

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE OF MEDICINE



College of Medicine

POLICY TITLE: <i>Grading System Policy</i>	APPROVAL DATE: <i>June 7, 2018</i> <i>Revised November 2, 2023</i> <i>Revised March 7, 2024</i> <i>Revised June 6, 2024</i>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Registrar &amp; Office of Medical Education</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>All Students</i>

POLICY STATEMENT

The College of Medicine grading policy is designed to reflect the academic performance of the medical student within the College of Medicine curriculum. The grades assigned reflect what the student has earned in a particular course or learning activity.

All clerkship and elective directors are expected to adhere to the expectation that no provider, who provides health services to medical students, has any role in the academic assessment or promotion of those students for whom they provide treatment. A student may also ask to not have a provider, who has provided treatment to a close family member, be in the role of assessment or promotion of the student. Furthermore, students should not rotate with family members for their required clinical clerkships and electives. Every clerkship and elective director must have a mechanism by which to identify and prevent these situations.

The COM uses a Pass/Fail/Incomplete grading system in M1/2. The COM uses an Honors (H), High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Conditional (C) and Failure (F) and Incomplete (I) grading system in M3/4. All grades appear on a student's official transcript. A Withdrawal Passing (WP), Withdrawal Failing (WF) and Withdrawal (W) also will appear on the official transcript. These grades are defined later in this document.

It is expected that the course director will post final grades and written evaluations of student performance where applicable within six (6) weeks of the completion of the course according to the policy set forth by the Education Program Committee (EPC) of the COM. A final grade is to be entered after all graded components of the course have been entered.

Each course will publish its grading criteria prior to the beginning of the course. A course's grading policy may not be changed once the course starts unless there are truly exceptional circumstances. Any such grading policy change is subject to approval of the EPC. If, due to unforeseen events, a requirement in a course must be dropped, appropriate adjustments to the grading policy will be made such that all students are treated equitably. All grading policies are subject to the oversight and approval of the EPC.

**Withdrawal (W), Withdrawal Failing (WF), Withdrawal Passing (WP)**

A grade of Withdrawal (W), Withdrawal Failing (FP) or Withdrawal Passing (WP) will be assigned to a student who goes on a Leave of Absence or who withdraws from the COM.

1. 1. If a student withdraws from all coursework prior to the sixteenth day of the term, no grade(s) will be recorded and the course(s) will be removed from the student's official record.
2. If a student withdraws prior to the first graded course activity, a Withdrawal (W) will be recorded. If a student is passing a course at the time of a withdrawal, a Withdrawal Passing (WP) will appear on his or her official transcript. If a student is not passing the course at the time of withdrawal, a Withdrawal Failing (WF) will appear on his or her official transcript. Withdrawal, Withdrawal Failing and Withdrawal Passing grades are not counted in the calculation of class rank/total weighted average.
3. Withdrawal Failing does NOT count as one of the three course failures in four years that represents grounds for dismissal. However, a Withdrawal Failing followed by a Failure is grounds for dismissal.

A. **GRADES FOR M1/2**

1. Final grades for all completed courses in M1/2 will be recorded on the transcript as a Pass (P), Incomplete (I), or Fail (F).

A grade of Pass (P) is awarded to a student whose performance in a course meets the Minimum Pass Level (MPL) established for each course.

**Incomplete (I)**

A grade of Incomplete is awarded without grade point assignment at the end of a semester (not within a semester) when a significant portion, but not all of the course work has been satisfactorily completed and the reason for non-completion is approved by the course directors and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs (e.g., absence from a class or examination due to illness or a serious personal emergency). The incomplete grade is appropriate only when the completed course work is of passing quality and the student has had such hardship that completion of the remaining course work within the Semester timeline would present an additional hardship. Processes and procedures for completing the course are at the sole discretion of the course director and the EPC. Once the coursework is satisfactorily completed, the grade of Incomplete is removed from the transcript and replaced with final grade earned by the student.

2. A student whose performance in a course is below passing standards shall be given a Failure (F) grade. A Failure (F) grade will remain on the student's official transcript along with the grade achieved if a course is repeated.
3. The MPL for all courses is established and approved by the M1/2 Curriculum Committee and is subject to approval by the EPC.
4. All courses are weighted equally with respect to whether a student has passed or failed a course when considering student promotion.

B. **GRADES FOR M3/4**

**Honors (H)**

A grade of Honors (H) is awarded to a student whose performance is of very high caliber and, in addition, whose demonstrated qualities of intellectual curiosity, integrity and professionalism have clearly set him/her apart from the majority of the group.

**High Pass (HP)**

A grade of High Pass (HP) is awarded to a student whose performance clearly exceeds the Pass requirements but does not reach Honors caliber.

**Pass (P)**

A grade of Pass (P) is awarded to a student whose performance in a course meets but does not exceed the requirements established by the department concerned.

**Pass/Fail M3 courses**

All M3 specialty clerkships are graded Pass/Fail with the exception of Ophthalmology. Most of the M3 specialty clerkships are designed as introductions and exposure electives rather than audition rotations. All are two-week rotations that limit the ability of the preceptor to give an in- depth evaluation. All M3 specialty clerkship grades are NOT included in the student's class rank determination.

**Benchmark Achieved**

Students who are part of the competency-based growth pathway are not assigned grades using the tiered (honors, high pass, pass, fail) system. Their performance is assessed using an entrustment rating scale and reviewed by an entrustment committee. Therefore, when they complete a clerkship, their performance will be labelled in the transcript as benchmark achieved or fail. To receive a designation of benchmark achieved from each clerkship director, students must meet three criteria. 1) They must have no more than 10% of the lowest ratings ("I would do it") on their

MedOneStop evaluations. 2) Their clerkship specific NBME shelf score must meet the requirements as all other students. 3) They must meet expectations for professional behavior and complete all assignments, requirements, and other expectations of the clerkship. If the student does not meet one of these criteria (i.e. minimum NBME shelf score) they may receive a “conditional” grade and be afforded the same opportunities that all students have outlined in the grading policy for remediation.

#### Conditional (C)

A grade of Conditional (C) may be given under specific circumstances. The grade of C is most commonly used when a student is marginally below the minimal requirements for just one component of the course. A student who is below the minimum pass level for the course as a whole will receive an F grade.

A student who receives a C grade due to a failing performance on the Shelf exam may only make up the Shelf exam a second time at a date determined in collaboration with OSA and OME. Failing the exam a second time will lead to a failure of the clerkship.

#### Failure (F)

A student whose performance in a course is significantly below passing standards shall be given a grade of Failure (F). Should a student receive an F grade, if approved by the PAC utilizing the guidelines of the Advancement and Retention Policy, the student would need to repeat the entire course.

Failure to meet a requirement (for example, not taking an exam, not completing assignments, failure to attend required clinical duties, significant professionalism concerns) without prior notification of the course director or designee will be treated as grounds for awarding a Failure (F) for the course.

Course directors have the latitude of not using the full range of grades available, subject to approval of the EPC.

Grading policies for M3/4 are approved by the M3/4 Curriculum Committee and are subject to approval by the EPC.

#### Incomplete (I)

A grade of Incomplete is awarded without grade point assignment, at the end of a term when a significant portion, but not all of the course work has been satisfactorily completed and the reason for non-completion is approved by the course directors and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs (e.g., absence from a class or examination due to illness or a serious personal emergency). The incomplete grade is appropriate only when the completed course work is of passing quality and the student has had such hardship that completion of the remaining course work within the term timeline would present an additional hardship. Processes and procedures for completing the course are at the sole discretion of the course director and the PAC. Once the coursework is satisfactorily completed, the grade of Incomplete is removed from the transcript and replaced with final grade earned by the student.