



QUILLEN COLLEGE of MEDICINE

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name/Number: M3 Clerkship Grading and Required Clinical Experiences / MSEC-0622-30

Policy Owner: Medical Student Education Committee (MSEC) / Ivy Click, EdD, MSEC Chair	
Committees, Departments, or Individuals Responsible for Implementation: MSEC, Clerkship Directors, and Medical Students	
Original Approval Date/ By: Kenneth Olive, MD/MSEC Chair 1/11/2011 (MSEC-0111-3); Kenneth Olive, MD/MSEC Chair 3/19/2013 (MSEC-0313-14)	Effective Date: 5/15/2025
Most Recent Revision Date: 5/15/2025	Policy Advisory Committee Review Date: 5/15/2025
Date of Next Review: 5/15/2028 <i>(All policies are reviewed by the Policy Advisory Committee every 3 years unless circumstances for an earlier review is identified.)</i>	

(A) Policy Statement:

The development of grading structures is to be consistent among all third-year clerkships and to include both clinical performance and medical knowledge assessments. Each clerkship has identified required and/or suggested clinical experiences (i.e., procedures and/or patient types) for all students to experience during the clerkships. Clerkship-specific clinical experiences are to be documented in the curriculum management system, indicating if they observed, assisted, or performed a skill and where the experience occurred.

(B) Purpose of Policy:

To ensure that grading structures are consistent between all third-year clerkships and to ensure that required clerkship-specific clinical encounters are documented in the curriculum management system.

(C) Scope of Policy (applies to):

Clerkship directors and third-year medical students of Quillen College of Medicine (QCOM).

(D) Policy Activities:

Grading

Third-year clerkship grades will be determined by:

- **Internal clerkship numeric score**, which is derived from all clerkship assessments, excluding the final examination. Clerkship assessments include clinical performance ratings and quizzes, simulations, projects, or other activities developed for the clerkship. Five percent of the clerkship assessments will be comprised of completing and logging required clinical experiences (see Required Clinical Experiences below). These activities will equal 65% of the final clerkship numeric score.
- **Adjusted NBME subject examination score**, or other nationally normed exam, or QCOM clerkship-specific final examination if a nationally normed exam (e.g., NBME or Aquifer) is not available. This activity will equal 35% of the final clerkship numeric score.
 - All clerkships for which an NBME subject exam is available will utilize it in their clerkship grading. A waiver from MSEC is needed if the NBME subject exam is not used.

At the conclusion of each clerkship period, students will be assigned a grade of Pass, Fail, or Incomplete (I) along with an earned final clerkship numeric score.

To pass the clerkship, a student must obtain an internal clerkship numeric score of at least 70% **and** score at or above the 6th percentile on the nationally normed exam or above 70% on the Underserved Medicine end of clerkship project. Scores for these two components will be combined to determine the final clerkship numeric score and corresponding grade. The cumulative final clerkship numeric score must be 70% or higher to pass the clerkship.

At the end of the clerkship year, a Pass grade for the clerkship may be changed to an Honors grade if a student meets all of the following criteria:

- Final clerkship numeric score is \geq top 25% of the class per clerkship
- Nationally normed exam (e.g., NBME subject exam) is above the 50th percentile of the national norm on the first attempt
- All course requirements/assignments completed and submitted on time, including logging required clinical experiences
- No professionalism concerns from the clerkship

Honors grades will be assigned, and students notified at the end of the final clerkship period, once all grades have been received. The top 25% of numeric scores per clerkship will be calculated at the end of the regular clerkship year. Students who were on an academic, medical, or military leave of absence (as defined in the [QCOM Leave of Absence Policy, ADMIN-0921-20](#)) and had to take clerkships that went into the beginning of the next academic year may receive an Honors grade if they scored above the numeric score cutoff that was calculated for the top 25% of students at the end of the regular clerkship and met all other criteria. Students who were on an administrative or personal leave of absence and students who completed Special Studies and had to take any clerkships in the next academic year are ineligible for an Honors grade in those clerkship(s).

Required Clinical Experiences

Clerkships must provide students with adequate exposure to a variety of learning opportunities. Students are to document all clerkship identified clinical experiences in the Patient Encounter Tracker in the curriculum management system by the end of the clerkship. Only the electronic log will be accepted as evidence of meeting the requirements. The ability to log diagnoses or procedures into the curriculum management system closes at midnight the last Friday of the clerkship rotation.

Students are expected to enter their documentation at least weekly into the curriculum management system and document at least one-third of the required clerkship procedures/patient types by the clerkship's midpoint. Students' progress will be monitored by the clerkship director and coordinator in addition to Academic Affairs.

A clerkship may provide the student a paper copy of the required experiences specific to that clerkship and require that each accomplished experience be validated by the observing faculty. This documentation assures the requirements of the clerkship are met by each student and builds the student's portfolio. A single observer cannot validate all of a student's documentation.

If a student has difficulty in accomplishing all required procedures or seeing required patient types, they should request assistance from the clerkship director, preceptors, residents, or fellow students in identifying opportunities. If the student is still unable to secure a procedural experience, they should inform the clerkship director and request to complete in a simulated environment. It is the student's responsibility to be proactive in seeking out the identified educational experiences. To remediate any deficiencies, an individualized plan will be developed by Academic Affairs and/or the relevant clerkship director.

Five percent of the student's total clerkship grade will be comprised of completing and logging required clinical experiences. Partial credit **will not** be given if all required clinical experiences are not logged by the deadline.

Annually, the clerkship directors will submit, an updated list of required experiences to Academic Affairs for review and approval by MSEC.

Failure and Remediation

- A. If a student scores below the 6th percentile on the NBME end of clerkship subject exam or other nationally normed exam **and** has obtained an internal clerkship numeric score of at least 70% **and** has obtained a cumulative final clerkship numeric score of at least 70%, a grade will not be assigned, and the student will be permitted to repeat the nationally normed exam once.
- The student will be required to complete the repeat exam during the next academic break (i.e., fall break, winter break, spring break) or following the conclusion of the third year, on dates determined by the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - The repeat exam will not be scheduled during any other clerkship.
 - The student will be required to meet with Academic Support and Counseling Services to develop a study plan and compliance monitored by the Student Success Committee (SSC) before repeating the exam.
 - The student will not be permitted to repeat the nationally normed exam if their internal clerkship numeric score and score from the first attempt of the nationally normed exam resulted in a cumulative final clerkship grade below 70%.

The student's final clerkship grade will be assigned following the repeat of the NBME end of clerkship subject exam or other nationally normed exam.

- If the student's score on the repeated exam is at or above the 6th percentile, the student will be permitted to pass the course, but the original final clerkship numeric score earned prior to repeating the exam will be retained.
- If the student's exam score on the repeated exam is below the 6th percentile, a grade of "F" will be assigned, the student will be reported to the Student Promotions Committee, and the Student Promotions will make a recommendation regarding the student's progression which could include repeating the clerkship or dismissal.
 - If the student scores below the 6th percentile on their third attempt of the exam, the student will be reported to the Student Promotions Committee with a recommendation for dismissal from Quillen College of Medicine.

If the student fails a second NBME end of clerkship subject exam or other nationally normed end of clerkship exam before completing the repeat exam for the first failure, the student will be immediately withdrawn from the clerkship scheduled following the second exam failure. The time is to be spent preparing for and retaking both outstanding exams.

- Both exams must be retaken before resuming clerkship training the following period.
- The student will be required to meet with Academic Support and Counseling Services to develop a study plan before repeating the exams and compliance monitored by the Student Success Committee (SSC).
- Students who accrue more than one end of clerkship exam failure will be reported to the Student Promotions Committee
- The missed clerkship will be rescheduled during the next academic year, with assignment based on availability and capacity. Students may be allowed to schedule select M4 electives or selectives at the discretion of MSEC. The clerkship must be successfully completed before the student will be permitted to proceed to graduation.

- B. If a student scores below the 6th percentile and their internal clerkship numeric score is below 70, the student will be assigned a grade of "F" and must repeat the clerkship. This represents a failure to achieve the minimum foundational knowledge competency necessary for clinical training and to pass USMLE Step 2 CK.

Internal Clerkship Numeric Score* (65% of final clerkship numeric score)	NBME or Other Nationally Normed Exam Score (35% of final clerkship numeric score)	Final clerkship numeric score	Clerkship Grade

Above 70	At or above 6 th percentile	Above 70	Pass: Final clerkship numeric score earned = internal clerkship numeric score combined with NBME exam adjusted score or other nationally normed exam associated with the clerkship into the curriculum management system.
Above 70	Below 6 th percentile	Above 70	Clerkship grade delayed: Student permitted to repeat NBME exam or other nationally normed exam once. Final clerkship numeric score earned = internal clerkship numeric score combined with NBME exam adjusted score associated with the clerkship into the curriculum management system. The final clerkship numeric score earned prior to repeating the NBME subject exam or other nationally normed exam will be retained. The cumulative final clerkship numeric score must be 70% or higher to pass the clerkship.
Above 70	At or below the 6 th percentile	Below 70	Fail the clerkship and must repeat. The cumulative final clerkship numeric score must be 70% or higher to pass the clerkship.
Below 70	At or above the 6 th percentile	Below 70	Fail the clerkship and must repeat.
Below 70	At or below 6 th percentile	Below 70	Fail the clerkship and must repeat.

Sample NBME Score Adjustment/Conversion Methodology

The NBME score adjustment/conversion equates the 90th percentile and above to a grade of 100 and the 5th percentile to a grade of 69. A score at or below the 5th percentile converts to a “failing” numeric grade.

	NBME Equated % Correct Score	percentile	Adjusted NBME score
	91	93	100
90th percentile	90	90	100

5th percentile	63	5	69
	62	4	67
	61	3	65
	60	2	63
	59	2	61
	58	1	58
	57	1	56
	56	1	54
	55	1	52
	54 or below	1	50