

# NSU MD Grading Standards Policy

## Blocks, Courses and Clerkships

The NSU MD curriculum is organized in three phases (pre-clerkship, clerkship, and electives). In the pre-clerkship phase, each semester includes a series of integrated basic science blocks, which occur concurrent with the Practice of Medicine clinical courses. The clerkships are organized as a series of three Clerkship Modules, each of which includes two or more required clerkships. Student performance is assessed in each block, course, clerkship and elective. The Student Progress and Advising Committee (SPAC) has defined standards for Satisfactory Academic Progress, which include the requirement that students must pass each block, course, clerkship, and elective in the curriculum.

Course numbers and credits are assigned to each block, course, clerkship and elective, which vary in the number of credits, intensity of scheduled time, and duration. In the pre-clerkship phase, the blocks and courses are organized to begin and end on common dates in each year or semester and generally have a uniform weekly schedule. Students are expected to participate in scheduled curricular activities from the first to the last day of study in each year or semester. To the degree possible, exams for concurrent blocks and courses will be scheduled so that exams do not compete with other learning activities.

The syllabus for each block, course, clerkship, and elective contains the course objectives, the NSU MD Educational Program Objectives addressed, the schedule of activities, learning objectives for specific sessions or activities, names and contact information for the faculty involved, a listing of course materials, the student assessment system, and grading policies.

## Examinations

The majority of written examinations are conducted as web-based examinations, using secure questions; this means that the examination questions will not be available for study before or after exams. In-class examinations are timed and proctored and include both internal exams and exams provided by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). Some blocks or courses use essay examinations, which may be timed and proctored or assigned as take-home ("open book") exams.

Students have opportunities to raise concerns about exams or ask specific questions by contacting the block, course or clerkship director. Students will receive their exam results individually along with comparative data when available (e.g., class mean on the exam).

Block and course directors are expected to use a variety of assessment tools in addition to exams that use secure, web administered, multiple choice questions (MCQs). The performance measures and percentage contribution to the final grade in each block, course or clerkship is described in the syllabus.

## Examination Policy

All students are required to take the examinations on the dates published by the block, course or clerkship director. Students may request approval to take an examination on a date later than the published date. The request should be submitted to the block, course or clerkship director in writing in addition to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs to ensure consistency. In general, permission to reschedule an examination will be approved only for the following reasons:

- Extraordinary circumstance that may be outside the student's control, such as a death in the immediate family or a severe illness.
- Conflict with a religious obligation.

If a student has a medical or other emergency that prevents him/her from taking a scheduled examination, the student should notify the block, course or clerkship director's and the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs as soon as possible.

## Narrative Assessment of Student Performance

A narrative description of student performance that addresses both cognitive and non-cognitive factors will be a component of assessment in any required, graded block, course or clerkship in which the teacher-student interaction permits this form of assessment.

### Grades

The final grade in each block or course in the pre-clerkship curriculum will be Pass (P) or Fail (F). The final grade in required clerkships will be A (Honors), B (High Pass), C (Pass), or F (Fail). All elective rotations and courses will be graded Pass (P) or Fail (F).

### Grade and Competency Reports

In addition to the final grade, NSU MD will provide students with more detailed information on their performance via internal Grade Reports. Grade Reports will provide information that includes:

- 1) Scores on examinations and other numerically scored assessments,
- 2) Written narrative comments with a designation as to whether they are “Summative” (may be included in the MSPE) or “Formative” (for internal NSU MD use only, to help the student improve performance in future courses),
- 3) For each competency assessed in the block or course, a rating of “Satisfactory”, “Satisfactory with Concern” or “Unsatisfactory”.

An Unsatisfactory (U) rating for any competency will result in a final grade of Fail (F) for the block/course.

Students may receive a final grade of Pass (P) with one or more Satisfactory with Concern (SC) competency ratings. The SC rating indicates that the student has academic weaknesses and could be at risk of failure, despite having received a final grade of Pass (P) for the block/course.

Students who receive any rating of SC will be monitored by the NSU MD Student Monitoring Committee and referred for support to improve performance. They may also be referred to SPAC or other appropriate parties/committees for further action. The SC rating will not be reported on the official transcript.

### Determination of Grades for Pre-clerkship Blocks/Courses

**Grading for basic science blocks** will consist of two components. In order to pass the block, the student will be required to pass both components.

The first component consists of accumulated points in 1) web-based objective examinations covering medical knowledge and 2) other assessments, such as essay questions or papers, oral exams, laboratory practical exams, problem-solving exercises, presentations, quizzes in TBL or similar sessions, completion of online quizzes. The block director will have discretion in choosing what types of other assessments to use in his/her block and may use more than one type. A passing grade for this component will be  $\geq 75\%$  of total points possible. The percentage contribution to total points will be distributed as follows for each block:

Web-based mid-block and final examinations covering medical knowledge using multiple choice questions (internal exams and/or NBME exams)	No more than 70%
Other assessments	Remainder
Total	100%

The second component is problem-based learning (PBL/IQ) small groups. Grading for PBL/IQ will be based on a narrative facilitator assessment and will be determined by the block director as Satisfactory or

Unsatisfactory, without assigned numerical points. Each student must receive a Satisfactory (S) assessment for PBL in order to pass the block.

**Grading for Practice of Medicine (POM) clinical courses** will consist of the following components. In order to pass the course, the student will be required to pass all components.

- 1) Accumulated points in objective assessments of clinical skills and reasoning, such as Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). A passing grade for this component will be  $\geq 75\%$  of total points possible. Total points will be rounded according to standard rounding conventions to determine whether a student has passed the course for final grade reports.
- 2) Accumulated points on assessments covering medical and/or clinical knowledge. These assessments may include web-based examinations using multiple choice questions, essay questions or papers, oral exams, problem-solving exercises, presentations, projects, completion of online quizzes, etc. The course director will have discretion in choosing what types of assessments to use in his/her course and may use more than one type. A passing grade for this component will be  $\geq 75\%$  of total points possible. Total points will be rounded according to standard rounding conventions to determine whether a student has passed the course for final grade reports. If an assessment is graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory without assigned points, the passing grade will be a Satisfactory.
- 3) The remaining components will consist of narrative faculty assessments and will be graded by the course director as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory without assigned numerical points. These will include 1) assessments by core clinical skills teachers in Practice of Medicine 1, 2, and 3 and assessments by clinical preceptors for the longitudinal clinical experiences in Practice of Medicine 2 and 3.

**Grading for other courses** (e.g., Professional Immersion, Research, Independent Study) will be based on the NSU MD competencies addressed in the course.

### **Reporting of Points**

Total accumulated points will be rounded according to standard rounding conventions to determine whether a student has passed a block or course, for final Grade and Competency Reports, and for calculations to determine eligibility for any awards based on academic standing that are given by NSU MD.

### **Remediation of Summative Assessments**

Students are not permitted to re-take or remediate examinations or other summative assessments within a block/course in order to achieve an overall grade of Pass, with the exception of remediating a portion of an objective assessment of clinical skills and reasoning at the discretion of the clinical course director(s).

### **Timing of Formative Feedback**

For all blocks and courses of  $\geq 4$  weeks duration, formative feedback and interim examinations should take place no later than approximately halfway through the block/course to provide timely feedback to the students about their academic performance.

### **Determination of Grades for Clerkships and Electives**

**Grading for required Year 3 clerkships** will be based on performance in the clinical setting, medical knowledge, clinical skills, and required clerkship assignments. The final grade will be based on an overall numerical score, the percentile score for the NBME Subject examination for the clerkship, and specific criteria related to professionalism. Final grades will be determined by a clerkship grading committee, which will review performance of all students who complete the clerkship during each of the three clerkship blocks in Year 3 once all assessments are available and assign final grades to those students no later than 6 weeks after the end of the clerkship block.

The overall numerical score will be derived from performance on four categories of assessments. The specific assessment methods and percentage contribution to the final score will vary across clerkships within the following guidelines:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Methods of Assessment</b>	<b>Minimum Acceptable Performance</b>	<b>Percentage of Final Numerical Score</b>
Clinical Assessments	Clinical observation forms Mini-CEX activities Ratings and narrative assessments	"Meets Expectations"	30%-45%
NBME Subject Examination	Subject examination relevant to clerkship	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	30%
End of Clerkship Clinical Skills Assessment	OSCE, oral exam, other	Satisfactory	15%
Other Assessments	Examples: Case write-ups Presentations EBM/PICO Quizzes Virtual Patient Cases Other assignments	As determined by the clerkship director(s)	Varies

Final grades in required clinical clerkships will be

A (Honors)      B (High Pass)      C (Pass)      F (Fail)

The final numerical score that will be required to achieve each grade in a clerkship in a given academic year will be established by the clerkship grading committee. The numerical scores for each grade will be based on data from students who have completed the clerkship and a target distribution of grades, as determined by recommendation from the Clerkship Subcommittee and the Curriculum Committee to the Office for Medical Education.

For all clerkships, the criteria for demonstrating professionalism will be the same and will include specific expectations for demonstration of professional behaviors, participation in required events, and timely completion of all clerkship logs, evaluations, and other assignments.

#### **Remediation of Summative Assessments**

Students are not permitted to re-take or remediate examinations or other summative assessments within a clerkship in order to achieve an overall grade of Pass. However, students who fail the NBME Subject Exam (score <5<sup>th</sup> percentile) but have satisfactory performance on all other assessments will receive a grade of I (Incomplete) and will be allowed to re-take the Subject Exam once. If the student receives a score  $\geq$ 5<sup>th</sup> percentile, he/she will receive a final grade of C (Pass) in the clerkship.

#### **Timing of Formative Feedback**

Formal formative feedback by the clerkship director will take place no later than approximately halfway through the clerkship to provide timely feedback to the students about their academic performance.