

POLICIES FOR CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Introduction

A medical school curriculum experiences continuous assessment and revision as faculty members make modifications in educational offerings that reflect changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, resources, educational technologies, and societal needs. This document is intended to reflect current policies and procedures of the Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources as they relate to the administration of the MI through MIV curriculum at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine (USCSM) for all medical students. The content of this document will be revised periodically as curricular changes are implemented in courses, clerkships, electives, academic calendars, and other components of the curriculum. Major changes in policies and procedures for curricular administration at USCSM follow approval by the Curriculum Committee and other relevant committees (e.g., the Academic Standards Committee), the Dean, and, when necessary, the Provost of the University of South Carolina (USC). Minor procedural changes are the joint responsibility of the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum, the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment, Assistant Dean for Medical Education at Florence, and when applicable, other personnel in the USCSM Office of Medical Education and Academic Affairs.

The uses of this document include 1) a record of the policies and procedures for administration of the medical curriculum as established by the faculty operating through the USCSM committee structure, 2) guidelines for operation of the curriculum, 3) a reference point for consideration of possible curricular changes, and 4) a resource book on curriculum for faculty and students.

I. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

- a. MI and MII Year. The first (MI) and second (MII) years of the medical curriculum will each consist of a maximum of 36 academic weeks in two semesters, which includes holidays, scheduled breaks and the final exam period.
- b. Fall Semester, MI and MII Year. The MI and MII first (fall) semester will consist of a maximum of 18 academic weeks. This semester will end by the beginning of the Winter Break and must therefore commence by the middle of August. The semester should start on a Monday. Holidays in the first semester include Labor Day, Fall Break (two weekdays in October), and Thanksgiving break (Thursday and Friday). No classes will meet on Election Day in November of even numbered years. The Winter Break will include at least 10 calendar days.
- c. Spring Semester, MI and MII Year. The MI and MII second (spring) semester will consist of a maximum of 18 academic weeks. This semester will commence by the middle of January. The semester should start on the first Monday after New Year's week. Holidays

in the second semester include the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. University Service Day and a one-week Spring Break; the semester will end by the third week of May.

- d. **Contact Hours.** Course directors are encouraged to limit contact hours to allow students to individualize their academic preparation. Educational engagement hours (i.e. didactic and self-directed learning) for medical students in the preclinical curriculum is not to exceed 20 hours of required educational activity per week when averaged over the total semester's weekly class schedules. An additional 10 hours of scheduled group activity (e.g. laboratories, small group case-based sessions, problem based learning) is allowed per week. The academic workload expectations for each course (i.e. the assigned period of contact hours allotted to a course each week) will correspond to the number of assigned credit hours. Each self-directed learning hour is given the same weight as a didactic hour when calculating a course's contact hours.
- e. **Semester Schedules.** All MI and MII courses should be scheduled during specific blocks of the academic schedule (i.e., during a semester). In addition, all courses should be taught in the hours assigned. Review sessions, help sessions, make-up sessions, or make-up exams cannot be scheduled during another courses' scheduled time. Any exceptions must receive prior approval from the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum and all course directors whose courses are scheduled during that time.
- f. **Fifty-minute Classes.** Each contact hour provided in a lecture format includes a 50-minute lecture and a 10-minute break. Faculty members should begin lectures on time and conclude lectures at 10 minutes before each hour.
- g. **MIII Year.**
 - i. The third (MIII) year of the medical curriculum will consist of 49 academic weeks. The MIII and MIV years will commence on the same day when possible.
 - ii. MIII students will have a two-week vacation during the Winter Break.
 - iii. The 49 weeks of the MIII year are divided into 1 twelve-week clerkship, 2 eight week clerkships, 3 six-week clerkships, and 2 one-week elective periods, with one clerkship devoted to each of seven clinical disciplines: Family Medicine (6 weeks), Internal Medicine and Neurology (12 weeks), Obstetrics and Gynecology (6 weeks), Pediatrics (8 weeks), Psychiatry (6 weeks), and Surgery (8 weeks). Each student is also scheduled for one of the two intersession weeks in the spring of every MIII year.
- h. **MIV Year.**
 - i. The fourth (MIV) year of the medical curriculum will consist of 41 academic weeks. The MIII and MIV years will commence on the same day when possible.
 - ii. MIV students will have a two-week vacation during the Winter Break.

- iii. The 41 weeks of the MIV year are scheduled as follows: four weeks of a required Acting Internship; four weeks of a critical care experience; two four-week rotations in either Internal Medicine, Pediatrics or Surgery (two selections must not be in the same discipline); one week of required Capstone; 4 weeks of board prep; 12 weeks of elective rotations; and two additional four-week electives or vacation periods, at the discretion of the student.

- i. Calendar Preparation. The Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources, in consultation with the Office of Student and Career Services, will prepare the MI, MII, MIII, and the MIV academic calendars.

- j. MIII and MIV Rotation Schedules. Lotteries for 3rd and 4th year selections will be held each spring using the OASIS electronic scheduler. Student requests will be taken into account and, when possible, honored during this assignment process. An off-cycle student will be placed in available rotations on his/her return to school.

- k. Academic Calendar Approval. All academic calendars and revisions thereof must be approved by the Curriculum Committee and the Dean prior to publication and at least 6 months prior to the commencement of the academic year in which the proposed calendar or calendar revision is to be implemented.

- l. Curricular Changes. Any substantive change in the curriculum, as defined by the Curriculum Committee Handbook, must be introduced and approved by the Curriculum Committee and the Dean at least six months prior to the beginning of the semester in which the curricular change is to be implemented. The Chair of the Curriculum Committee will ensure that decisions of the Curriculum Committee are reported regularly to the Dean.

II. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- a. MI. Completion of all required MI course work with a passing grade (C or better) is required for promotion to the MII year.

- b. MII. Completion of all required MII course work with a passing grade (C or better), achieving a Step I equivalent passing grade on the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination, and subsequently passing the USMLE Step I are required for promotion to the MIII year. MII students will be permitted to start MIII year pending notification of Step I results.

- c. Core Clerkships. All core MIII clerkships will be taken in residence at the USC School of Medicine-Columbia or at the Florence regional campus. Up to four M-IV rotations may

be taken as extramural rotations, to include any of the required rotations except Capstone.

- d. MIII. Completion of all required MIII clinical clerkships with a passing grade (C or better) is required for promotion to the MIV year.
- e. MIV. Elective Schedules. Each student's MIV elective schedule must be approved in advance by the student's advisor and/or by the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment, who will review the schedule for its educational appropriateness.
- f. All Academic Experiences of Equal Importance. Each course and clerkship (regardless of the number of credit hours assigned) will be considered to be of equal importance for purposes of promotion.
- g. MD/Ph.D. The regulations governing the administration of the MD/Ph.D. program have been approved by the USCSM and the USC Graduate Council, as appropriate. Information for each program is contained in the USCSM bulletin.

III. EXAMINATIONS

- a. Coordination of Semester Examinations. The Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum, in consultation with MI and MII course directors, will coordinate all semester examinations and prepare an examination schedule for each MI and MII semester such that no more than two major (one hour or more) examinations will occur in any calendar week, and that there will be a minimum of one calendar day between major examinations. Each MI and MII course director shall submit a daily topic schedule and proposed examination dates to the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum at least two months prior to the beginning of each semester. The final semester examination schedule should be completed by the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum and distributed to course directors at least two weeks prior to the beginning of each semester. Semester examinations will not be rescheduled once classes begin.
- b. MI and MII Final Examination Schedules. Final examinations in a MI or MII course should take place during the final examination period. The day and time of the final examination for each MI and MII course will be determined by the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum. A one to three-day-long "Reading Days" period will precede the final examination period. No instructional activity shall take place in any course during "Reading Days", including review sessions. No course shall have its final examination period during time scheduled for instruction without the prior approval of the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum.
- c. Curriculum Accommodations. USCSM will provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students wishing to request accommodations

should make application to USC Disability Services. Once accommodations are approved, the USCSM will be notified. The application must be made in a timely manner prior to any coursework for which accommodation is requested. The Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum, when indicated, will advise course directors and other pertinent faculty as to the nature and extent of the accommodations to be provided. The USCSM, through the ad hoc subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, appointed by the Chair, retains the right to request additional information, including test results and diagnostic information from a qualified professional, concerning accommodations that extend beyond the following: extended time for written exams, a separate room for exams, and a note taker. Students receiving accommodations will be held to the same technical standards for graduation as other students. (USCSM bulletin)

IV. GRADING

- a. MI and MII Courses. All MI and MII courses will record a grade at the end of each semester by the deadline established by the School of Medicine Registrar.
- b. MIII and MIV Clerkships and Electives. All MIII and MIV clerkships and electives will record a grade within four weeks of the conclusion of the clerkship or elective.
- c. Continuing Courses. Any MI or MII course that extends beyond one semester in length shall have its total number of credit hours divided into two semesters, with a grade assigned at the conclusion of each semester.
- d. Departmental Grading Policies. Grading of medical students is the responsibility of each individual department. At the beginning of each course, clerkship, and elective, each department, through the course director, will provide to students and the Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources, in writing or through online access, an explanation of the method(s) of evaluation and the grading system to be utilized in the course, clerkship, and elective. These policies will remain in effect for that course, clerkship, or elective for the entire academic year.
- e. Standardization of Alphabetic vs. Numeric Grades. The relationship between numeric and alphabetic grades in courses has been standardized, as follows:

i. 100 – 90	A
ii. 89 – 85	B+
iii. 84 – 80	B
iv. 79 – 75	C+
v. 74 – 70	C
vi. 69 – 65	D
vii. Below 65	F

- f. Rounding of Numeric Grades. Any final numeric grade in a course or clerkship whose first decimal place is calculated to be .5 to .9 shall be rounded up to the next whole number, while grades whose first decimal place is calculated to be .0 to .4 should be rounded down to the lower number.
- g. Grading System. The following grading system will be utilized for courses, clerkships, and electives at USCSM. Courses graded **D** or lower cannot be applied towards the medical degree and must be repeated.

Superior	A	4.0
Above Average	B+	3.5
	B	3.0
Satisfactory	C+	2.5
	C	2.0
Below Average	D	1.0
Failure	F	0.0

Other Symbols. The following symbols may also be utilized for courses, clerkships, and electives at USCSM; these grades do not carry grade points.

- i. S or P – Satisfactory or pass – to be used in evaluating work done on a pass-fail basis.
 - ii. U – Unsatisfactory or failure – to be used in evaluating work done on a pass-fail basis
 - iii. W – Withdrawal passing, or without penalty, from a course
 - iv. WF – Withdrawal failing, or with penalty, from a course
 - v. AUD – Course was carried on an audit basis
 - vi. I – Incomplete – failure to complete some portion of the assigned work in a completed course
 - vii. NR – No report – to be used in the absence of any of the above grades; a temporary mark which can be used only when no grade has been assigned and is replaced subsequently by a regular grade.
- h. GPA. The grade point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the total grade points earned by the hours attempted for credit. An incomplete grade is automatically included as a failure (F) in a student’s GPA until such time as the final grade is submitted.
 - i. Narrative Evaluations in the MI and MII Courses. A Student Non-cognitive Performance Evaluation form is used to assess student performance in small group or in other instructional activity where professionalism and communication ability can be measured. A student should receive a copy of the evaluation with the original being placed in his/her permanent file. Any serious professionalism issues should be directed to the Director of Student and Career Services. At the end of each semester, MI and MII course directors will be asked to provide a narrative evaluation, in addition to the letter grade, for a

student receiving a D or F grade in any MI or MII course. In addition, an MI and MII course director has the option of providing narrative evaluation for any other student exhibiting extraordinary behavior (positive or negative) during a course.

- j. Narrative Evaluations in MIII and MIV Clerkships. All MIII and MIV clerkships will provide narrative evaluations of students' performance in those clerkships. These narrative evaluations will address students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors.
- k. Policy on Evaluation on Personal and Professional Conduct. Assessment of a student enrolled in MIII and MIV clerkships and electives will include an evaluation of the student's personal and professional conduct during the clerkship or elective according to the Policy on Evaluation of Personal and Professional Conduct.
- l. Use of NBME Subject Exams in Required Clinical Clerkships. Effective with the 2000-2001 academic year each required MIII clinical clerkship of either six, eight, or twelve weeks duration will utilize the appropriate NBME subject examination in the assessment of student performance in the clerkship. MIII clinical clerkship directors will utilize the two-digit scores in the grading and reporting of NBME shelf tests. Effective with the 2002-2003 academic year, all required MIII clinical clerkships established the 5th percentile as the minimum passing score for their respective NBME subject examinations. The percentile table used for calculating pass/fail status and for reporting on the students' clerkship evaluations is to be from the total year column on the most recent Academic Year Norms for Examinee Performance report.

Any student failing the NBME subject exam test in a clerkship will receive an incomplete grade in that clerkship, but he/she will be permitted to continue on to other clerkships. Students failing a (one) subject exam in periods 1, 2 and 3 of the MIII year will retake that exam in January. Those failing a (one) subject exam in periods 4, 5, and 6 will retake that exam in July. Exams will be scheduled for either the second or third Friday in the appropriate month depending on rotation scheduling.

A student who fails two subject exams in a semester will be pulled from the fourth rotation block (for failures in rotations 1, 2, and/or 3) or from the first rotation of the M-IV year (for failures in rotations 4, 5, and/or 6). Retakes for the two failed exams will occur during those times for the rotations from which the student was pulled.

Any student who fails a subject exam in three different clerkships over the third year will be immediately pulled from his/her current rotation and be required to appear before the Academic Review and Promotions Committees.

Any student who fails the same subject exam a second time receives a failing grade for the clerkship, and that student is referred to the Academic Review and Promotions Committees and ultimately the Dean. At a minimum, the student will be required to

repeat the clerkship in its entirety. For those students who have failed more than one exam initially and then fail the retaken exam, an anticipated graduation date in May of the fourth year may be in jeopardy, particularly if the initially failed exam was in the spring semester of the third year.

V. UNITED STATES MEDICAL LICENSING EXAMINATIONS (USMLE)

- a. USMLE, Step 1 and Step 2 Requirement. Students at USCSM are required to pass Step 1 and Step 2 (Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills) of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) prior to graduation. A USCSM student must be enrolled at USCSM in order to take Step 1 or 2 of the USMLE. A student will be permitted to attempt Step 1 and 2 of the USMLE three times. Failure on the third attempt will result in a student being subject to dismissal from USCSM.
- b. Step 1, USMLE. A student must receive a passing grade on Step 1 of the USMLE as designated by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in order to be promoted to the third year and to progress to third-year clerkships. Second-year students are required to complete applications for Step 1 during the second year in sufficient time to request test dates before the start of the MIII year. The student is to take Step 1 prior to beginning any third year clinical clerkship or elective. Students who have taken Step 1, but not received a passing score will be allowed to start the first clerkship, but will not be officially promoted until a passing score is received.
- c. As part of the preparation to sit for the USMLE Step 1, students must receive an equivalent passing score (as determined by the SOM) on the NBME Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) prior to taking the USMLE Step 1 exam. The CBSE will be administered at the SOM at least three times between the end of final exams of the M-II year and the beginning of M-III Orientation.
- d. Students who have not passed the CBSE by the beginning of M-III Orientation will be placed on administrative leave and will not be registered for the M-III year and referred to the Financial Aid Officer. A passing score on the CBSE and the USMLE Step 1 exam will be required to start rotations.
- e. The SOM will offer at least five opportunities, the dates of which will be determined and published annually, to take and pass the exam by August 1st. If by August 1st a student has not successfully passed the CBSE the student will be referred to the Academic Review Committee.
- f. If a student is allowed to continue to take the CBSE, the exam will be administered at the SOM's discretion no more than once a month between September and April, and the student must pass both the CBSE and USMLE Step 1 before beginning a clinical rotation. Likewise, a student who requests a leave of absence to allow for additional preparation for the CBSE and/or USMLE Step 1 must pass both exams prior to beginning a clinical rotation.
- g. A student who sits for USMLE Step 1 without having passed the CBSE will be considered in

violation of the Honor Code and subsequently referred to the Honor Committee.

- h. A student receiving testing accommodations will be allowed to take the CBSE with the same accommodations that have been granted for Step 1. Applications should be filed with the NBME no later than March 1st in order for the decision to be made prior to the 1st CBSE attempt. A student who receives testing accommodations, but does not file an application with the NBME, will take the CBSE under standard testing conditions. A student who appeals a denial of accommodations with the NBME will wait until the appeal is heard before sitting for the first the CBSE. The same limit of 5 attempts to pass the CBSE before going to academic review will apply whether or not accommodations are granted.
- i. Any second-year student who is unsuccessful on his/her first attempt at Step 1, and has started a clerkship, will immediately be pulled from the clerkship and placed on administrative leave. His/her second attempt shall be scheduled within eight weeks of the beginning of his/her MIII year. After completion of the second attempt, the student will re-enter the third year of medical education in the next scheduled eight week clerkship. Any student who extends preparation time beyond what is stated in this policy will need to request a leave of absence and will then be required to have a passing score reported at least 2 weeks before being allowed to return to educational activities. Any student placed on administrative leave for more than 16 weeks during the third year or fourth year of the medical curriculum will be required to complete the entire third year or fourth year in sequence upon a return to full-time student status.
- j. Any second-year student who is unsuccessful on his/her second attempt at Step 1 will immediately be placed on an administrative leave for the remainder of that academic year in order to prepare for the third and final administration of Step 1 and is expected to complete an application in sufficient time to ensure a test date and score reporting by the beginning of the first third-year clerkship period of the next academic year. In the interim, the student will not be permitted to progress further in the third year of medical education. The student will not earn academic credit for any clinical clerkship; a grade of W will be entered on the student's transcript for those clinical clerkships from which /he/she was pulled. A student preparing for the third attempt at Step 1 will develop a contract with a faculty member in the Office of Medical Education for a course of study in preparation for that exam. If successful on the third attempt, the student will begin third-year clerkships in the first clerkship period of the subsequent academic year and is required to complete the entire third year in sequence. A student who fails Step 1 on the third attempt will be subject to dismissal from USCSM upon notification by the NBME of the third failure.
- k. Step 2, USMLE. Students must receive a passing grade on Step 2 (both components) as designated by the NBME in order to graduate from USCSM. All fourth-year students are expected to sit for both components of USMLE Step 2 (Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills) by the last day of the sixth rotation block of the MIV year. It is the responsibility of

any fourth-year student who is unsuccessful on his/her first attempt at either of the components of Step 2 to reapply to the NBME and to request an examination date. Students are encouraged to take both components of Step 2 as early as possible to allow for sufficient time for retesting, if necessary, so that an affected student may graduate on time.

- l.
- m. Students are required to perform all elective and required rotation duties during the dates those rotations are scheduled. Except for the day prior to the Step 2 Clinical Knowledge examination, students are not allowed to take time off from rotations to prepare for that examination. The day prior to or the day after the Clinical Skills examination is allowed for travel purposes. Students are thus strongly encouraged not to take both components during a required rotation so time away from scheduled duties is minimized.
- n. Testing Under Nonstandard Conditions. The Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum will assist students with documented disabilities to apply to the NBME for permission to take the USMLE under nonstandard conditions. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all deadlines are met and that all appropriate documentation is received by the NBME.

VI. COURSE/CLERKSHIP/ELECTIVE CREDIT HOURS.

- a. Calculation of Assigned Credit Hours. The Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources will periodically review credit hours assigned by the Curriculum Committee to individual MI and MII courses according to the formula below. By this formula, one contact hour is assigned for every hour of lecture, large-group instruction, lecture alternative (i.e. assigned self-study module), or examination during the course of a semester. Every three hours of laboratory or small group instruction during the course of a semester will also be assigned one contact hour. Unassigned independent study time will not be counted toward total contact hours. The total number of contact hours over the semester is then divided by 16.4 weeks in the semester, not including final examination periods or days off, to arrive at the number of credit hours for that course. In the third and fourth years, one credit hour will be assigned for each week of clinical clerkship or rotation.
- b. Actual Course Credit vs. Assigned Course Credit. Calculated credit hours for a MI or MII course, as determined by the formula described in VI a., shall not differ from the number of credit hours assigned to that course by more than +/-0.2 credit hours per semester.
- c. Requests for Changes in Assigned Credit Hours. MI or MII Course Directors who wish to increase or decrease the credit hours of their courses should make the request for the change to the Curriculum Committee.

VII. GRADE CHANGES

- a. Grade Changes. A grade cannot be changed by the department after it has been submitted to the Director of Enrollment Services/Registrar except when an error in computation or transcription has occurred.

- b. Grade Change Committee. A subcommittee of the Academic Standards Committee has been established by the Dean to monitor this policy; the Director of Enrollment Services/Registrar serves as staff member to this subcommittee.
- c. Requests within One Year. Requests for a grade change must be made to the Director of Enrollment Services/Registrar, according to the established procedure, within one year of the completion date of the course, clerkship, or elective.
- d. Student Appeal of Grades. The procedures shall not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the grade or evaluation of his/her work. Such matters shall be discussed by a student and his/her instructor; final authority shall remain with the instructor. Students have the right to be graded in an equitable manner, free from arbitrary bias or capriciousness on the part of faculty members. The basis of a student grievance shall be a violation of Teaching Responsibility policies contained in the Faculty Manual (http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/Faculty_Manual_Columbia.pdf); or a violation of the policies on Protection of Freedom of Expression or Against Improper Disclosure, as stated in Carolina Community (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf628.pdf>). Students who believe they have the right to grieve under this policy should, within 30 calendar days of receiving a grade, contact the Associate Dean for Medical Education to review the appeals process. The complete policy is housed in the USCSM academic bulletin, which is housed on the SM website.

VIII. CLASS ATTENDANCE

- a. Absences. Enrollment at USCSM obligates the student to complete all assigned course work promptly and to attend classes on a punctual and regular basis. Absences, whether excused or unexcused, do not absolve the student of these responsibilities.
- b. Grade Penalties for Excessive Absences. Students are expected to attend all regular class sessions. The course or clerkship director has the prerogative to exact a grade penalty for excessive absences. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason for the instructor to refer to the Student Promotions Committee for consideration in the promotion process.
- c. Notification of the Office of Student and Career Services. Any student who finds it necessary to be absent from a quiz, examination, or other required academic experience due to an emergency situation, illness, or hospitalization is required to notify the Office of Student and Career Services and the affected course/ clerkship director of the reason for the absence prior to the absence or as soon as possible thereafter. Notification should be in the form of a phone call, voice message, or email to both the Office of Student and Career Services **and** the course/ clerkship director(s). When requested, the student will provide written verification of the reason for the absence from the treating physician or other professional, to the Office of Student and Career Services. Within the guidelines of

USC policy, the course/ clerkship director will determine whether or not an absence from class shall be excused. Under these guidelines, absences from examinations, structured laboratory assignments, or other academic requirements may be made up at the discretion of the course or clerkship director.

- d. Lack of Notification. Any student who does not provide appropriate notification to the Director of Student Services and/or who does not provide written verification of the reason for the absence when requested to do so may forfeit the opportunity to make up missed examinations and/or other academic experiences. A request for an excused absence received after the absence has occurred will not be accepted unless it was not possible to present proper advance notification.
- e. Inclement Weather Policies for MI and MII Students. USCSM MI and MII classes are canceled when USC Columbia classes are canceled in times of inclement weather. USCSM MI and MII classes begin on a delayed schedule when USC Columbia classes begin on a delayed schedule in times of inclement weather.
- f. Inclement Weather Policies for MIII and MIV Students. The holiday and inclement weather policies have been developed and approved for MIII/MIV medical students are discussed in the Student Handbook to Clinical Rotations and The Clerkship Directors Handbook both of which can be accessed through the Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources webpage.

IX. MIV ELECTIVES

- a. Electives. An MIV student may schedule up to five four-week elective experiences in the MIV year with the approval of his/her advisor and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment.
- b. Away Electives and Acting Internship. Up to four (4) rotations (electives, selective, and AI) may be scheduled away, and no more than three (3) electives (including the AI and selective) may be scheduled in the same specialty or subspecialty. One or two additional rotations beyond the nine required rotations can be scheduled, if desired, in any specialty or subspecialty and at any approved site, in the two four week blocks available for vacation.
- c. SCAHEC, Florence, Grand Strand, and Greenville Hospital System Electives. Electives offered by the SC Area Health Education Consortium (SCAHEC), Florence, Grand Strand, and the Greenville Hospital System are considered to be USCSM electives and are not considered "away" electives for medical students.
- d. Approval Process for MIV Electives. All USCSM and SCAHEC electives are reviewed and approved by the appropriate departmental Chair and by the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment prior to their inclusion in the USCSM Medical Student Elective

Catalog. Students wishing to do "away" electives must submit a description of the elective experience to the appropriate departmental Chair and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment and receive their approval of this elective as equivalent to educational experiences offered by USCSM prior to scheduling that "away" elective in his/her MIV curriculum.

X. VISITING STUDENTS

- a. Enrollment in MIV Electives. A student enrolled and in good academic standing at another medical school may take MIV electives at USCSM.
- b. Maximum of Two Electives. A visiting student may take a maximum of two four-week MIV electives at USCSM.
- c. Application Fee. A visiting student is charged a \$150.00 application fee for each MIV elective.
- d. Students from LCME-accredited and American Osteopathic Association-accredited Medical Schools. A student enrolled at an LCME-accredited or American Osteopathic Association-accredited medical school will make application for MIV electives to the Visiting Student Coordinator in the USCSM Office of Admissions and Enrollment Services. Application procedures include completion of the following: an application page, HIPAA confidentiality statement, Multi-System Request form, and accompanying BBP module and quiz. All forms must be submitted with the application fee for processing. The rotation then requires the approval of the department chair and the elective director.
- e. Students from MUSC. A student enrolled at MUSC may take USCSM MIV electives at Palmetto Richland Memorial Hospital (PRMH) through the SC Area Health Education Consortium (SC AHEC); application should be made to SCAHEC and the Medical Education Office at PRMH. A student enrolled at MUSC may make application for other USCSM MIV electives (other than those offered at PRMH through SCAHEC) by means of the same procedures in place for students at other LCME-accredited medical schools.

XI. COURSE EXEMPTIONS

- a. Course Exemptions in MI and/or MII Year. All students accepted to USCSM are expected to enroll and successfully complete all required courses. When a student with specialized training enters USCSM, he/she may apply to exempt certain required MI and/or M-II courses. With the concurrence of the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum and the appropriate department chair, the student may be given an examination to measure the student's degree of proficiency in the appropriate area or the student's previous course work in the appropriate area may be reviewed to determine its equivalence to the relevant USCSM course work. Any exemption should be granted before matriculation in the course and must be granted no later than one academic week after matriculation.

- b. Transfer with Advanced Standing into the M-II Year. A student accepted for transfer with advanced standing into the M-II year from another LCME-accredited medical school will be required to submit course syllabi from all first-year medical school course work for review by the relevant USCSM course director. Following this review and evaluation, USCSM course directors will advise the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum of the equivalence of course work completed at the medical school from the student is transferring and of any deficiencies in the student's medical education as compared to course work completed by USCSM students. In the case of (a) deficiency(ies), the student will be required to remediate successfully the deficiency(ies) with appropriate members of the USCSM faculty prior to April 1 of the MII year.
- c. Transfer with Advanced Standing into the M-III Year. A student accepted for transfer with advanced standing into the M-III year from another LCME-accredited medical school shall be considered as having completed an equivalent basic science education to that completed by MII and M-II students at USCSM when the transfer student documents successful completion of the basic science curriculum at the medical school from which he/she is transferring and provides official documentation from the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to USCSM of a passing score of Step 1 of the USMLE.

XII. LEAVE OF ABSENCE/ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

Student use of facilities and services. Students who are granted a leave of absence or who are placed on administrative leave from USCSM are eligible to use USCSM facilities and support services during the period of leave, including the medical library, computer resources, study areas, student lounge, Humphries Fitness Center, programs and activities of the Office of Student and Career Services.

XIII. CURRICULAR ASSESSMENT

- a. Course and Clerkship Evaluation.
 - i. Course Evaluations: At the end of each semester, all course evaluations will be posted on Blackboard in an independent study course used solely for evaluation purposes. Only selected personnel in the Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources will have access to these special courses. Each student will receive a check mark in his or her grade book after submission of each evaluation. A submitted evaluation goes into an anonymous data pool containing all the evaluations for that course. Results of each course evaluation will be shared with course directors, but only after the final grades for the evaluated course have been submitted to the registrar. Course evaluations are to be completed by the end of reading day each semester.

Course evaluations are considered mandatory as part of the overall professional responsibilities inherent to medical education.

Consequences for Failure to Submit Course Evaluations: All MI/MII students will be required to submit a course evaluation for each course in which they are registered. A student failing to submit course evaluations will have a non-cognitive performance evaluation completed and placed in his/her student file.

- ii. Clerkship Evaluations: MIII and MIV required clerkships and rotations shall be evaluated by students by means of on-line clerkship evaluations at the conclusion of each two-week, four-week, six week, or eight-week instruction period. Data collected from these evaluations will be distributed to MIII and MIV directors and department Chairs on a regular basis, as well as to members of the Curriculum Committee. Data will not be released to MIII and MIV Directors or Chairs until final grades for the evaluated clerkship have been submitted to the USCSM Registrar. Students will receive an incomplete for the clerkship until evaluations are submitted.
- b. Preclinical Faculty Evaluation. The processes by which faculty members teaching in the preclinical curriculum are evaluated and the resulting data distributed are the responsibility of the USCSM Office of Curricular Affairs and Media Resources.

At the School of Medicine, faculty evaluations are available at scheduled times on Blackboard in an independent study course used solely for evaluation purposes. If Blackboard is not applicable, an alternate form of electronic evaluations will be completed. The evaluations are tracked per student for the sole purpose of identifying which students have submitted the faculty evaluations. This prevents duplication of evaluations by one student. Faculty evaluations can be completed at any time during the semester in order to accommodate courses utilizing guest lecturers and clinical professors. Results will not be available until the end of the semester and after course grades have been submitted.

A copy of the evaluation is sent to the instructor, the pertinent course director and department chair, the Associate Dean for Medical Education and either the Assistant Dean for Preclinical or Clinical Curriculum at the end of each semester. Faculty evaluations are considered privileged information.

- c. Clinical Faculty Evaluations. By request of the clinical department chairs, each department establishes its own method and criteria for MIII and MIV teaching faculty evaluations.

XIV. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

- a. Academic Progress. In order to be promoted to the next academic year or to be permitted to continue to the next academic semester, a student must be recommended for promotion or continuation to the Dean by the Student Promotions Committee. A student should maintain a 2.000 grade point average in order to be promoted to the next

academic year or permitted to continue to the next academic semester. A student receiving less than a 2.000 grade point average in an academic semester or academic year or less than a 2.000 cumulative grade point average is subject to dismissal.

- b. **Unsatisfactory Progress.** The grade of D is considered to denote unsatisfactory progress in any course or clerkship. Any student receiving a grade of D, regardless of semester GPA, will be required to go before Academic Review and Student Promotions Committee. The Student will be required to remediate the course.
- c. **Repeat of a Course/Clerkship Failed.** The grade of F is used to denote failure in a course; a student receiving a grade of F in one or more courses is subject to dismissal. A student receiving an F grade in a course may be permitted by the Dean, in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee, to repeat the course. A student permitted to repeat a preclinical course may repeat the course at USCSM or at another medical school approved by course director and the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Curriculum. A student permitted to repeat a clinical course must repeat the course at USCSM. If the student fails to achieve a C or better grade in the repeated course, the student will be subject to dismissal from USCSM or will be required to repeat the academic year, at the discretion of the Dean in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee.
- d. **Grade Report for the Repeated Course.** Upon satisfactory completion of the repeated course, both the original F grade and the grade received in the repeated course will be recorded on the student's transcript. Grade points and credit hours for both grades will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average that is used for promotion decisions and in the determination of class rank.
- e. **Failure of a Continuing Course.** In the case of a continuing course (Biochemistry, Pathology), if a student receives an F grade in the first semester and the student is permitted by the Dean, in consultation with the Student Promotions Committee, to continue to the next semester, the student will be required to attend classes of the course during the second semester and take all examinations in that course on a pass/fail basis and then repeat the course.
- f. **Repeated Semester/Year.** A student will not usually be permitted to repeat more than one academic semester or academic year. A student who is repeating the semester or year must receive a grade of C or better in repeated courses in order to be promoted to the next academic year or permitted to continue to the next academic semester. A student who fails to receive a grade of C or better in repeated courses is subject to dismissal.
- g. **Grade Points for Repeated Semester/Year.** If a student is required to repeat an academic semester or academic year, grade points and credit hours from the original semester or year will not be calculated into the cumulative grade point average for the purpose of

promotions decisions. For all other purposes, grade points and credit hours from the original academic semester or academic year will be calculated into the cumulative grade point average.

- h. Personal and Professional Conduct. Student progress is based upon professional performance that includes both cognitive mastery of the basic and clinical sciences and personal and professional conduct that reflects the high standards of moral and ethical behavior and judgment necessary for professional practice as a physician. Factors which could result in a student's suspension or dismissal from USCSM, regardless of his/her grades in basic science course work and clinical clerkships and electives, include, but are not limited to, violations of the USCSM Policy on Evaluation of Personal and Professional Conduct, violations of University regulations as described in the *Carolina Community* or conviction of a criminal offense.
- i. Clinical Standards Attainment Documentation. Student proficiency in the clinical skills necessary for competent generalist medical practice is required. The necessary clinical skills are selected by the faculty and the documentation of the attainment of proficiency in them is accomplished during course and clerkship experiences. Course and clerkship directors obtain the necessary documentation from the faculty and supply the notification of satisfactory completion to the Administrator of Enrollment Services/Registrar accompanying the grade report. Failure to complete the clinical skills requirement of a course or clerkship will result in a grade of Incomplete and redemption will be necessary prior to advancement to the next clerkship. Completion and documentation of proficiency in all the required clinical skills is necessary for graduation.
- j. Patient Encounter Data. MIII and MIV students on the six required M-III clerkships and the M-IV acting internship track patient encounters using an online program. Patient demographics and ICD codes are recorded so clerkship directors can ensure appropriate clinical education diversity, both culturally and medically.
- k. Requirements for Graduation. Upon recommendation by the USCSM faculty, the University of South Carolina will confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine upon candidates who have:
 - i. Attained the Schools' educational objectives as evidenced by satisfactory completion of prescribed basic science and clinical courses and electives and acquisition of all required clinical and technical skills;
 - ii. Passed Steps 1 and 2 (both components) of the USMLE
 - iii. Attended the University of South Carolina School of Medicine on a full-time basis for a minimum of two years
 - iv. Discharged all financial obligations to USCSM and to the University
 - v. Completed any additional requirements as mandated by the USCSM Academic Standards Committee.

- I. In order to graduate in the May commencement ceremony, fourth-year students must successfully complete all academic requirements by May 31. Similarly, in order to graduate in August or December, fourth-year students must successfully complete all academic requirements by August 31 or December 31, respectively.

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