



Office of Medical Education  
Division of Academic Affairs  
Brody School of Medicine  
East Carolina University

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Heading:

Assessment System: NBME Subject Exam Remediations

### Assessment System: NBME Subject Exam Remediation

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#### Rationale

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Students at the Brody School of Medicine are assessed using NBME Subject Exams (commonly referred to as ‘Shelf Exams’) in both the foundational and clinical phases of the curriculum. The Executive Curriculum Committee has set the equated percent score threshold required to successfully pass a NBME Subject Exam at the 12<sup>th</sup>% of the national average for the Block 4 exams, and the 12<sup>th</sup>% based on quartile averages for the clinical years. Other courses use the subject exams for formative and summative assessment as stipulated in the course syllabi. Any student who fails an NBME subject exam is expected to retake that NBME subject exam in order to successfully remediate the relevant content. All Brody students will be subject to the following process and parameters regarding NBME Subject Exam remediation attempts.

#### Scope

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The Standard Operating Procedure applies to all medical students at the Brody School of Medicine. It outlines the requirements for remediation of NBME Subject Exams in both the foundational and clinical phases of the curriculum. Additionally, procedures for scheduling dates for administration of remediation attempts are outlined. The SOP also establishes expectations to key stakeholders for required timeframes for remediating examinations, and consequences for failing to comply with these expectations. This SOP affects students, staff, faculty members, and course/clerkship directors of the Brody School of Medicine who administer or participate in the leadership and grading of courses and clerkships that administer NBME Subject Examinations.

#### Definitions

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**BSOM:** Brody School of Medicine

**OME:** Office of Medical Education

**Testing Administrator:** Office of Medical Education Staff member who is responsible for the proctoring and administration of all institutional and NBME Shelf Exams

**CD:** Course or Clerkship Director

**NBME:** National Board of Medical Examiners

**Subject Exam:** National exam developed by the NBME; commonly referred to as a “Shelf” or “Shelf Exam”

**Foundational Years/Phase:** The first 20 months of the BSOM curriculum

**Clinical Years/Phase:** Comprised of the clinical clerkships and include third and fourth years of the BSOM curriculum

**ECC:** Executive Curriculum Committee

## **Procedures for Implementation and Review**

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### **Minimum Passing Thresholds for NBME Subject Exams**

- The Executive Curriculum Committee (ECC) has set the minimum thresholds required to be considered a successful, passing attempt on a Subject Exam
  - **Foundational Phase- Microbiology and Block 4:** Students must achieve a minimum equated percent score of 12<sup>th</sup>% based on the national average for the specific exam.
  - **Clinical Phase:** Students must achieve a minimum equated percent score of 12<sup>th</sup>% based on the national average for the designated quarter for the specific exam
    - To provide uniformity the clerkship NBME Subject Exam score is converted to a percentile based on the specific quarter of the year in which the clerkship was taken
    - A Student's quarter will be determined as follows:
      - Clerkships taken in Cohort 1 and 2 are based on Quarter 1
      - Clerkships taken in Cohort 3 are based on Quarter 2
      - Clerkships taken in Cohort 4 and 5 are based on Quarter 3
      - Clerkships taken in Cohort 6 are based on Quarter 4
    - Off-cycle students will comply with the grading scale based on the cohort number in which they completed the clerkship.

### **Failure to Meet Minimum Thresholds**

- The ECC has established a standard approach for failure to meet the minimum thresholds required to be considered a successful, passing attempt on a Subject Exam.
  - **Foundational Phase:** Students who fail to reach an equated percentile score of the 12<sup>th</sup>% based on national norms for an exam will comply with the following:
    - Student must remediate by re-taking the exam and achieving the minimum threshold required to pass
    - The impact on the grade will be delineated in the syllabus for Blocks 1-3.
    - Students in Block 4 must remediate exams prior to sitting for the USMLE Step 1 examination.
    - In Block 4, achievement of the 12<sup>th</sup>% nationally is required to pass the Systems Capstone Course. Students who do not successfully pass the NBME exams after 3 attempts will be required to repeat Block 4.
  - **Clinical Phase:** Students who fail to reach an equated percentile score of the 12<sup>th</sup>% based on the specific quarter for an exam will comply with the following:
    - Student must remediate by re-taking the exam and achieving the minimum threshold required to pass within three total attempts.

- A student who remediates an exam will be unable to achieve a letter grade of 'A' in the clerkship. If their final score falls into the range of an 'A', the CD will lower their final letter grade to a 'B' and their final numeric grade to the highest possible 'B'.
  - Subsequent attempts beyond a first remediation attempt will not result in a further reduction of a letter grade beyond the reduction from an 'A' to a 'B'
- A student with a remediation attempt will not be able to achieve an A or honors in the clerkship, regardless of their overall final numeric grade
- A student will have no more than 3 total attempts (the original exam attempt and 2 remediation attempts) to achieve the minimum passing threshold. Students who do not achieve this after three attempts will receive a failure of the clerkship and must retake the entire clerkship.
- A student cannot proceed in the clinical curriculum with two unremediated shelf exam failures. Details described in Academic Achievement Policy.

#### Scheduling a Remediation NBME Subject Exam

- Students who are required to remediate an exam are responsible for scheduling their remediation attempt with the Testing Administrator in the Office of Medical Education.
  - **Foundational Phase:** NBME failures in the M1 year must be remediated in the summer between the M1 and M2 year. NBME Subject exams in Block 4 must be remediated within 4 weeks of the end of Block 4.
  - **Clinical Phase:** Students must remediate their M3 exam before progressing to the M4 year. M4 exams must be remediated before graduation.
    - Student contacts testing administrator to identify day and time slots available for exam retakes.
    - As a component of the LIPPMR form completion, students must identify two-three potential dates and times to retake their exam.
    - Students should communicate with the Clerkship Director of the clerkship in which they are enrolled during the retake to ensure they are not scheduling their remediation exam date during a required experience.
      - Clerkship Directors may require the student to complete an alternative or additional clinical experience in place of any clinical or didactic experiences missed by the student in order to remediate the exam.
- Once a general testing time frame is identified, the testing administrator will determine the date for the student's remediation exam based on the currently approved testing times offered by the Office of Medical Education.
  - The currently approved testing days and times can be found by contacting the testing administrator in the Office of Medical Education.

- The approved testing times are subject to change based on testing room and proctor availability.
- Once a date has been determined, the testing administrator will notify the following individuals via email of the required remediation date: The Office of Medical Education Dean(s), the Office of Student Affairs, the Student making up the exam.
  - Once a remediation date has been scheduled the date may not be moved without an excused absence when occurring less than 3 business days in advance of the exam.
  - The student may request to move a remediation exam only once the entire year if communicated greater than 3 business days in advance. If the request is granted, the remediation attempt must occur within two weeks.
- The testing administrator will contact the Office of Student Affairs to have the exam ordered after determining the remediation date.
  - A minimum of 48 hours (2 business days) notice is needed between scheduling a remediation date and the administration of the remediation attempt to accommodate the ordering of the NBME exam.

**Responsibilities**

There are several key stakeholders involved in the testing process. Listed below are each key stakeholder, along with their expected responsibilities and time frame for completion.

**Testing Administrator**

- Responsible for working with medical students to schedule a remediation exam that follows the established timeframes in this SOP, and the currently approved testing schedule within OME
- Responsible for communicating with OSA to ensure an exam is ordered and notifying all vested parties regarding the scheduled remediation date

**Office of Student Affairs**

- Responsible for contacting the NBME to order an examination

**Course/Clerkship Director**

- The course/clerkship director of the failed subject exam is responsible for communicating with the student regarding the need to remediate the exam.
- The clerkship director is responsible for communicating with the medical student who must remediate an exam and needs to schedule a remediation attempt to ensure the student understands any missed work or required clinical experiences, as well as the requirements for making up these missed, required elements of a course/clerkship

**Medical Student**

- Responsible for contacting the testing administrator in OME to schedule a date for a remediation attempt
- Students must communicate with the Course/Clerkship Director to ensure the scheduled remediation exam date does not conflict with educational sessions or clinical experiences
  - For Clerkships, it is the responsibility of the student to work with the Clerkship Director to make up any missed experiences required by the CD
- Students must remediate any failed exam within the required timeframe listed below:



- **Foundational Phase:**
  - Courses in Blocks 1-3 must be remediated in the summer following the M1 year.
  - Courses in Block 4 must be remediated within 4 weeks of the end of Block 4 courses, and prior to sitting for USMLE Step 1. Failure to comply will result in remediation of Block 4.
- **Clinical Phase:**
  - Students should work with their current Clerkship Director to ensure they are not scheduling their remediation exam date during a required clinical experience.
    - Clerkship Directors may require the student to complete an alternative or additional clinical experience in place of any clinical experiences missed by the student to make up an exam.

**Procedures for Implementation and Review**

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This procedure is reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committees, including the Executive Curriculum Committee, M1 Curriculum Committee, and M2 Curriculum Committee, and Clinical Curriculum Committee every three years.

This procedure is disseminated by the Office of Medical Education to students and teaching faculty/administration.

**Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards**

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LCME Standard 9, Element 8  
LCME Standard 3, Element 5