UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Together in teaching, innovation and compassion

Pillar 2 NBME Subject Examination Failure and Retesting

LCME Standard:
Originating Office: Office of Medical Education
Responsible Executive: Associate Dean Medical Education
Date Issued: June 2014
Date Last Reviewed: March 2022
Date Last Revised: November 2025

Policy Contents

I. Reason for this Policy 1

II. Statement of Policy 1

III. Definitions 1

IV. Procedures 2

V. Related Documents, Forms and Tools 2

I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

To set policy regarding NBME subject examination failures and retesting. The following policy applies to students who do not achieve a passing score on the seven clinical subject exams in either of two attempts during Pillar 2.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

- Students must achieve passing grades in all NBME subject exams for the seven primary disciplines prior to beginning Pillar 3. The passing grade for each discipline (15th percentile nationally) is defined in the Pillar 2 Student Handbook.
- Students who do not achieve a passing score on at least one of the two NBME subject exam attempts in a clerkship will not pass that clerkship.

- Students who do not achieve a passing score on at least one of the two NBME subject exam attempts in a clerkship must retake the exam(s) prior to the second CCSE exam at the end of Pillar 2. They may not begin Pillar 3 clinical rotations until they receive a passing score on all seven subject exams.
- Students who pass on the third attempt on an NBME subject exam complete the requirements to pass that respective clerkship.
    - The score from the third NBME subject exam attempt will be used in the grade calculation for that clerkship.
    - A student who requires a third attempt to pass their subject exam in any clerkship will not be able to achieve a grade higher than a B in that clerkship.
- Students who fail a subject exam for a third time will be assigned a grade of D in that clerkship and referred to the Student Progress and Conduct Committee (SPCC) for determination of required remediation or other action up to and including dismissal.
    - If SPCC determines the student should be given a fourth attempt to take the NBME subject exam, the student will be enrolled in a new remediation clerkship.
- The student will be enrolled in the remediation course in the term immediately following the failed clerkship, and the student will have to pay for the remediation.
- The remediation plan will be determined by SPCC. If the student is allowed a fourth attempt at the NBME subject exam and passes the exam, the fourth attempt score will be for clerkship remediation course grade, assuming all other SPCC-required remediation work has been satisfactorily completed.
    - The transcript of any student who completes a remediation clerkship will have both the original clerkship with a grade of D and a notation of "R" for remediation displayed along with the remediation clerkship course and earned grade.
    - The remediation clerkship grade will be utilized in the calculation of the grade point average (GPA.)

**Students may appeal the grade or action based on the medical school policy on student appeal

III. DEFINITIONS

NBME – National Board of Medical Examiners

IV. PROCEDURES

Procedures imbedded in Policy, above

V. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

This policy is also posted in the Pillar 2 Handbook.