

□ SECTION III

GRADING POLICIES, Years 1 through 4

Medical students are graded on an honors/satisfactory/no-credit basis. The Medical Curriculum Committee has permitted selected courses to use a strict S/NC grading system in which no honors grades are awarded. A grade of "NC" does not appear on the official University transcript. When a student fails a course, either a make-up examination is taken or the course is repeated. When a course is repeated successfully, the external transcript shows the course with a grade of "S" next to it. If a make-up examination is taken and passed, the transcript records the following comment in the *Remarks* section: "The requirements for BioMed (course number and course title) were completed by special examination."

Internal academic files are maintained for each student and kept within the office of the Director of Student Affairs. All grades are recorded in these internal files, as determined by the course leader, as honors, pass, existing deficiency, or no credit. If a grade is changed either by repetition of the course or make-up exam, the original grade is retained and the new grade added. This internal academic file is available for inspection by the student during regular office hours (8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. on weekdays) or by special arrangement with the Director of Student Affairs.

The internal academic file is used for the purposes of writing the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE or "Dean's Letter"), letters of recommendation, or for provision of information to advisors and members of the medical school administration. All narrative evaluations from clerkships and courses are kept within the folder as are all other communications to and from the student (except as noted below).

Grades are assigned to the student by the course leader according to the following guidelines:

Honors (H): This grade indicates that the student has performed at a level of distinction as determined by the course leader.

Satisfactory (S): The student has completed all requirements of the course at or above the minimum standard of performance in all components of the course.

No Credit (NC): The student's overall performance in a course is below the minimum standard of performance.

Specifics regarding the mechanisms for assigning grades for each course will be made available at the start of each semester.

Existing Deficiency (ED): This temporary grade indicates that the student has performed below the minimum standard of performance in components of the course, but that overall performance was deemed satisfactory. This grade option is used when the course leader believes that a reasonably limited amount of additional effort or study would

remedy these deficiencies and result in satisfactory performance in all course components. When using the **ED** option, the course leader(s) should discuss the deficiencies with the student, develop a plan and timetable for correction, and communicate this to the Associate Dean for Medical Education. The course leader should decide, at the time of the meeting with the student, what means should be used to evaluate the student's performance at the end of the timetable. The timetable should generally not exceed three months except in unusual circumstances. When the student successfully remedies the deficiencies, the course leader will change the course grade to satisfactory (S), and the student will receive full credit for the course or clerkship. If the student fails to remedy the deficiencies, then the course grade will be changed to no credit (NC). An ED grade not remedied within one year of the beginning of the course will become NC. This will require the student to repeat the entire course or clerkship.

Incomplete (I): Under exceptional circumstances, a course may be left incomplete (except for a regularly scheduled final examination) with the course leader's consent. In such cases, a grade of "I" will be assigned provided that the student has filed a request for extension of time to complete the work of the course and the course leader had consented to such a request. Unless an earlier date is specified by the course leader, grades of "I" should be made up within three months of the date of the last day of the incomplete class. Extensions beyond this may be granted by the course leader but for not longer than one year from the end of the incomplete courses. Course work not completed within the timetable will result in the grade being changed to no credit (NC).

Absent (ABS): This grade is assigned to students who are absent from a regularly scheduled final examination. If the absence from the examination is excused by the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the student will be permitted to take a special examination. If the absence from the final examination is not excused by the Associate Dean, the student will receive NC for the course.

Each course leader is responsible for determining how students will be evaluated and how grades will be assigned. Students who believe that an assigned grade is not an accurate reflection of their performance should discuss this with the course leader. While there is no formal avenue of appeal of a grade within the medical school beyond the judgment of the course leader, a course leader may request that the Associate Dean for Medical Education provide input into particularly contentious discussions regarding grades.

Examinations are not returned to students. However, examinations will be made available to students for their perusal at post-examination sessions. At these sessions, students can review their own examinations while course faculty discuss specific questions and make themselves available for discussion.

Grading Policy: Pre-Clinical Courses – Year 1

Overview:

The preclinical courses are organized within each of the first four semesters of Medical School as Integrated Medical Sciences I-IV and Doctoring I-IV. Each semester of IMS consists of 3-4 courses, each of which is assigned a course number and is under the direction of a separate course leader(s). The grading policies for each of these courses are described in this document.

Year 1, Semester I

All IMS-I courses and the Doctoring I course in this semester will be graded S/NC (Satisfactory/No Credit). No Honors will be awarded in Semester I.

Grading for Doctoring I

BIOL3640 Doctoring I (2 credit course) Course Leaders: I. Tong, J. Taylor, A. Frazzano – S/NC

Grading for Doctoring I will be based upon performance in Small Groups, OSCEs, Case Write-ups, Field Notes, and Community Mentor sessions. If a student's performance is unsatisfactory in any component of the course, s/he will be required to remediate the deficiency before receiving a final grade. If a student's performance is unsatisfactory in more than one component of the course, s/he may be required to repeat the course. A decision to require that a student repeat the course will be based on a recommendation by the course leaders to the Medical Committee on Academic Standing (MCAS). For policies governing MCAS, its responsibilities and processes, see the Student Policies Handbook (http://med.brown.edu/student_services/handbook.html).

Grading for IMS-I

- **BIOL3642** IMS-I: Scientific Foundations of Medicine (1 credit), P. Gruppuso – S/NC
- **BIOL3643** IMS-I: Histology (1 credit), M. Thompson – S/NC
- **BIOL3644** IMS-I: Human Anatomy (2 credits), D. Ritter – S/NC
- **BIOL3645** IMS-I: General Pathology (1 credit), L. Dumenco – S/NC

There will be five integrated examinations during semester I. Each exam will contain questions from 2 to 3 of the IMS-I courses. Course scores will be cumulative throughout the semester. The passing grade for each course will be determined by the course leader. A grade of 70 will most often be considered passing. A cutoff below 70 may be designated as passing at the discretion of the course leader. Students who do not achieve a passing grade will be assigned a grade of NC (no credit). Upon remediation (if deemed applicable by the course leader), the grade will be changed to S.

Progression to Semester II

If a student receives a grade of NC in any Semester I course (including any of the four IMS-I courses or Doctoring I), s/he will be brought to the attention of the Medical Committee on Academic Standing (MCAS). The MCAS will consider options for remediation based upon the recommendations of the relevant course leader(s) in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Students failing two or more Semester I courses (including the four IMS-I courses and Doctoring I) will be required to repeat the semester.

Year 1, Semester II

In the second semester of Year 1, Doctoring II will be graded S/NC. However, Honors is a grade option for IMS-II courses (Brain Sciences, Microbiology/Infectious Diseases, and Endocrine Sciences).

Grading for Doctoring II

- **BIOL3650:** Doctoring II (2 credit course) I. Tong, J. Taylor, A. Frazzano – S/NC

Grading follows the same policies as for Doctoring I.

Grading for IMS-II

- **BIOL3652** IMS-II: Brain Sciences (2 credits), E. Feldmann, B. Connors, G. Tung, R. Boland, S. Salloway, J. Donahue – H/S/NC
- **BIOL3653** IMS-II: Microbiology/Infectious Diseases (1 credit) T. Salazar-Mather, J. Lonks – H/S/NC
- **BIOL3654** IMS-II: Endocrine Sciences (1 credit) M. Laufgraben – H/S/NC

Each IMS-II course is graded H/S/NC (Honors, Satisfactory, No Credit). Grades will be determined based on examination scores and small group attendance and participation (if applicable).

Examinations. Overall cumulative exam scores of 90 or above will be **designated for Honors**. This honor grade cut-off may be adjusted at the discretion of the course leader(s). The **passing grade** for each course will be determined by the course leader(s); however, a grade of 70 will most often be considered passing. A cutoff below 70 may be designated as passing at the discretion of the course leader(s).

Brain Sciences. There will be three exams in this course that will encompass material from several different disciplines: head and neck anatomy (counting towards the anatomy final grade from semester I), neurobiology, neuropathology, neuropathophysiology, neurologic pharmacology, and Brain and Behavior (psychiatry).

Scores in Brain Sciences will be cumulative and final grades will be determined (see Examinations, above) based upon the total number of possible points on all exams.

Students who receive a failing grade in Brain Sciences will receive an NC and be brought to the attention of the MCAS. The MCAS will consider options for remediation (which most often is re-taking the entire course) based upon the recommendations of the course leaders in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Microbiology/Infectious Diseases. There will be two Microbiology/Infectious Diseases examinations in this course. Epidemiology/Biostatistics will be integrated into this course and throughout all subsequent preclinical courses.

The Micro/ID course will be graded H/S/NC based upon cumulative examination grades (see Examinations, above) and upon attendance and satisfactory participation in all small group sessions (see Small Group Sessions). **Students who receive a failing grade in Micro/ID will receive an NC and be brought to the attention of the MCAS.** The MCAS will consider options for remediation (which most often is re-taking the entire course) based upon the recommendations of the course leaders in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Endocrine Sciences. There is a single integrated examination in this course, which encompasses endocrine physiology, pathology, pathophysiology and pharmacology, and epidemiology. Students will receive a final grade of H/S/NC based upon exam score (see Examinations) and upon attendance and satisfactory participation in all small group sessions (see Small Group Sessions). **Students who receive a failing grade in Endocrine Sciences will receive an NC and be brought to the attention of the MCAS.** The MCAS will consider options for remediation (which most often is re-taking the entire course) based upon the recommendations of the relevant course leader(s) in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Progression to Year 2

If a student receives a grade of NC in any Year 1 Semester II course (including the three IMS-II courses and Doctoring II), s/he will be brought to the attention of the Medical Committee on Academic Standing (MCAS). The MCAS will consider options for remediation based upon the recommendations of the relevant course leader(s) in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Note that students must successfully complete both Doctoring I and Doctoring II in order to proceed on to Year 2.

Small group sessions are an important component of the Micro/ID, Epidemiology, and Endocrine Sciences courses. Small group performance in Problem-Based Learning sessions will be graded S/NC. Honors will not be awarded for small groups; however, active participation in small groups is required for a passing grade. Attendance at each small group session is mandatory. Students need to communicate with Emily Green, Assistant Director of Medical Student Affairs (Emily.Green@Brown.edu) for permission to miss a small group and, if given permission, students must alert their small group

leader. See the Attendance Policy section of the Student Policy Handbook for more details.

Small group performance assessment will be based upon participation, quality of contribution to the discussions as well as leadership skills. Your small-group leader will assess your performance in the specific areas of communication, problem-solving skills, using basic science in the practice of medicine, lifelong learning, and personal growth and development.

Pre- and post-examination review sessions will be scheduled to precede each major examination in each course. The review session will be led by the course instructors and/or by medical students who are serving as Teaching Assistants.

Examinations will not be returned to students. However, post-exam sessions will be held after each examination. During these sessions, students will be given an opportunity to review their exams. In addition, faculty will be available to answer questions.

Tutoring: Content tutors are available from the Office of Curriculum Affairs. Students who think that they may benefit from tutoring should contact Richard Dollase at 863-3198 or by email (Richard.Dollase@brown.edu). For learning strategy tutoring, contact Phil Tetreault, Director of Academic Enhancement at Phillip.Tetreault@Brown.edu or 863-3335. Students should also feel free to consult course leaders and/or Emily Green, Assistant Director of Medical Student Affairs, regarding academic advising.

Grading Policy: Pre-Clinical Courses: Year 2

Year 2, Semesters I and II

All IMS-III and IMS-IV courses will be graded H/S/NC (Honors/Satisfactory/No Credit). Doctoring III will be graded S/NC. Doctoring IV will be graded H/S/NC.

Grading for Doctoring III & IV

➤ BIOL3660 Doctoring III (2 credit course) Course Leaders: J.Taylor, A. Frazzano – S/NC

Grading for Doctoring III will be based upon performance in Small Groups, OSCEs, Case Write-ups, Field Notes, and Community Mentor sessions. If a student's performance is unsatisfactory in any component of the course, s/he will be required to remediate the deficiency before receiving a final grade. If a student's performance is unsatisfactory in more than one component of the course, s/he may be required to repeat the course. A decision to require that a student repeat the course will be based on a recommendation by the course leaders to the Medical Committee on Academic Standing (MCAS). For policies governing MCAS, its responsibilities and processes, see the Student Policies Handbook (http://med.brown.edu/student_services/handbook.html).

➤ BIOL3670 Doctoring IV (2 credit course) Course Leaders: J. Taylor, A. Frazzano – H/S/NC.

Students must pass each component of Doctoring (I, II, III) to move on to the subsequent Doctoring component. Although the first three semesters of the Doctoring Course are graded S/NC, the Honors (H) grade option is offered in Doctoring IV. The components of students' grades that are used to determine Honors include Small Group faculty evaluations, Final OSCEs, single best Case Write-up and Field Note from the year and the Community Mentor evaluation. If a student's performance is unsatisfactory in any component of Doctoring IV, the same policies will be followed as those described for Doctoring III (see above).

Grading for IMS-III IMS-IV Courses

- BIOL3662 IMS-III: Cardiovascular (1 credit) D. Burt, C. Oyer, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3663 IMS-III: Pulmonary (1 credit) M. Jankowich, B. Kimble, C. Oyer, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3664 IMS-III: Renal (1 credit) S.Hu, C. Oyer, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3665 IMS-III: Supporting Structures (1 credit) S. Schwartz, C. Ebersson, N. Jellinek, C. Oyer, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3672 IMS-IV: Hematology (1 credit) L. Dumenco, E. Wittels, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3673 IMS-IV: Gastroenterology (1 credit) H. Rich, J. Carlsten, R. Patrick, W. Bowen
- BIOL3674 IMS-IV: HRGD (Human Reproduction, Growth & Development) R. Moore, Z. Harel, C. Oyer, R. Patrick, W. Bowen

Each IMS-III and IMS-IV course is graded H/S/NC (Honors, Satisfactory, No Credit). Grades will be determined based on examination scores and small group participation.

Examinations

For each course, written in-class integrated examinations will be administered. Each course exam will consist of individually graded components:

- Physiology and Pathophysiology (counts for ~1/2 of each examination).
- Systemic Pathology (counts for ~1/4 of each examination).
- System-Based Pharmacology (counts for ~1/4 of each examination).
- Epidemiology/Biostatistics questions will be incorporated into the pathophysiology portion of relevant examinations.

Students will receive a single integrated exam score for each course. Overall integrated exam scores of 90 or above will be **designated for Honors**. This honor grade cut-off may be adjusted at the discretion of the course leaders. The **passing grade** for each course will be determined by the course leaders; however, a grade of 70 will most often be considered passing. A cutoff below 70 may be designated as passing at the discretion of the course leaders.

Progression to Year 3

Students who receive a failing grade in any semester III course (including the four IMS-III courses or Doctoring I) will receive an NC and be brought to the attention of the MCAS. The MCAS will consider options for remediation based upon the recommendations of the relevant course leaders in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Students who fail two or more Year 2, Semester I courses (any of the four IMS-III courses and Doctoring III) will be brought to the attention of the MCAS and will be required to repeat IMS-III.

Similarly, students failing two or more Year 2, Semester II courses (including the three IMS-IV courses and Doctoring IV) will be brought to the attention of the MCAS and will be required to repeat IMS-IV.

Small group sessions are an important component of IMS-III and IMS-IV courses. Small group performance in Problem-Based Learning sessions will be graded S/NC. Honors will not be awarded for small groups; however, active participation in small groups is required for a passing grade. Attendance at each small-group session is mandatory. Students need to communicate with Emily Green, Assistant Director of Medical Student Affairs (Emily.Green@Brown.edu) to obtain permission to miss a small group and, if given permission, students must also alert their small group leader. See the Attendance Policy section of the Student Policy Handbook for more details.

Small group performance assessment will be based upon participation, quality of contribution to the discussions as well as leadership skills. Your small-group leader will assess your performance in the specific areas of communication, problem-solving skills, using basic science in the practice of medicine, lifelong learning, and personal growth and development.

Pre- and post-examination review sessions will be scheduled to precede each major examination in each course. They will be led by the course instructors and/or by medical students who are serving as Teaching Assistants.

Examinations will not be returned to students. However, post-exam sessions will be held after each examination. During these sessions, students will have an opportunity to review their exams. In addition, faculty will be available to review examination results and to answer questions.

Tutoring: Content tutors are available from the Office of Curriculum Affairs. Students who think that they may benefit from tutoring should contact Richard Dollase at 863-3198 or by email (Richard_Dollase@brown.edu). For learning strategy tutoring contact Phil Tetreault, Director of Academic Enhancement at Philip_Tetreaut@Brown.edu or 863-3335. Students should also feel free to consult course leaders and/or Emily Green, Assistant Director of Medical Student Affairs regarding academic advising..

Timing of Step 1: The Office of Student Affairs will provide information sessions on Step 1 preparation during Year 2. Students are provided with 6 weeks of free time after completion of Year 2 courses in mid-March to prepare for taking the USMLE Step 1 Exam. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL WILL NOT CERTIFY STUDENTS TO TAKE THE STEP 1 EXAM BEFORE THEY SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE ALL PRECLINICAL COURSEWORK including IMS I-IV and Doctoring I-IV.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Integrated Medical Sciences I-IV

Lectures: Attendance at medical school lectures is strongly encouraged but not required.

Small Group Sessions, Laboratory Sessions (Anatomy, Histo/Path, ID), and Exams:

Attendance and participation are mandatory. **Do not make travel or conference plans until you have determined whether or not an absence will be excused.** An excused absence may be granted for the following reasons:

- *Illness*- An excused absence may be granted if you are ill. For your own sake and the sake of others, you should not attend classes or take an exam if you are ill. An excused absence due to illness requires a note from Health Services or your primary care provider.
- *Presentation at a conference*- An excused absence may be granted for students presenting at a conference. Conference attendance, without presentation responsibilities, does not meet the requirements for an excused absence.
- *Leadership activity*- An excused absence may be granted if you are representing Brown in a leadership capacity at a conference or meeting (for example, as the president of our SNMA chapter, or as an elected representative from Brown on an AMSA committee). Conference attendance, without leadership responsibilities, does not meet the requirements for an excused absence.
- *Major life event*- An excused absence may be granted in light of a major life event such as a death in your immediate family, the wedding of an immediate family member, or other major event. The granting of an excused absence in these instances will be considered on a case by case basis.

Students with one absence from any required session will complete a written make-up assignment (the content of which will be determined by the course leader(s) in conjunction with Luba Dumenco [Year 1] or Paul George [Year 2]). Students with more than one absence will be in danger of failing the course. This situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The awarding of Honors in a particular course requires that all absences be excused.

How to Obtain Approval (IMS I-IV)

In order to obtain an excused absence for a small group session, or to request a make-up exam or exam extension, please contact Emily Green (Emily.Green@Brown.edu; Assistant Director of Medical Student Affairs) via email. When possible, please request approval at least 2 weeks in advance. In the case of illness, an absence will be approved retroactively. Please make sure to provide the required note from Health Services or your primary care provider to Emily within two days of your return to classes. If you miss a required session, you must contact the Course Leader regarding make-up work.

Doctoring I-IV

Small Group Sessions: Students are allowed one excused absence per semester for reasons of illness, presentation at a conference, leadership activity or a major life event.

Students missing a small group session are responsible for any material covered in their absence. If a student must miss more than one small group session s/he must work with the Course Leader and the small group faculty to make up the missed work.

Mentor Sessions: All mentor sessions are required. Any missed session must be made up, and students missing mentor sessions will not receive a grade for the course until each session has been made up. Please note that there is a make-up mentor session scheduled at the end of each semester for those students with absences.

How to Obtain Approval (Doctoring)

In order to obtain an excused absence for a small group session, please contact Mike Belue (Michael_Belue@brown.edu; Coordinator of the Doctoring Program) and your small group faculty.

In order to obtain an excused absence for a mentor session, please contact Roni Phipps (Roni_Phipps@brown.edu; Coordinator of the Community Mentor Program) and your community mentor.

Absences from Regularly Scheduled Examinations

It is expected that students will take examinations at the times scheduled. Emily Green (Years 1 and 2) or Alex Morang (Years 3 and 4) should be contacted should students desire to request to be absent from an examination. While students should, whenever possible, inform course leaders of situations requiring that they miss an examination, they should not request that a course leader excuse them from an examination. Email communication with the aforementioned individuals or with the Associate Dean for Medical Education is the appropriate mechanism for dealing with such occurrences. If deferral of an examination is approved, one of these individuals will notify the Office of Curriculum Affairs or clerkship director so that arrangements can be made for the student to take the examination. The situations in which a student may take an examination at a time other than when it is scheduled include the following:

- *Illness*. Students who are ill are required to visit the University Health Services or a private physician to obtain documentation of a medical condition that prevented them from taking an examination as scheduled. This documentation will be required in order for an examination to be rescheduled. Mental illness is treated the same as physical illness except that the student should, whenever possible, be seen at Psychological Services.
- *Extenuating Personal Circumstances*. Students who experience a personal tragedy, such as a death in their family, are required to inform Emily Green (Years 1 and 2) or Alex Morang (Years 3 and 4) of the situation and apprise the course leader. Ms. Green or Ms. Morang will excuse the absence in the same manner as for illness.
- *Scheduling Conflicts*. The final instance of an excusable absence is due to a conflict in schedule due to another activity that is related to the study of

medicine. Attendance at a national AMSA convention or a scientific conference at which the student is making a presentation would qualify as such an activity. When such a conflict exists, it is the responsibility of the student to make this conflict known to the course leader well in advance of the scheduled exam. However, as in the situations described above, only Emily Green (Years 1 and 2) or Alex Morang (Years 3 and 4) may give the student permission to take an examination at a time other than that originally scheduled. The examination may be given earlier or later than the scheduled examination, at the discretion of the course leader.

Holiday Schedules for Clerkships and Other Clinical Rotations

The University and clinical affiliates do not adhere to the same holiday schedules. This may complicate holiday scheduling for clinical rotations. The policy agreed to by the Office and Student Affairs and the Clerkship Directors regarding holiday scheduling is as follows:

- Rotations are not scheduled for the December break at Christmas-time. However, as was the case earlier this year, clerkships may start before New Years day.
- All students are off for Thanksgiving and the following Fri/Sat/Sun.
- For all Monday holidays, you should make plans as though you will have to work. If you are on a rotation at an institution that observes a Monday holiday, and you are not scheduled to be on call, then you will be off. If the institution does not observe the Monday holiday, or if you are on call, then you will be expected to work.
- You will be expected to work on July 4 if you are working on a service that has a call rotation and your team/service is on call.
- It may not be possible for you to predict your holiday work schedule far in advance. Students' clinical assignments and/or call schedules are generally not arranged until a rotations is about to begin.

MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (MSPE)

The MSPE is a composite evaluation from the medical school for medical students applying to postgraduate (residency) training programs. This evaluation is written by a member of the Postgraduate Referral Committee on behalf of the Medical School. Students are assigned to a member of the committee during the spring of their third year. Assignments are based on the students chosen career path. For example, a student applying to pediatrics residency programs would be assigned to a pediatric faculty member on the committee.

In preparation for writing the MSPE, it is expected that the committee member will meet with the student to discuss the student's background, academic record, interests, activities, and professional goals. The committee member should serve as a resource for the student, providing information on the National Resident Matching Program and on specifics of the programs the student is considering.

In addition to information gathered during a personal meeting, committee members are expected to review a student's academic record and biography in preparation for writing a draft of the MSPE. It is critical that the student's academic activities, academic record and personal qualities as described in narrative evaluations are accurately and candidly presented. The institution's goal is that the MSPE provide a supportive but realistic assessment of each student's qualifications for residency. Extensive narrative comments from the clerkship instructors are often included to allow the residency program to judge the applicant's qualifications. The completed MSPE will also include graphs and tables to provide residency programs with information on the student's performance relative to the performance of their peers. While students are encouraged to review the draft of their MSPE for accuracy, final decisions as to its content will be made by the Postgraduate Referral Committee member.

