

Policy on SHELF Make-Up Exams

I. PURPOSE

Students on most clinical clerkships are assessed with an NBME Subject Exam, commonly referred to as a SHELF exams. These exams are difficult to schedule, lengthy, and require special proctoring. If a student is unable to take such an exam with their cohort, or if they require a retest, they will have to arrange testing at some point in the future, usually when they are advancing through the curriculum. Delays in retesting harm students by making it harder for them to both study older content and focus on new curriculum; it also delays grade completion and taxes clerkship staffing. Having a clear process and approach for scheduling such retests will help ensure consistency and equity for students, staff, and rotations in general.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students in the clinical phase of curriculum at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) who need to take a SHELF exam.

III. POLICY

If a medical student needs to retake a SHELF exam to successfully complete a clerkship, that make-up exam must be scheduled in a timely fashion, as appropriate to the student's situation. Make-up testing dates will occur throughout the academic year, at the end of the first week of every new scheduling period. If a student is able to test at that time, they should—and they will be excused from whatever rotation they are taking at that time to complete the assessment.

Students may be unable to test at that time, due to ongoing illness, lack of cognitive readiness to retest, travel/absence, or other exceptional factors. The decision to delay will be made by the student and the clerkship director together, with consultations as necessary from the leadership of the Offices of Student Affairs and Medical Education, as well as other staff/faculty. If a delay is approved, students must then schedule the make-up exam in the following two rotation periods (generally by nine weeks after the original testing date).

If a delay is not approved by the clerkship director, and if a student feels they need more time, they can appeal to the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, who will make a determination.

Students who do not test when expected will receive an Unsatisfactory for the rotation and will be discussed at Student Promotions Committee.

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

- Office of Medical Education

V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absence and Attendance.

Academic Remediation.

Timeliness of Evaluations in Courses, Clerkships.

VI. REFERENCES

- N/a

VII. APPROVALS

Curriculum Committee, approved February 7, 2022.

Educational Policy Council, approved February 15, 2022.

Executive Committee, approved June 24, 2022.

Dean, School of Medicine, approved August 5, 2022.

VII. PROCEDURES

This policy shall be shared with the student by the clerkship director and/or OMED staff at the end of the clerkship if an exam extension/retake is approved.

Standard SHELF make-up time for all clerkships will be Thursday morning the week after a test administration. Students from any clerkship who need to retest on that day will gather in a location, proctored by clerkship and OMED staff together. Clerkship coordinators will provide primary proctoring; OMED staff will liaison with NBME and provide technology support. Students with accommodations will be supported during the make-ups.

Students would have the option to test either with the regular clerkship cohort in that discipline, or during the joint make-up day the following week.

This policy does not address OSCE make-ups.