

## **Office of Academic Excellence**

### **Guideline for Application Phase Shelf Exam Failures and Delays**

**Purpose:** To provide clarity and consistency regarding best practices for remediation of failed shelf exams and policies for delaying shelf exams.

#### **Guideline for Shelf Exam Failures**

1. **Notification:** Application Phase course directors or coordinators should inform students, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA), and Office of Academic Excellence (OAE) when a student fails a shelf exam, within three business days of the exam.
2. **Coordination:** The Director of Academic Assistance will coordinate assistance from the OAE and can serve as a liaison between the student, course director and coordinator, student affairs, and the NBME liaison to help select a date for the student to take the exam, and to reschedule it.
3. **Timing of Retake:** Students should retake failed shelf exams after the end of Application Phase. In rare cases, on an individualized basis, considerations may be made for the student to take the exam earlier if the student has sufficient time available to study in consultation with the appropriate course directors, Clinical Academic Resource Director (CARD), advisor, and the OAE representative, and with permission from the Student Progress Committee. However, it should not be taken less than 1 month after the initial failure.
4. **CARD Support:** All students who fail a shelf exam are required to meet with the CARD for their campus, ideally within two weeks of the initial failure, to make an individual study plan. The student may not reschedule the shelf until they have met with the CARD.
5. **Tutoring:** All students who fail a shelf exam will have the option and strong recommendation to work with a student tutor.
6. **Grading:** For single, first-time shelf failures, students will have a grade of Incomplete in the course until they remediate the shelf exam at which point a final grade will be assigned. For full information on how failures relate to final grades, please see the [Application Phase Assessment Policy](#).
7. **Multiple Failures or Delays:** If the student fails more than one shelf exam, fails the same exam twice, has delayed more than one shelf exam for non-medical reasons, or has failed one exam and delayed another exam, the Student Progress Committee (SPC) will review the student's case and make decisions regarding continuing to progress in the curriculum. All above considerations will also apply.
8. **Progress in Individualization Phase:** For students who have not begun Individualization Phase, all shelf exams must be successfully passed before entering Individualization Phase. For students who have already begun Individualization Phase, students must successfully pass all shelf exams prior to advancing further in Individualization Phase.
9. **Longitudinal Campuses:** For Asheville and Charlotte campuses, students may be eligible to re-take the shelf exam during application phase based on individualized recommendations reviewed by the above committee representatives and in consultation with their campus CARD.

## Guideline for Shelf Exam Delay Process

The following describe criteria for situations in which a student may be considered for a delay of the date on which they take a shelf exam for the first time. These criteria and the process were formulated based on prior history of national passing scores for shelf exams and NBME data. Delays for medical or personal reasons or life events may be separately approved by the Dean for Student Affairs.

The process for shelf delay recommendations will include the following:

1. Criteria: The student has met with a CARD at least 3 weeks prior to the shelf exam date and the student scores below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on an NBME practice shelf exam at least 1 week before the actual shelf exam date
2. Decision-Making: The CARD and OAE will make recommendations for delaying a shelf. The student will still have the option to choose to take the shelf exam on time.
3. Communication: An OAE member will communicate the delay recommendation to the course directors.
4. Timing of Shelf Exams: Delayed shelf exams will be taken at the end of application phase. If a student delays two shelf exams or delays one and fails one, they will be reviewed by the SPC.
5. Longitudinal Campuses: For Asheville and Charlotte campuses, students may be eligible to take the delayed shelf exam during application phase based on individualized recommendations reviewed by the above committee representatives and in consultation with their campus CARD.
6. MSPE: The fact that the student took extra time to study for the exam and did not take it at the usual time will be noted on the student's MSPE. The phrase used will be "This student was approved for extended shelf exam study period preparatory to taking the shelf exam."