

TITLE

**Policy on the Timing of Academic Procedure Changes**

I. PURPOSE

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine should insure the comparability of education/assessment across academic years. Because some students may take curricular components during different academic years, it is unrealistic and unfair to retroactively adjust grades to insure equity within a graduation year. Students who take clerkships at the same time should be evaluated under the same procedure.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Medical students

III. POLICY

Academic procedures, particularly assessment guidelines, will be set at the beginning of the academic year. Students who take a unit of curriculum (e.g., a clerkship) at any point during that year will all be subject to the same procedures. This will ensure that students, and the faculty assessing them, are all equitably using the same standards and approaches.

If a course or clerkship needs to make a change in academic procedures during an academic year, efforts will be made to ensure equity across the year—e.g., adjusting grades of learners who experienced the course/clerkship earlier in the year. This may mean that some learners will have assessments adjusted upwards, while others may have assessments adjusted downwards, depending on their situation.

Students who took that curricular component in previous academic years will not have their assessment adjusted. For instance, if a clerkship changes their grading system at the beginning of an academic year, then all students who take the clerkship that year will be assessed using the new system—even if it means that some students in the same graduation year may experience different academic procedures depending on when they took that clerkship (e.g., in third vs. fourth year).

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

- Office of Student Affairs
- Office of Medical Education

## V. RELATED POLICIES

none

## VI. REFERENCES

LCME Element 8.7: Comparability of Education/Assessment. A medical school ensures that the medical curriculum includes comparable educational experiences and equivalent methods of assessment across all locations within a given course and clerkship to ensure that all medical students achieve the same medical education program objectives.

## VII. APPROVALS

Dean, School of Medicine, originally approved December 16, 2019.

### Revisions:

Curriculum Committee, approved 3/6/23.

Education Policy Council, approved 3/21/23.

Executive Committee, approved XXXXX.

Dean, School of Medicine, approved XXXXX.

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## PROCEDURES

In the MSPE and/or the narrative summaries of performance, efforts will be made to insure clarity on different course structures and assessment procedures.

Academic procedure changes do not include minor alterations in didactics, clinical sites, or administrative expectations. Major changes in assessment or other requirements, that would affect the comparability of the educational experience among cohorts of learners, should follow the above policy.

Courses/clerkships are expected to provide academic expectations at least one month in advance of student start dates, with procedures outlined clearly in syllabus material and no changes made during the operation of the course/clerkship. Exceptions may be required due to emergencies or unusual circumstances but must be done with the consent of the Dean responsible for that phase of curriculum, ideally with the support and consent of affected students.