

**CHICAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL
AT
ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY
OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE**

Evaluation and Grading System

Chicago Medical School Offices for Student Affairs and Curriculum have published this handbook to inform students of guidelines and procedures pertaining to the CMS evaluation and grading system and its implementation. It also addresses irregularities such as missing an exam due to illness, remediation of an academic deficiency, and requesting a leave of absence. In order to ensure a quality educational experience, students should become familiar with the contents of this handbook and be able to use it as a resource. If you have questions or concerns regarding any material contained in this handbook, please contact the CMS Office for Student Affairs. Please note that policies and other information in this handbook are subject to change over time as appropriate and Chicago Medical School reserves the right to make such changes at its sole discretion.

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Chicago Medical School
Evaluation and Grading System

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I. Objectives

The student evaluation and grading system should:

Provide evaluations of student performance throughout the range of competencies important to the provision of good health care. Multiple methods of evaluation are encouraged and are to be utilized.

Evaluate student performance against a defined level of competence. A minimum passing grade must signify competent performance.

Provide the student with clear, accurate, and prompt feedback concerning his/her performance.

Provide appropriate recognition to students who have achieved outstanding performance in competencies requisite for the provision of good health care.

Provide the basis for data to generate a realistic summary of the student's performance at Chicago Medical School.

II. Data for the Evaluation Process

A. Relevance

1. Reported evaluation data should be relevant to:
 - a) course objectives
 - b) course content
 - c) CMS overall competencies for medical education
(Appendix II)
2. The goals, expectations or objectives of each course or educational experience are to be explicitly communicated to both the students and instructors at the beginning of the course.
3. Each department, faculty, or organized teaching program is to evaluate students by means it deems appropriate to its respective course and subject to approval by the applicable curricular subcommittee.

4. The method of student evaluation is to be clearly communicated by the instructor at the beginning of the course to each student and should remain in effect through the duration of the course.

B. Grading System - An A,B,C,F system will be utilized and defined as:

- A – High Achievement
- B – Above Average Achievement
- C – Average Achievement
- P - Pass
- F - Fail
- W – Withdrawal (must retake the entire course)
- PP - Pass Proficiency Exam
- I – Incomplete (must complete the course requirements)
- # - Graded at Sequence End
- IP - In Progress
- NR – Needs Remediation
- NC - No Credit given
- + - Same course as taken by Medical Students

1. A grade of Incomplete (I) is given when sufficient evaluation data have not yet been acquired and/or when the student has not yet met all the requirements of the course or clerkship. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirement, the incomplete “I” will be removed from the transcript and be replaced by the earned grade.
2. An NR grade signifies that the overall performance in the course of clerkship was not at a passing level. At the discretion of the course director, a student whose initial performance was unsatisfactory may be eligible to take a retake examination. Upon passage of a retake examination, the "NR" will be removed in favor of a "C", the highest grade achievable via a retake exam. Upon failure of a retake examination, the "NR" notation would be replaced by an "F".
3. A student who remediates an initial failure by repeating the complete course at CMS/RFUMS or at another approved medical school would have the subsequent course and grade listed separately on the transcript.
4. The deadline for withdrawing from a required course (not electives) is 2 weeks prior to the final examination in that course.

5. Retake / make-up examinations or summer courses taken elsewhere must be completed and grades reported by the start of the next academic year.

C. Clinical Clerkship Evaluations

Overall, an evaluation of a student's performance in a clinical clerkship needs to meet the following objectives:

1. Both the letter grade and the accompanying narrative should accurately reflect the level of competence and knowledge demonstrated by the student.
2. Evaluation practices should be performed in a manner that ensures consistency and comparability across sites.
3. Final evaluations should reflect a summary of the student's performance for the duration of the clerkship.
4. Each clerkship should provide formative feedback to each student at the midpoint of the clerkship.

D. Reporting Evaluations

1. Each department or course director is expected to submit grades and evaluations within four weeks of the end of that course or clerkship.
2. All evaluations for each clerkship taken for credit toward the M.D. degree will be reported on a standard format.

Completed copies of the evaluations will be supplied to:

- 1) the student's permanent record in the Registrar's Office
- 2) the student
- 3) the department
- 4) the CMS Office for Student Affairs

E. United States Medical Licensure Examination Requirements

1. All CMS students are required to take both Step 1 and both parts (written and clinical skills) of Step 2 of the USMLE to graduate. USMLE Step I and Step II CK must be passed for graduation.

2. Students must attempt Step 1 before beginning junior clinical clerkships. Students may begin junior activity after attempting the exam. A student who fails the examination may complete the clerkship in which he/she was enrolled at the time of notification of failure, but must withdraw from further clinical activity until he/she has retaken Step 1. Students who fail Step 1 on a second attempt will not be allowed to enroll in any clerkship until they have passed the examination.
3. A student who does not pass the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge examination prior to graduation may remain a student of Chicago Medical School, paying applicable tuition and receiving appropriate benefits such as student health insurance subject to the approval of the Student Evaluation Promotion and Awards Committee. A student who does not complete Step 2 requirements by one year from the original/scheduled date of graduation will be recommended for dismissal.
4. Students who are unsuccessful on three attempts on USMLE Step 1 or Step 2 CK will be considered for dismissal.

III. Requirements and Procedures for Correcting Academic Deficiencies

A. Examinations

1. Deferred Examinations

a. General Principles

Scheduled examinations may be postponed for individual students only if:

1. The student is too ill on the day scheduled for the examination to carry on normal daily routine functions, or
2. A serious personal or family crisis has arisen on or immediately prior to the scheduled examination day.

b. Procedures

1. When a student finds himself/herself too ill to perform normal daily routine functions or experiences a serious personal or family crisis on or just before an examination, the student must:

- a. Immediately notify the CMS Office for Student Affairs.
- b. The CMS Office for Student Affairs will determine whether a student's personal situation warrants deferring an examination and will notify course directors of excused absences.

2. The student has the responsibility for contacting the course director to arrange a specific time for taking the deferred examination.

2. Administration and Scheduling of Retake/Makeup Examination

- a. Course directors will give retake or make up examinations on the scheduled dates listed on the academic calendar or at the discretion of the course director.
- b. Students who need to retake or make up a clerkship examination are required to do so within 12 weeks of beginning the senior year.
- c. In most situations, only one retake examination will be permitted per course or clerkship.

3. Failure to Pass Retake Examination

When a student fails a Retake examination, a grade of "F" shall be submitted to the Registrar and the student will be required to repeat the entire course in question.

B. Course or Clerkship Deficiency

There are instances where a student may have a deficiency in only a portion of the course content, insufficient to justify complete course or clerkship failure. The course director has the option to design an appropriate remediation experience that:

- a. Provides an opportunity to adequately demonstrate to the department that the student is now competent in the knowledge/skills which that course/clerkship considers necessary for passing performance.
- b. Stresses those aspects of student performance in the course/clerkship in which competency has yet to be demonstrated.
- c. Falls within the range of resources that the department may reasonably bring to bear to provide an opportunity to correct the deficiency.

- d. Makes efficient use of the student's time and other resources in demonstrating competence in the course/clerkship material.
- e. Interferes to the minimum extent with the student's orderly progression through medical school.
- f. Minimizes the disruption in orderly scheduling of the student into subsequent courses and clerkships.

C. Course or Clerkship Failure

1. Notification of a Student's Failure to Pass a Course or Clerkship

The course or clerkship director will notify the Registrar, the CMS Office for Student Affairs and the student of failure to pass a course or clerkship.

2. Failure of one basic science course

- a. A student who fails one basic science course will be required to repeat the course at CMS or at an approved summer course listed at <http://services.aamc.org/smc> with the approval of the course director.
- b. A student who fails the same basic science course twice will be considered for dismissal.

3. Failure of two basic science courses

- a. A student who fails two basic science courses student must retake the courses and will be required to go on an altered schedule.
- b. A student with a repeat failure of one or both courses will be considered for dismissal.

4. Failure of three or more basic science courses

A student who fails three or more basic science courses in one year will be considered for dismissal.

5. Failure of a required clinical rotation

- a. A student who fails a required clinical rotation (such as a clerkship or subinternship) will be required to repeat the rotation.

- b. All required junior clerkships must be successfully passed by December 31 of the senior year
- c. A student with a repeat failure of the same required clinical rotation will be considered for dismissal.

6. Failure of two required clinical rotations

- a. Students who have failed two required clinical rotations will not be allowed to register for clinical electives until the student has achieved satisfactory academic status.
- b. A student who fails two required clinical rotations in the same year may be considered for dismissal

7. Failure in three or more required clinical rotations

A student who fails three or more required clinical rotations will be considered for dismissal.

8. Failure of an elective

- a. A student who fails an elective must take and pass an additional elective of equivalent duration of the failed elective.
- b. A student who fails three or more electives during the period of enrollment at CMS will be considered for dismissal.

D. Standards of Professional Behavior

All students at Chicago Medical School are expected to exhibit professional, responsible and ethical behavior in their academic, professional and personal lives.

All students should, therefore, possess the highest degree of personal integrity and be able to reason about ethical issues in their professional life. Students are expected to treat patients, patient's families, peers, faculty, staff, members of the healthcare team and all persons with respect, compassion, and sincerity, regardless of race, color, creed, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic class, and to maintain strict confidentiality. Students are expected to be honest and trustworthy, to respect the property of others, and to follow the code of professional ethics appropriate to the practice of medicine.

Any departures from these standards may result in disciplinary action. Students who exhibit egregious or habitual behavior that is inconsistent with this standard, with the CMS competencies, with University policy or with the law will be considered for dismissal.

Procedures for Consideration of Violations of Ethical and Professional Standards

Allegations of ethical or professional misconduct by a student shall be referred to the Student Evaluation, Promotion, and Awards Committee (SEPAC).

A student under suspicion of ethical or professional misconduct will be afforded notice and process in the investigation, deliberation, and decision about such allegations and potential penalties. The recommendations of SEPAC shall be transmitted by the Committee Chair to the Dean of the Medical School. The student will have the opportunity to appeal any negative outcomes to the Dean of Chicago Medical School.

IV. Academic and Professional Progress of CMS Students

Chicago Medical School accepts students who it believes are capable of successfully completing a medical school education. Early identification of students suffering academic difficulty and intervention on their behalf can help in the process of making them self-aware life-long learners.

A. Conditions for Advancement

A student may be advanced to the next succeeding academic year at CMS if he/she:

1. Has successfully completed all of the requirements for the current year, and
2. Has no physical or mental condition that would prevent him/her from assuming the responsibilities of the next academic year and performing the essential functions of a medical student.

No student may enroll in any junior year clerkship without having met all of the academic requirements of the prior years.

B. Conditions for Recommendation of Graduation

1. The student has completed, or is scheduled to complete, all requirements for the MD degree.

2. The student is in good academic and professional standing.
3. The student has taken and/or passed all required USMLE examinations.

C. Conditions Under Which a Student May be Placed on Probation

A student with any of the following deficiencies may be placed on probation:

1. Demonstrated problems with ethical integrity or professional behavior.
2. A student who is granted a Leave-of-Absence (LOA) for any reason, and who in the last academic period prior to beginning the LOA was on probation, will remain on probation upon returning from LOA.
3. Probation may be removed when in the opinion of Chicago Medical School the specific deficiency is resolved and the student has demonstrated consistent satisfactory professional behavior.

D. Conditions Under Which a Student May Be Dismissed

A student with any of the following deficiencies may be recommended for dismissal:

1. Failure of three or more basic science courses in any given academic year.
2. Failure of two or more required clinical rotations.
3. Repeat failure of the same basic science course or required clinical rotation.
4. Failure of 3 or more electives during the student's period of enrollment at CMS.
5. Failure to meet requirements for removal of probation within the time period specified.
6. Difficulties which require that a student be placed on probation after the student has once before been placed on probation.
7. Failure to develop and maintain the standards of ethical integrity, professional judgment, or reliability in personal relationships essential to the competent, honest, responsible practice of medicine.

8. Failure to satisfactorily meet all of the requirements of the first two academic years of medical school within 36 months of the date of first registration into Chicago Medical School as a beginning medical student.
9. Failure to satisfactorily meet all of the requirements of the first three academic years of medical school within 54 months of the date of first registration into Chicago Medical School as a beginning medical student.
10. Failure to satisfactorily meet all of the requirements for graduation with the MD degree within 5 1/2 calendar years of the date of first registration into Chicago Medical School as a beginning medical student.
11. Failure to pass USMLE Step 1 or Step 2 requirements on three attempts.
12. Failure to complete all requirements for the MD degree within seven calendar years, including periods of leave of absence.

V. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The policy and procedures in the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure Manual shall apply. Leaves of Absence may not exceed one year. Students must submit the request for a Leave of Absence in writing to the CMS Office for Student Affairs and specify a beginning and ending date. Students receiving financial aid must schedule an interview with the financial aid office prior to the approval of the Leave of Absence request. All students must complete a signed Leave of Absence/Withdrawal request form prior to final approval of a Leave of Absence by the CMS Office for Student Affairs.

Conditions for a Leave of Absence

Leave of absence may be granted by the CMS Office for Student Affairs for any of the following purposes:

1. Academic
 - a. To undertake full time studies and/or research that relate to healthcare
 - b. To remedy a deficiency in knowledge or skill that relates directly to performance in medical school.
2. Personal
 - a. To retain one's health when a physical or mental illness precludes continued performance in medical school.

- b. Parental leave
- c. Family emergencies or illness
- d. Personal problems that interfere with development of professional competency and future practice of medicine.

VI. SEPAC

The Chicago Medical School Evaluation and Grading System is implemented by the faculty and overseen by the Student Evaluation, Promotions and Awards Committee (SEPAC), and the CMS Office for Student Affairs.

A. Responsibilities of the Student Evaluation, Promotion and Awards Committee (SEPAC)

1. Review, evaluate and encourage the progress of each student's academic performance and professional development. This shall include development of required competencies. In particular, SEPAC will be concerned with impediments to individual academic performance and professional development, such as deficiencies in study skills, or personal and interpersonal problems.
2. Respond to and adjudicate questions that may arise concerning the application of student evaluation criteria and guidelines in specific situations.
3. Interpret the rules concerning promotion, graduation, unsatisfactory student performance, probation, dismissal and leave-of-absence as applied to individual students and situations and to recommend action when needed.
4. Recommend recipients for student honors and awards.
5. Recommend students who have satisfied and completed all requirements for graduation.
6. Recommend changes that may be needed in the process of evaluating student performance.
7. Recommend changes that may be needed in the rules governing promotion, graduation, student performance, probation, dismissal, leave-of-absence and similar topics.

B. SEPAC Membership and Procedures

1. Membership

- a. Voting Members. There will be ten faculty representing the broad range of the faculty. Upon recommendation by the Academic Assembly faculty members are appointed by the Dean.
- b. Non-voting Members; There will be two (2) non-voting student members. Student members are appointed by the Dean upon recommendation of the University Student Council.
- c. Ex-Officio Members. Ex-officio (non-voting) members shall include the following: Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Medical Education, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Office of Admissions and the Registrar's Office.

2. Procedures

Decisions of SEPAC will be made only after careful review and deliberation. Efforts will be made to secure adequate, accurate and carefully documented information on which to base SEPAC recommendations. Humanistic concerns and extenuating circumstances will be taken into account.

- a. The committee will meet at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called as necessary.
- b. A quorum will consist of a minimum of one-half of the voting members.
- c. SEPAC will review the progress of all students at the end of each academic year. At least once during each academic quarter the committee will review the progress of all students who are experiencing performance difficulties. The progress of such students will be followed until the deficiencies have been satisfied or the student is dismissed.
- d. The CMS Office for Student Affairs will advise the committee of changes in any student's performance status.
- e. The CMS Office for Student Affairs will execute the decisions of SEPAC.

3. When SEPAC makes a recommendation:

- a. Action will follow upon approval by the Dean of the School of Medicine.
- b. Affected parties will be informed in writing.

- c. The decision and its justification will be set forth.
- d. A student may appeal any recommendation affecting his/her academic status as outlined in the section on Appeals.

4. Role of the CMS Office for Student Affairs

The CMS Office for Student Affairs is responsible for collecting data on student performance, advising and counseling students, interfacing with faculty and SEPAC on behalf of students, and communicating SEPAC decisions to students.

- a. Midway through each academic term and/or at the end of each academic term, the CMS Office for Student Affairs will request from each basic science course director a report identifying students who appear to be encountering academic or personal difficulties. Similarly, clinical clerkship directors should provide student evaluations midway and at the end of each clerkship to secure similar information.
- b. The CMS Office for Student Affairs will confer with each student so identified in each academic term.
- c. The CMS Office for Student Affairs will provide a summary of individual student performance and circumstances and convey the information to SEPAC. In most cases, issues or difficulties involving academic performance can be presented to SEPAC without the student being present.
- d. There may be occasional complex situations determined on a case-by-case basis where the student may be asked to appear in front of the committee.
- e. The confidential counseling records in the CMS Office for Student Affairs regarding conferences with OSA and specific students will be available only to the student and OSA.

5. Responsibility of the Registrar

- a. All documents and records pertaining to a student's admission and academic performance in the University are filed in the Office of the Registrar. The student may inspect and make copies of items in his/her file in the Registrar's Office on any regular working day. The Dean of the School and the CMS Office for Student Affairs also have access to these files. University faculty, committees, and

other administrators may obtain access to these files only through the Registrar of the school.

The University complies with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended.

VII. Appeals

A. Appeal of Course or Clerkship Grade/Evaluation Report (Appendix I)

1. A student may appeal his/her grade/evaluation report to the Course or Clerkship Director, who will have **one week** to review it and render a decision. If the Course or Clerkship Director supports the appeal and submits a new grade/report, it will replace the grade/report currently in the student's record.
2. If the Course or Clerkship Director rejects the appeal, the student may appeal to the Department Chairperson, who will have **one week** to review it and render a decision. If the Department Chairperson supports the appeal and submits a new grade/report, it will replace the grade/report currently in the student's record.
3. Continued disagreement will be referred to SEPAC via the CMS Office for Student Affairs. SEPAC will review the appeal request **at its next scheduled meeting**. SEPAC's decision on the appeal will be final, with no further recourse for appeal.

B. Appeal of Decision by SEPAC or the Dean (Appendix I)

1. A student may appeal a decision of SEPAC (except as set forth in A, 3 above) or the Dean by submitting in writing to the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Medical Education his/her reason for requesting reconsideration of the decision. This must be done **within ten working days of notifying the student of the adverse decision**. Upon receipt of the student's appeal, the Senior Associate Dean shall request that the Dean of the School of Medicine appoint an Appeals Board and charge it to hear the appeal, if:
 - a. the student has new information of a substantive nature or
 - b. when the decision is dismissal or repetition of a year

2. Composition of Appeals Board

The Appeals Board shall consist of seven (7) persons appointed by the Dean of the School of Medicine. A quorum shall consist of five (5) members, present and voting. The composition of the Appeals Board will be as follows:

- a. Two full-time faculty members, each from a different pre-clinical department, who are neither members of the Student Evaluation, Promotions and Awards Committee (SEPAC), nor members of a department involved in the appeal, unless the appeal involves all pre-clinical departments, or all but one pre-clinical department, in which case departments from which faculty are to be appointed to the committee will be chosen by a lottery.
- b. Two full-time faculty members, each from a different clinical department, who are neither members of the Student Evaluation, Promotions and Awards Committee (SEPAC), nor members of a department involved in the appeal, unless the appeal involves all clinical departments, or all but one clinical department, in which case departments from faculty are to be appointed to the committee will be chosen by a lottery.
- c. A fifth faculty member of the Appeal Board, to be selected from among full-time faculty members in a pre-clinical department or a clinical department.
- d. Two CMS medical students, who are neither members of SEPAC nor members of the same class as the student making the appeal.

3. The Appeals Board must meet and hear the appeal **within thirty working days of the request for an appeal by the student.**
4. The student may inspect and make copies of all items in either the official or Confidential Files of that student. The student may inspect and make copies of any additional materials used by SEPAC in their deliberations concerning his/her case. The Appeals Board may also have access to materials at the time of the Appeal hearing including such materials from the student's Confidential File that the student chooses to introduce into the Appeals Board's proceedings.
5. At the appeals hearing, the Chair of the Appeals Board shall be elected by the membership of the board and shall vote as a regular member on all questions put to a vote. A Secretary, also a voting member, will also be elected to take notes on the proceedings and draft a report reflecting the Appeals Board's recommendations.
6. If a SEPAC decision is appealed, the Chair of SEPAC will prepare for the Appeals Board a written report, which will describe those actions taken by SEPAC that the student has elected to appeal. In addition, this report will specify briefly SEPAC's reasons for the actions taken. If a decision by the Dean is being appealed, a letter from the Dean to the student communicating that decision and the reasons for it will be provided to the Appeals Board in lieu of a summary report.
7. The student may appear personally before the Appeals Board, to present his/her appeal (including affidavits, exhibits, and oral presentations), to present witnesses to testify and answer questions, and to question witnesses called by the Appeals Board. However, witnesses may not initiate exchanges with the student, Appeals Board members, or other witnesses; their role is to provide information by responding to questions posed by the student or the Board. Additionally, no other party may represent the student before the Appeals Board.
8. The Appeals Board may present witnesses and question the student and any witnesses presented before the board.
9. The student will be shown the evidence for or against him/her, including (but not limited to) academic grades and reports and evaluations used in arriving at those grades.

10. The Senior Associate Dean or his/her designee will be present during the information-gathering portion of the Appeals Board's activities for the sole purpose of supplying information as requested by the chair of SEPAC or the student. In addition, the student making the appeal may attend the information-gathering portion of the board's activities. Witnesses will be present only during the time they are giving testimony and answering questions.
11. Only members of the Appeals Board may be present during the deliberations and the period during which the board finalizes its recommendations.
12. Members of the Appeals Board who vote on recommendations of the board should have been present for the majority of the proceedings.
13. Recommendations of the Appeals Board will be based upon evidence presented or available to it during the hearing.
14. The Appeals Board shall make one of the following recommendations to the Dean:
 - a) to uphold the decision(s) of SEPAC or the Dean.
 - b) to request that SEPAC or the Dean re-evaluate the information and reconsider its/his/her decision(s).
15. The School of Medicine may record the information-gathering portions of the proceedings of the Appeals Board. Recordings may not be made of the deliberations or the period during which the board finalizes its recommendations.
16. The Appeals Board shall submit a report and recommendation to the Dean **within seven working days after hearing the appeal**. This report will state the recommendation(s) and the reasons for making it/them.
17. The Dean of the Medical School retains the sole responsibility for deciding whether to uphold or to reject the recommendation(s) of the Appeals Board. The Dean shall communicate this decision in writing to the student, SEPAC, and the Senior Associate Dean **within ten working days after receiving the written report of the Appeals Board**.

APPENDIX I: FLOW CHARTS FOR APPEALS

APPENDIX II: CMS Competencies and Objectives