

Policy on Academic Remediation: Foundations Curriculum

I. PURPOSE

The goal of academic remediation generally speaking is to provide individualized and holistic support to learners to help them achieve success. We believe that every student can achieve competency with the right support; we also believe that every student should achieve competency to assure that they can meet appropriate standards of skill and safety. Students who do not achieve a satisfactory grade on benchmark assessments (e.g., summative exams, required assignments, etc.) or satisfactory attendance must be provided with an opportunity to remediate and to develop the necessary level of mastery of the subject matter. The Committee on Student Promotions has a key role in determining the type of remediation activity that is appropriate for each student's situation. The faculty on the Committee on Student Promotions are charged to globally evaluate individual student performance and use their judgment in making decisions. This policy defines the usual approaches that may be selected for specific situations.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Medical students

III. POLICY

A. Benchmark Assessments

Students are expected to achieve a satisfactory grade on benchmark assessments and meet attendance expectations within the Foundations curriculum.

In order to provide robust, holistic academic support to our students, there is a category of passing called "pass with support needed" specifically for courses with numerical scores, i.e., Keystone Fundamentals block, Organ Systems block, Patient Physician Society block, and Evidence, Discovery and Reasoning. In recognition that benchmark assessments come in quick session, students who pass a benchmark assessment with numerical scoring (i.e., summative exams) less than or equal to 5 percentage points of the passing threshold (assuming passing threshold is on a scale of 100 points) will be offered more robust academic supports. The designation "pass with support needed" will only be used internally, and not on external reports (e.g., the academic transcript, the MSPE).

A table of Reference Guidelines summarizes the usual approaches that may be selected for specific situations (see Procedures, below).

The phrase “benchmark assessment” refers to summative exam, clinical exam assessment, or other required assignments, and "remediation" refers to remediation attempts of any benchmark assessment. Formative exams are not benchmark assessments. For the purposes of this policy, MS1 refers to July – May of the first academic year, and MS2 refers to July through January of the second academic year.

Keystone Fundamentals

Students must attain the passing threshold for each of the three (3) summative exams individually in order to pass the course. Students receiving an unsatisfactory score on any summative exam will be contacted in writing by the Assistant Dean for Foundations to discuss a remediation plan. Unsatisfactory exam attempts must be remediated by January 31st and may be remediated earlier pending approval of the Assistant Dean for Foundations (e.g., flex weeks, winter recess).

Two (2) and only two remediation attempts are permitted for each summative exam.

Any student with an unsatisfactory score on one or more summative exams and unable to successfully remediate by the stated deadline will receive a failing grade for the Keystone Fundamental Block and will be referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of repeating the MS1 year.

Referral to the Committee on Student Promotions – please refer to the table in the Procedure section.

Organ Systems

Students must attain the passing threshold for each summative exam in Organ Systems (OS). Students receiving an unsatisfactory score on any summative exam will be contacted in writing by the Assistant Dean for Foundations to discuss a remediation plan. Unsatisfactory scores in the OS MS1 Spring block must be remediated no later than the following July 15. Students must successfully pass all of the MS1 Spring Organ block before beginning the MS2 Fall Organ block.

Unsatisfactory scores in the OS MS2 Fall block must be remediated before the start of the Preclerkship Course.

Two (2) and only two remediation attempts are permitted for each summative exam. Remediation may occur earlier pending approval of the Assistant Dean for Foundations (e.g., flex weeks, summer or winter recess).

Any student with an unsatisfactory score on one or more summative exams and unable to successfully remediate by the stated deadlines will receive a failing grade for the OS Block in which the exam was scheduled, and will be referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of repeating MS1 or MS2 year accordingly.

Patient Centered Care:

Students must satisfactorily complete required clinical session activities and assignments. Deadlines for completion of required benchmarks are as detailed for Keystone Fundamentals (January 31st) and the Organ Systems semesters (July 15 and prior to the start of the Preclerkship Course, respectively). Students not meeting stated deadlines will receive a failing grade and will be referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of repeating the appropriate academic year (MS1 or MS2).

Other Courses

Other courses and content areas include and are not limited to: Evidence, Discovery and Reasoning; Physician, Patient and Society; Community Alliance Program; Longitudinal Alliance Program; and Longitudinal Research Program. As appropriate to each course or topic, assessment questions will be embedded in the summative exams for Keystone Fundamentals and Organ Systems.

Remediation procedures are as described above. Students must additionally satisfactorily complete required assignments in order to pass the respective course. Deadlines for completion of required benchmarks are as detailed for the Keystone Fundamentals and Organ Systems blocks above.

Attendance (all courses)

The academic consequences of excused and unexcused absences are described in the Policy on Absence and Attendance.

B. Grading Thresholds

The threshold for a satisfactory grade will be set by the block directors (Keystone Fundamentals, Organ Systems) and/or course director in conjunction with Assistant Dean for Foundations and the Director of Medical Student Assessment using criterion-referenced methods. For summative exams, this group will ensure that each assessment will either have an overall passing threshold or multiple content-specific passing thresholds (e.g., a passing threshold for all endocrinology questions and a separate passing threshold for reproductive biology questions). These assessments and passing thresholds will be vetted and approved by the Assessment

Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, prior to utilization. All passing thresholds will be communicated clearly and transparently to students in writing either in the course syllabus or by course posting/email.

C. Committee on Student Promotions

The Committee on Student Promotions (CSP) will be informed of all students according to the table in the procedures section and summarized below.

In summary, students who pass a benchmark assessment with numerical scoring (i.e., summative exams) less than or equal to 5 percentage points of the passing threshold (assuming passing threshold is on a scale of 100 points) either on initial attempt or subsequent remediation attempts will be designated as having “passed with support needed”. The courses this designation specifically applies to include the Keystone Fundamentals block, Organ Systems block, Patient Physician Society block, and Evidence, Discovery and Reasoning. This designation only applies to benchmark assessments with a threshold at 70% or below.

A student who receives a “pass with support needed” in any course of the Foundations phase will be contacted by the Assistant Dean of Foundations (or the student’s coach) and informed about their grade status, including the number of “pass with support needed” scores and unsatisfactory scores within the Foundations phase.

Students receiving three “passes with support needed” benchmark assessments within the Foundations phase will be placed on Academic Observation.

A student who receives 1 “pass with support needed” and 1 unsatisfactory result on a benchmark assessment (regardless of subsequent remediations) will result in the student being placed on Academic Observation.

Any student who has 2 benchmark assessment failures (regardless of subsequent remediations) in any course of the Foundations phase will be placed on Academic Observation.

Any student with 3 benchmark assessment failures (regardless of subsequent remediations) in any Foundations phase course will be referred to the Committee on Student Promotions to be considered for repeat of the academic year (in its entirety including courses that have been passed) versus dismissal.

Benchmark assessments include both initial and remediation attempts. That is, if a student fails an initial benchmark assessment in one course, and then fails the first remediation attempt, they would have failed two benchmark assessments and will be placed on Academic Observation.

Based upon their review, and in consultation with the guidelines in this policy, the CSP may choose to recommend any action, including but not limited to:

- Repeat the academic year in its entirety
- Repeat of one semester of the academic year in its entirety
- Repeat of the failed courses only
- Academic Leave of Absence
- Dismissal

A student who is required to repeat the entire year will be required to take and pass all of the courses during that year, including courses that had previously been completed satisfactorily, unless they receive a specific exemption by the CSP. This applies to all curriculum years.

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

- Office of Medical Education
- Remediation subcommittee of the Foundations Assessment Working Group of the Curriculum Reform Task Force (Phase 3)

V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Policy on Academic Dismissal and Appeals
- Policy on Academic Observation
- Policy on Leave of Absence
- Policy on Requirements for Granting of the MD Degree
- Policy on Structure and Function of the Committee on Student Promotions
- Policy on Standards for Performance and Academic Progress
- Policy on Time Limitations for Completing Portions of the MD Degree Program
- Policy on USMLE Examinations
- Policy on Absence and Attendance

VI. REFERENCES

- LCME Standard 9.9: Student Advancement and Appeal Process: A medical school ensures that the medical education program has a single set of core standards for the advancement and graduation of all medical students across all locations. A subset of medical students may have academic requirements in addition to the core standards if they are enrolled in a parallel curriculum. A medical school ensures that there is a fair and formal process for taking any action

that may affect the status of a medical student, including timely notice of the impending action, disclosure of the evidence on which the action would be based, an opportunity for the medical student to respond, and an opportunity to appeal any adverse decision related to advancement, graduation, or dismissal.

- **LCME Standard 10.3: Policies Regarding Student Selection/Progress and Their Dissemination:** The faculty of a medical school establish criteria for student selection and develop and implement effective policies and procedures regarding, and make decisions about, medical student application, selection, admission, assessment, promotion, graduation, and any disciplinary action. The medical school makes available to all interested parties its criteria, standards, policies, and procedures regarding these matters.

VII. APPROVALS

Dean, School of Medicine, latest revision approved January 6, 2025. Originally approved December 30, 2018; revised December 16, 2019.

Curriculum Committee, revision approved August 5, 2024.

Education Policy Council, revision approved August 8, 2024.

Executive Committee, revision approved November 7, 2024

VIII. PROCEDURES

Reference Guidelines: The following table summarizes the usual approaches that may be selected for specific situations in all courses including but not limited to PCC, EDR, PPS, etc.:

	Keystone Fundamentals	Organ Systems
Assessments Expectations	Students must attain the passing threshold on each of the 3 exams individually in order to pass the course	Students must attain the passing threshold on the benchmark assessment in order to pass the course For twinned OS courses with a common summative exam, the grading threshold applies to content for each <u>organ system content area</u> rather than to a single score for the summative exam as a whole

<p>Remediation Timelines</p>	<p>Exams must be successfully remediated by January 31st</p>	<p>Remediation of Spring semester exams must be completed by July 15</p> <p>Remediation of Fall semester benchmark assessments must be completed before the start of the pre-clerkships course</p>
<p>Pass with support needed, 1 or 2 benchmark assessments</p>	<p>The Assistant Dean for Foundations (or the student’s coach) will inform student that they have “passed with support needed” and that a 3rd “pass with support needed” or an unsatisfactory grade on a benchmark assessment will lead to their being placed on Academic Observation.</p> <p>Academic support resources are provided.</p>	<p>Same as Keystone Fundamentals</p>
<p>Pass with support needed, 3 benchmark assessments</p>	<p>The Associate Dean of Students will inform students that they are being placed on Academic Observation.</p>	<p>Same as Keystone Fundamentals</p>
<p>1 pass with support needed AND 1 unsatisfactory benchmark assessments result (regardless of remediation status)</p>	<p>The Associate Dean of Students will inform students that they are being placed on Academic Observation.</p>	<p>Same as Keystone Fundamentals</p>

<p>Unsatisfactory, 1 benchmark assessment</p> <p>(no passes with support needed)</p>	<p>Student consults with Assistant Dean for Foundations. The Assistant Dean for Foundations will inform student that if they have a subsequent “pass with support needed” or a 2nd unsatisfactory grade on a benchmark assessment they will be placed on Academic Observation.</p> <p>Case-by-case, the student may be encouraged to remediate exam in a Flex week or later</p> <p>Not referred to the Committee on Student Promotions unless remediation expectations are not achieved</p>	<p>Same as Keystone Fundamentals</p>
<p>Unsatisfactory, 2 benchmark assessments (including remediation attempts)</p>	<p>The Associate Dean of Students will inform students that they are being placed on Academic Observation.</p>	<p>Student referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of the individual’s particular circumstance and academic observation</p>
<p>Unsatisfactory, 3 benchmark assessments (including remediation attempts)</p>	<p>Student referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of the individual’s particular circumstance</p> <p>Students referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of repeating Keystone Fundamentals, the entire year, or dismissal.</p>	<p>Student referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of the individual’s particular circumstance</p> <p>Students referred to the Committee on Student Promotions for consideration of repeating relevant Organ Systems (Spring and/or Fall) accordingly, the entire academic year, or dismissal.</p>

SUMMARY TABLE:

<u>Pass with Support Needed</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Dean/coach check-in
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Dean/coach check-in
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Observation (1 year)
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Observation (1 year)

<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	Observation (1 year)
<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	CSP Referral for either Repeating Curriculum (on Observation) or Dismissal

Of note, students who receive a “pass with support needed” while on academic observation will not see any change in their status beyond continued monitoring.

Course leaders will provide students with an outline of requirements for remediation of required activities. A student’s plan for remediation should be based on discussions with the relevant course leader(s), the student’s Advisory Dean, and Assistant Dean for Foundations. Students should review the exam and relevant course materials, and meet with course faculty to identify specific weaknesses. They should also meet with a learning specialist to discuss remediation and overall academic progress. In the rare event that a student, course leader, and Assistant Dean for Foundations are unable to come to a shared agreement regarding a remediation plan, the Associate Dean of Medical Education will adjudicate.

All benchmark assessments must be taken on-site and in-person, in alignment with standard practices for National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) testing. Only one exam can be taken at a single session unless explicit permission from the Academic Success Team is obtained.

Students should schedule exams with OMED’s assessment specialist. Multiple, defined times will be established for remediations to allow for flexibility. The student should plan their schedule with the recognition that they must successfully complete all remediations by the stated deadlines. A student who has taken a remediation exam is not to discuss the exam with other students. All academic integrity/security procedures will be maintained during remediation exams.

Support for Academic Success

We at UPSOM want all of our students to succeed. Students want to feel prepared for academic performance within and outside the curriculum. Fortunately, there are many ways that students can access support, and many kinds of support available. Students can reach out on their own for most of these resources, get guidance from coaches or advisors about the appropriateness, or be offered services based on a discussion of their needs.

If a student hopes to improve their academic performance, they can ask, access, or work with:

Faculty:

- Members of the Academic Success Team (Drs. Borghesi, Gonzaga, Templer, Pettigrew, Tiffany Martin, Jessica Owens)
- Faculty content leads <https://www.omed.pitt.edu/faculty-educators/faculty-educator-directory>
- LE or CSP
- OMED deans (Drs. Borghesi, Van Deusen, Rosenstock, Ufomata)

- Block directors for Keystone Fundamentals and Organ Systems (Drs. Schmidt and Powers)
- Academic success specialists (Jessica Owens: jessica.owens@pitt.edu; Tiffany Martin: tmm206@pitt.edu)
- Coach
- Advisory Dean

Peers:

- Tutor (referrals through academic success specialists)
- MedEd Elective students, residents/fellows (as available, either directly or through Dr. Rosenstock)
- Study groups (e.g., Collaborative Based Learning)

University Resources:

- Disability Resources and Services (DRS)—especially if accommodations needed
<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/disability-resources-services/disability-resources-services>
- Neuropsych testing (thru DRS/Academic Success Team)
- Library/Other resources (e.g., learning platforms, texts, videos—as appropriate)
- Academic support programs/courses (as referred by Academic Success Team)
- Mental Health team (therapists/psychiatrist)