	academic record as N/P, N/HP*, or N/F as	
	appropriate.	
	*The N/HP designation took effect 4/28/2024	

Table 1.1

Coursework is categorized into the following graduation requirements*:

Table 1.2

Pre-clerkship Courses	Required
Clerkships	Required
Acting Internships (AI)	Students may select from multiple course options to fulfill this requirement



Electives	Students may select from multiple course options to fulfill this requirement
Learning Communities (LC)	Required
Preparation for Residency	Required
Scholarly Activity (SA)	Required
Special Topics (ST)	Students may select from multiple course options to fulfill this requirement
Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)	Required

*Graduation requirements may vary by program or track. Please refer to <u>Graduation</u> <u>Requirements</u> for details.

2. Notification. Upon determination that a student will receive a grade other than passing, the Course Director and/or Director of Assessment, will send notification of the final grade to the student. A copy of the written correspondence is also sent to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Students, and the Associate Dean for Admissions and Enrollment Management. Students have the right to appeal a grade up to 2 weeks following notification (See Medical Student Grading Policy, Appeal Process).

3. Academic Standing. Academic status for students receiving a grade of F or WF in a preclinical course will be Active with Deficiency, provided no other academic issues need resolution. Students who fail more than one course in a given preclinical year are subject to academic probation status as designated by the SASC. Students receiving a grade of I or N will be placed on a status of Active with Deficiency, provided no other academic issues need resolution. Grades of WP or W do not affect academic standing. Students receiving a grade of F or WF in a clinical course are subject to academic probation status as designated by the SASC.

Return to a status of Active in Good Standing after placement on Active with Deficiency or Academic Probation is dependent upon course type and number of non-passing grades. In general, students whose status is Active with Deficiency return to Good Standing upon successful remediation of failed coursework provided no other academic issues need resolution. In general, students whose status is Academic Probation due to a single course failure return to Active in Good Standing upon remediation of the failed course. Students with multiple course failures return to Active in Good Standing upon successful completion of requirements for their current academic year provided no other academic issues need resolution.

Table 3.1.

Academic	Number and type of	Academic Status	Timing of Return to Good
Year	Course Failures		Standing



MS1	1 preclinical course	Active with	Successful remediation of
		Deficiency	the failed course
MS1	2 preclinical courses	Academic	Successful completion of all
	_	Probation	MS1 coursework
MS2	1 preclinical course	Active with	Successful remediation of
	-	Deficiency	the failed course
MS2	2 preclinical courses	Academic	Successful completion of all
	-	Probation	MS2 coursework
MS3	1 clinical course ¹	Academic	Clerkship: Successful
		Probation	remediation of the failed
			clerkship
			Elective: Successful
			remediation of the same
			course or another course
			fulfilling the same
			requirement
MS ₃	2 clinical courses ^{1,2}	Academic	Successful completion of all
		Probation	MS3 coursework
MS4	1 clinical course ³	Academic	Successful remediation of
		Probation	the same course or another
			course fulfilling the same
			requirement
MS4	2 clinical courses ^{2,3}	Academic	Successful completion of all
		Probation	MS4 coursework
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¹MS3 clinical courses include clerkships, clinical electives, and the ambulatory acting internship.

²Students who fail two clinical courses in the same year are considered by the SASC for dismissal. Academic Status and Timing of Return to Good Standing apply in cases where the SASC allows students to continue coursework.

³MS4 clinical courses include acting internships, clinical electives, teaching associate courses, and Preparation for Residency.

Failure of other curriculum components (i.e., Scholarly Activity, Special Topics, Learning Communities, OSCE's) results in a status of Active with Deficiency provided no other academic issues need resolution. Students remain in this status until successful remediation of the curriculum component.

Students with failure of one preclinical or clinical course and failure of another curriculum component within the same year will be placed on Academic Probation. Return to Good Standing occurs after successful completion of the academic year in which the failures occurred.

All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.



4. Grades of F. Students receiving a grade of F in a required course must remediate or repeat that course to graduate. If the course is an elective, acting internship, or special topics course, the student must either successfully complete the same course or successfully complete a different course that meets the same graduation requirement.

4.1. Remediation of Grades of F in required preclinical courses. The following table summarizes general actions related to grades of F in first and second year required courses. Variations in circumstances and situations unique to individual students may alter these general guidelines. All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.

Note: When an entire module must be remediated, the remediation process and timeline is specified by the module director in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education. In rare cases when satisfactory remediation cannot be accomplished within the required timeframe without the student stopping academic progression, the student will be required to recycle.

Course or Required Curriculum Patient, Doctor, Society	Action Remediation Timeline for	 Details Must remediate to the satisfaction of the module director. Must remediate prior to the start of the
	remediation	next MS1 academic year.
Fundamentals of Medicine All five blocks of this course must be passed to proceed to the MS1 organ system modules.	Remediation	 Students who fail ONE block may remediate the failed block. Students must successfully pass the remediation examination for the failed block before proceeding to the organ system modules. Students who fail ONE block and successfully remediate the block will receive a grade of P for the course. The block remediation examination must be passed for a student (a) to pass the failed block, (b) to pass the module as a whole (provided no other block failures), and (c) to proceed to the organ system modules.

Table 4.1



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		 Students who fail TWO blocks will receive a grade of F for the course. Students are typically required to recycle (repeat) the first year of medical school in its entirety, provided no other issues need resolution.
		• Failure of a block remediation examination will result in failure of the block and failure of the Fundamentals of Medicine Module.
		• Students who fail a block remediation are required to recycle (repeat) the first year of medical school.
	Timeline for remediation	• Required BEFORE the start of the organ system modules. Specific dates will be designated yearly.
		• Students unable to remediate prior to the start of organ system modules for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, are required to recycle (repeat) the MS1 year.
Organ Modules: Cardiovascular, Pulmonary, Gastrointestinal, Renal,	Remediation	• Failure of either the Summative Performance (K) component or the Application (P) component results in a grade of F for the course.
Neurosciences, Musculoskeletal & Skin, Endocrine, Reproductive, Hematology-		• Beginning with 2023-24 academic year, a combined raw score (Summative, Application, and Skills portions of the grade) that is below 70.0 will require a time-based remediation process.
Oncology Both the Summative		• Students must remediate the module to the satisfaction of the module director.
Performance (K) component and the Application (P) component must be		• Failure to successfully remediate is grounds for recycling the first or second year of medical school.



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passed to pass the course.	Timeline for Remediation	 For MS1 courses: Prior to the start of the next MS1 year. For MS2 courses: Prior to taking USMLE Step 1. Students unable to remediate within the timeline for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, are required to recycle the year.
Evidence-Based Medicine	Remediation	• Must remediate to the satisfaction of the module director.
	Timeline for Remediation	• Prior to taking USMLE Step 1.
		• Students unable to remediate within the timeline for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, are required to recycle.
OSCEs	Remediation	• A combined OSCE average below 70.0 at the end of MS2 year will require remediation.
		• Must remediate to the satisfaction of the Directors of Clinical Skills program.
	Timeline for Remediation	Prior to beginning first clerkship.
		• Initiation of first clerkship may be delayed until successful remediation of OSCEs.

4.2. Remediation of Grades of F in clerkships. Students receiving a grade of F in a clerkship must successfully remediate that course by repeating it. A grade of F is typically received when a student fails the clinical component of a clerkship or fails a repeated attempt on a clerkship shelf exam. Reasons for failure of the clinical component include, but are not limited to, clinical performance not meeting the standards for a passing grade as determined by the clerkship director(s), absence beyond those allowed to meet the attendance requirement, or professionalism breaches. For shelf exam failures, see section 7. Grades of N.

The following table summarizes general actions related to grades of F in clerkships. Variations in circumstances and situations unique to individual



students may alter these general guidelines. All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.

Note that students receiving a grade of F in a clerkship may be allowed to repeat that clerkship on a different campus than the campus on which the grade of F was received.

	Status	Continuation in Coursework	Remediation and Time	Beginning New
			Limit	Coursework
			-	
1st Clerkship Failure	Academic Probation Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful remediation of the failed clerkship	Student's option to (a) complete any clerkship or course currently in progress or (b) withdraw immediately	Must repeat the entire clerkship within 12 weeks of notification of failure. Requests for an extension of this time limit must be approved by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education prior to this deadline	Students may begin new coursework after completing the repeated clerkship
2nd Clerkship Failure	Academic Probation Subject to dismissal Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful completion of all clerkships if allowed to continue	Required to withdraw from coursework immediately Placed on School-Initiated Leave of Absence	Must repeat the entire clerkship immediately upon return from leave of absence if approved to continue	Students may begin new coursework after completing the repeated clerkships provided no additional actions specified by the SASC



3rd	Academic	Required to	Must repeat the	Return to
Clerkship	Probation	withdraw from	entire clerkship	coursework
Failure		coursework	immediately	dependent upon
	Subject to	immediately	upon return from	SASC decision
	dismissal		leave of absence	
		Placed on	if approved to	
	Usually	School-Initiated	continue	
	returned to	Leave of Absence		
	Active in			
	Good			
	Standing			
	upon			
	successful			
	completion of			
	all clerkships			
	if allowed to			
	continue			

4.3. Remediation of Grades of F in other required courses or curriculum components. The following table summarizes general actions related to grades of F in other required courses or curriculum components. Variations in circumstances and situations unique to individual students may alter these general guidelines. All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.

Table 4.3

Preparation for Residency	Remediation	 Must remediate to the satisfaction of the course director. Failure of remediation will require that the student repeat the full course at its next offering.
	Timeline for remediation	• Prior to graduation.
		• Students unable to remediate within the timeline are required to repeat the full course at its next offering.
Introduction to the Scholarly	Remediation	• Must remediate to the satisfaction of the Director of Scholarly Activity.
Activity	Timeline for remediation	• Prior to the beginning of the MS2 year.



		• Students unable to remediate prior to the start of the next MS2 year for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, are required to recycle (repeat) the MS1 year.
Scholarly Activity Milestones	Remediation	• Failure of any milestone must be remediated to the satisfaction of the Director of Scholarly Activity.
Composed of 3 milestones. All 3 milestones must be passed to		• Students who fail ONE milestone and successfully remediate the milestone will receive a grade of P for the course.
graduate		• Students who fail TWO milestones and successfully remediate the material will receive a grade of F/P for the course.
	Timeline for	• Within 12 weeks of milestone deadline.
	remediation	• Students unable to remediate within 12 weeks of the deadline for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, may not start new coursework until the milestone is completed, may be removed from coursework, or placed on School-Initiated Leave of Absence to provide time for completion of the milestone.
		• All milestones must be completed prior to graduation.
Learning Community 1, 2, 3, or 4	Remediation	 Must remediate to the satisfaction of the course director. MS1-3: Failure of remediation will require that
		• MS1-3: Failure of remediation will require that the student repeat the full course at its next offering.
		• MS4: May not graduate until successful remediation.
	Timeline for Remediation	 For LC 1, 2, or 3: Prior to the start of the next academic year.
		• For LC 4: Prior to graduation.



		• Students unable to remediate by the deadline for reasons other than those considered excused under the absence policy, are required to recycle (LC1-3) or may result in delay of graduation (LC4).
MS3 OSCEs	Remediation	 Must remediate to the satisfaction of the program directors. Students are not permitted to participate in acting internships until they pass the remediation.
	Timeline for Remediation	• Prior to beginning acting internships.

4.4 Remediation of Grades of F in other courses. Some components of the curriculum allow students to select from specified courses to fulfill that component to graduate (see graduation requirements list in Section 1). Students receiving a grade of F in such a course may opt to (a) repeat the same course or (b) select another course from the specified course list to count toward that requirement.

The following table summarizes general actions related to grades of F in courses used to fulfill graduation requirements in which a variety of courses may be used. Variations in circumstances and situations unique to individual students may alter these general guidelines. All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.

	Status	Continuation in Coursework	Remediation and Time Limit	Beginning New Coursework
1st Course Failure - Acting Internship	Academic Probation Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful remediation of an	May continue in coursework provided no other academic issues need resolution	Must successfully complete the requirement prior to graduation	N/A

Table 4.4



1st Course Failure - Electives including Clinical Electives, Co-enrolled Courses, and Teaching Associate Courses	acting internship fulfilling the graduation requirement. Academic Probation Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful completion of the same or another elective course	May continue in coursework provided no other academic issues need resolution	Must successfully complete the requirement prior to graduation	N/A
2nd Course Failure - Any combination of Acting Internship, Electives, and/or Teaching Associate Courses	Academic Probation Subject to dismissal Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon completion of all graduation requirements if approved by SASC to continue	May be required to withdraw from coursework immediately dependent upon the time sequence of failures May be placed on School-Initiated Leave of Absence	If approved to continue, must successfully complete the requirement prior to graduation	Return to coursework dependent upon SASC decision
3rd Course Failure - Any combination of Acting Internship, Electives, and/or Teaching Associate Courses	Academic Probation Subject to dismissal Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon completion of all graduation requirements if approved by SASC to continue	Required to withdraw immediately if in coursework Placed on School- Initiated Leave of Absence	If approved to continue, must successfully complete the requirement prior to graduation	Return to coursework dependent upon SASC decision



Special	Active with	May continue in	Must	N/A
Topics (ST)	Deficiency Usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful completion of the same or another Special Topics Course	coursework provided no other academic issues need resolution	successfully complete the requirement prior to graduation	

5. Grades of WF. A student who withdraws from a course prior to its completion and receives a grade of WF is considered to have failed the course. Since a WF is a failing grade, it is treated in the same manner as a grade of F. All procedures related to notification and academic status are the same as those for grades of F (see above). The student will be reviewed by the SASC.

6. Grades of WP and W. A student who withdraws from a course prior to its completion and receives a grade of WP or W will not be given credit for the course or any part thereof.

7. Grades of N. A student who fails an NBME subject examination in a clerkship on the first attempt will receive a grade of N in the clerkship. Upon receipt of the score on the second attempt of the same NBME subject examination, the N grade will be amended to N/P or N/F as appropriate. After 4/28/2024, a student may receive a grade of N/HP when they earn Honors for their clinical performance. A second failure of the same subject examination results in a failing grade for the course, and is treated in the same manner as a grade of F. In this case, all procedures related to notification, academic standing, and terms of remediation are the same as those for grades of F in a clerkship (see above).

Students requiring remediation on the first attempt on an NBME subject examination (N) in a clerkship will be required to successfully pass that examination within 12 weeks of notification of the examination failure. Requests for an extension of this time limit must be approved by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education prior to this deadline. If the subject examination is not retaken within the approved period, the student may retake the course. The original course grade remains an N.



The following chart summarizes general actions related to grades of N. Variations in circumstances and situations unique to individual students may alter these general guidelines. All decisions are subject to review and approval by the SASC.

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	Status	Continuation in	Remediation and
		Coursework	Time Limit
1st Clerkship	Active with	Student's option to	Must retake the
Subject	Deficiency	(a) complete any	examination within 12
Exam Failure		clerkship or course	weeks of notification of
(N)	Usually returned	currently in progress	failure. Requests for an
	to Active in Good	or (b) withdraw	extension of this time
	Standing upon	immediately	limit must be approved
	receipt of passing	provided no other	by the Associate Dean
	score on subject	academic issues	for Undergraduate
	examination	need resolution	Medical Education prior
	provided no other	need resolution	to this deadline
	academic issues		to this deadhine
	need resolution	March and 1	Marat anna 111
2nd	Grade of N/F in	May be required to	Must commence within
Clerkship	clerkship	withdraw from	12 weeks of notification
Subject		coursework	of failure by repeating
Exam Failure	Academic	immediately. See	the entire clerkship. In
(Same	Probation	table above	all cases, requests for an
Clerkship)		regarding clerkship	extension of this time
	Usually returned	failure.	limit must be approved
	to Active in Good		by the Associate Dean
	Standing upon	May be placed on	for Undergraduate
	successful	School-Initiated	Medical Education prior
	remediation of	Leave of Absence.	to the deadline
	the clerkship	See table above	
		regarding clerkship	
		failure.	
2nd	Academic	May be required to	Must commence within
Clerkship	Probation	withdraw from	12 weeks of notification
Subject		coursework	of failure by retaking the
Exam Failure	Subject to	immediately if other	subject examination. In
(Different	dismissal	academic issues	all cases, requests for an
Clerkships)	uisiiiissui	need resolution,	extension of this time
olor wantha)	Usually returned	otherwise may	limit must be approved
	to Active in Good	remain in current	÷ -
			by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate
	Standing upon	course.	ior Undergraduate
	successful		



	completion of all clerkships if allowed to continue	May be placed on School-Initiated Leave of Absence	Medical Education prior to the deadline.
3rd Clerkship Subject Exam Failure	Academic Probation Subject to dismissal If allowed to continue, usually returned to Active in Good Standing upon successful completion of all clerkships if allowed to continue	Required to withdraw from coursework immediately Placed on School- Initiated Leave of Absence	Dependent upon SASC decision

8. Grades of I. Students receiving a grade of I must successfully complete any missing course requirements within the deadline stipulated by the course director to receive credit for the course. In general, a first or second year student may not commence a new academic year until any grade of I is resolved; a student in the third or fourth year has up to 1 year to resolve grades of I. Failure to successfully complete missing course requirements or failure to complete them within the specified timeframe may result in a grade of F for the course; in this case the grade of F will be treated as outlined above.

9. Multiple Grades Other Than Passing. Students receiving more than one grade other than passing, regardless of the type of each course (including Preparation for Residency, Scholarly Activity, and Learning Community), may be required to remediate courses, repeat courses, or recycle an academic year, or may be dismissed from the School of Medicine. Students receiving more than one grade other than passing, regardless of the type of each course, may also be required to stop coursework, be placed on School-Initiated leave of absence, and/or be required to remediate as outlined in the tables above.

As in all cases of grades other than passing, the SASC will review each instance of failure and make determinations regarding the student's academic progression.

9.1. In Preclinical Courses. The SASC typically takes the following actions for students receiving multiple grades of F or WF in preclinical courses:



- Receipt of two grades of F or WF during the MS 1 year: Typically required to recycle (repeat) the MS 1 year in its entirety.
- Receipt of two grades of F or WF during the MS 2 year: Typically required to recycle (repeat) the MS 2 year in its entirety.
- Receipt of two grades of F or WF in preclinical coursework during two different academic years: Typically required to remediate coursework to the satisfaction of the course directors.
- Receipt of three grades of F or WF in preclinical coursework: Subject to dismissal.

9.2. In Clerkships. Students receiving more than one grade other than passing in clerkships are subject to the actions detailed in Table 4.2 and Table 7 above.

9.3. In Other Course Types. Students receiving more than one grade other than passing in courses other than preclinical or clerkship courses are subject to the actions detailed in Table 4.4 above. The SASC will review each instance of grades other than passing for course types not addressed in the tables above and make determinations regarding the student's academic progression.

10. Academic Dismissal. Academic dismissal will be considered for, but is not limited to, the following reasons:

- Failure to successfully remediate coursework.
- Failure to successfully remediate by the specified deadline.
- Failure of two or more courses in a single academic year.
- Failure of two or more clerkship courses.
- Failure of two or more courses regardless of course type.
- Grades other than passing in two or more courses, regardless of the type of grade or type of course.

As in all cases of grades other than passing, the SASC will review each instance of failure and make determinations regarding the student's academic progression, including need for remediation, recycling, or dismissal.

11. Academic Record and Transcript. The academic transcript reflects a student's total, unabridged academic history at the School of Medicine. All courses are recorded on the academic transcript whether attempted or completed. Grades are not removed or replaced on the transcript after a course has been remediated or repeated since doing so is inconsistent with the representation of an unabridged record (i.e., a complete, accurate, and unedited record of the student's academic performance).

For this reason, preclinical courses remediated by examination and/or completion of assigned work appear on the academic record as F/P or F/F as appropriate. Clerkship



courses remediated by repetition of the NBME subject examination appear on the academic record as N/P or N/F as appropriate. After 4/29/24 N/HP will designate when a student failed then successfully remediated the NBME subject examination and earned Honors for their clinical performance in a clerkship. In instances where a course is repeated, both course attempts will appear on the academic record with the appropriate grades.

Since the academic transcript is an unabridged academic history, a course title on the transcript reflects the name of the course at the time the course was taken. Course name changes are effective for a future term or academic year and are not retroactive.

12. SASC Authority. All decisions regarding academic status, course remediation, course completion, course repetition, recycling, dismissal, academic progression, and academic status are subject to approval by the SASC. Students can respond and appeal any adverse decision by the SASC related to status, recycling, promotion, graduation, or dismissal. See <u>Medical Student Academic Progress Review Policy</u> for details.

HISTORY

Created: 1999

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