

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE  
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT: Summative Examination/Assessment Procedures**

**I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- A. To ensure that students understand summative examination/assessment procedures.
- B. To ensure that the UH College of Medicine medical education program follows the NBME testing standards.
- C. To provide a positive and appropriate Learning Environment in all settings used for the education of medical students in compliance with LCME Standard 3.7.

**II. BACKGROUND**

Summative examinations/assessments (referred to as “exams” in this policy) can include nationally mandated or College of Medicine-generated multiple-choice exams (MCQs), short-answer questions, essay questions, Observed Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs), laboratory practicals, or a combination. The College of Medicine will adhere to NBME policy for written exam procedures and medical students must follow exam procedures to be eligible to take and to receive a grade for an exam.

**III. POLICY**

- A. Student Responsibilities Prior to Taking Exams
  - 1. Specific details including dates and times for exams can be found within the respective course syllabi. Prior to each exam, a course coordinator or other educational support staff will email the class to inform students of the testing room location, time, number of questions, and amount of time for the exam. Students with academic accommodations will be issued separate instructions.
  - 2. Student laptops must be certified as meeting the minimum specifications distributed by the Office of Student Affairs prior to the first exam.
  - 3. Students are required to check-in prior to exams.
    - i. For written exams: Check-in tables will be located outside the testing room and will be open 30 minutes prior to the scheduled exam start time. Students MUST be in line 15 minutes prior to the exam start time. Any student who arrives after the doors to the testing room have been closed may or may not be permitted to take the exam at that time (see Tardiness for Summative Examination/Assessment below).
    - ii. For OSCEs and exams in CCASEL: Students MUST be present AND accounted for in the designated pre-briefing room prior to exam start time. Any student who arrives after the pre-briefing has begun may or may not be permitted to take the exam at that time (see Tardiness for Summative Examination/Assessment below)
  - 4. At check-in for exams, students are required to present their Cougar Card photo I.D. and sign in on the roster.
  - 5. Students are required to bring their laptop computers and AC adaptors to both written exams and exams in CCASEL. Staff will check to ensure that only authorized items are brought into the testing room/hallway, which include Laptop and AC Power Adaptor, Mouse, Mouse Pad, and/or ear plugs (headphones are NOT allowed).
  - 6. Students are not allowed to have the following in the testing room/hallway: backpacks, notes (unless otherwise specified in the case of OSCEs), coats of any type, hats, hooded

clothing, food or beverage (including water), or portable electronic devices, including cell phones and smart watches. Students need to arrange to leave these items in lockers or vehicles during exams.

B. Student Responsibilities During Written Exams

1. All written exams will be administered online using computer-based testing software.
2. During the exam, students will not be allowed to ask questions regarding the exam content. Any concerns regarding the clarity of question(s) or comments in general should be put in the comment windows, if available. The intent of this comment window is to leave constructive feedback about questions which may be ambiguously worded or have more than one best answer. These comments will be reviewed by faculty and considered in exam question analysis.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to notify a proctor *immediately* if they experience any technological difficulties that interfere with their ability to complete the exam.
4. If students are given a blank sheet of paper or any other additional handouts for use during exams (e.g., NBME laboratory values), students must put their name, signature, and the time at which the exam was submitted, and are required to turn in all sheets of paper to the exam proctor before leaving the testing room. Upon completion of the exam, students should quietly assemble their belongings and quietly vacate the testing area (including hallways outside of the testing rooms), so as to respect fellow students who may still be taking the exam.

C. Student Responsibilities During OSCEs and Exams in CCASEL

1. All OSCEs and exams in CCASEL will be video and audio recorded
2. During the pre-briefing or exam period, students will not be allowed to ask questions regarding the exam content. Any concerns regarding the clarity of instructions either in pre-brief, on the door sign, or during the documentation period should be addressed to the course coordinator or CCASEL staff in an appropriate and non-disruptive manner.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the course coordinator or CCASEL staff *immediately* if they experience any technological difficulties that interfere with their ability to complete examination requirements, such as documentation; if the student fails to do so, they forfeit any right to have the outcome of their exam adjusted.
4. If students are given a blank sheet of paper or any other additional handouts for use during exams, students are required to turn in ALL sheets of paper to the exam proctor before leaving the testing room.
5. Upon completion of the exam, students should WAIT until they are dismissed by the course coordinator or CCASEL staff and then quietly leave CCASEL so as to respect fellow students who may still be taking the exam.

D. Time to Results for Exams

1. For written exams: After all students have taken the exam and faculty have completed exam question analysis, exam results will be released in eMedley (usually within three to five working days following an exam but may take longer under extenuating circumstances).
2. For OSCEs and exams in CCASEL: After all students have taken the exam and both standardized patient quality assurance processes and faculty grading of documentation have been completed, exam results will be released in eMedley (usually within five working days following an exam, but may take longer under extenuating circumstances)

E. Absence for Exams (also see Attendance Policy)

1. Attendance at all scheduled exams is MANDATORY. The Office of Medical Education must approve an absence for a student in order for that student to be able to make-up a missed exam.
  2. Any student absence as a result of illness or emergency must have some means of documentation. Students are required to (a) complete an Absence Report Form once an absence is known and (b) contact the appropriate faculty and educational support staff and the Office of Medical Education at the earliest convenience.
  3. Any student absence for any other reason must be approved by the Office of Medical Education at least 2 weeks BEFORE the scheduled exam. Shorter notice must be brought about by a very serious circumstance.
  4. All make-up exams, if approved by the Office of Medical Education, will be set up by the Course/Clerkship Director and Office of Medical Education, and must be taken no later than one week after the student returns to class. The make-up exam format will be determined by the Course/Clerkship Director on a case-by-case basis.
- F. Tardiness for Written Exams
1. If a student arrives after the doors to the testing room have been closed and before any student has completed the exam, the late-arriving student will be allowed to take the exam immediately in the time period remaining for that exam.
    - i. The student must submit an Absence Report Form immediately after the completing the exam. The Office of Medical Education will approve or not approve the reasons for tardiness. If not approved, this violation will be noted as a breach of professionalism.
  2. If a student arrives after the doors to the testing room have been closed and the first person has completed the exam, the student will not be permitted to take the exam and is deemed absent from the exam. The student must immediately submit an Absence Report Form.
    - i. If the student's absence is approved by the Office of Medical Education, a make-up exam will be scheduled ASAP by the Course/Clerkship Director and Office of Medical Education.
    - ii. If the student's absence is not approved by the Office of Medical Education, this will be noted as a breach of professionalism and the student may be awarded a grade of zero on the exam.
- G. Tardiness for OSCEs and Exams in CCASEL
1. If a student arrives after the pre-brief has begun but before any student has completed the exam, the late-arriving student may be allowed to take the exam without receiving all pre-brief information (which may or may not impact their preparation of or performance in the exam), at the discretion of the course coordinator and CCASEL staff.
    - i. The student must submit an Absence Report Form immediately after the completing the exam. The Office of Medical Education will approve or not approve the reasons for tardiness. If not approved, this violation will be noted as a breach of professionalism.
  2. If a student arrives after the scheduled rotation has begun, the student will not be permitted to take the exam and is deemed absent from the exam. The student must immediately submit an Absence Report Form.
    - i. If the student's absence is approved by the Office of Medical Education, a make-up exam will be scheduled ASAP by the Course/Clerkship Director and CCASEL.
    - ii. If the student's absence is not approved by the Office of Medical Education, this will be noted as a breach of professionalism and the student

may be awarded a grade of zero on the exam, at the discretion of the Course/Clerkship Director.

#### IV. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

- A. Faculty and staff proctors will assure consistent adherence to these policies. Further details about NBME rules can be found at: <http://www.nbme.org/Schools/Subject-Exams/security.html>

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