

The SAASC convened on Friday, April 13, 2018 to consider a proposal from the College of Medicine to change the grading system for the College of Medicine and Senate Rules 5.1.2.3, 5.3.3.3.A and 5.3.3.3.8.

Attendance: Dan Morey, David Hulse, Dan Howe, Kevin Donohue, Brad Kerns, Rebecca Kellum, Herman Farrell (Chair), Annie Davis Weber (ex-officio).

Procedure:

Brad Kerns acted as facilitators of the proposal. And we were joined by Charles Griffith and Helen Garces of the College of Medicine.

Discussion:

Brad Kerns lead the discussion by noting that this proposal involves a change from numerical grading to a pass/fail system. This is in keeping with nationwide practice at most medical school. The change also will aid in the reduction of stress to medical students. Kerns noted that the proposal was detailed and provided evidence of the number of medical schools in the nation using pass-fail (the vast majority) and those still using the numerical system. Kerns noted that the language provided for the change in the Senate Rules accurately reflected the rubric of the proposed pass fail system. Charles Griffith noted that the failure to switch over to a pass fail grading system was adversely affecting recruiting, noting that U of L, Vanderbilt and a variety of other competitive medical schools in the region had already switched over. Members of the committee wondered how students would be evaluated for residencies and other continuing education and employment opportunities. It was noted by Griffith and Garces that licensure exams, reference letters, interviews would still be used as measures of a student's relative success at medical school. It was also noted that students favor the transition to a pass fail grading system.

Vote:

A motion was made and seconded that the SAASC approve the proposal from the College of Medicine to change the grading system for the College of Medicine and Senate Rules 5.1.2.3, 5.3.3.3.A and 5.3.3.3.8.

The committee voted 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

University of Kentucky College of Medicine
2017 Program Change RE: Grading System

Summary

In lieu of a program change form (which is not available for professional programs or required by University Senate rules), this cover letter serves as an overview and summary of proposed changes. In an effort to better prepare students for our M.D. program, the College of Medicine (COM) proposes to revise the M.D. program grading system. As such, the COM proposes changes to the following Senate Rules:

- Senate Rule 5.1.2.3, related to the grading system for the College of Medicine
- Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.A, related to the assessment of student learning for the College of Medicine
- Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.B, related to the promotion and retention criteria for the College of Medicine

Rationale

Nationally, medical education is under a period of substantial changes. Colleges of Medicine are gravitating toward a concept of competency for all medical students. In order to progress in training, students must be declared competent in key areas identified by the College of Medicine. This competency-based system is at odds with course/clerkship grades, because those key areas of competency often exist beyond what can be measured in an individual course. Plus, some courses or clerkships may assess several key areas of competency that cannot be combined into a simple numeric average. For example, if a student has achieved minimum standards in competencies #1, #2 and #3, but has not achieved minimum standards in #4, it would make little sense to average those four together, because the student must achieve minimum standards in all four.

As such, most medical schools are moving toward a pass-fail system with a separate report of student competency that is sent to residency training programs. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), 63% of medical schools are pass-fail in the preclinical years (M1 and M2), 10% for required clinical clerkships during the 3rd year (M3) and 49% for elective rotations (Figures 1, 2 and 3). This data is according to the 2015-2016 academic years, and trends suggest that this will be far greater in the 2018-2019 academic year, but more recent data is currently unavailable.

Another contemporary issue in medical student education is the severe work-related stress and burnout. Studies (Ishak et al., 2014; Dyrbye & Shanafelt, 2016) continue to demonstrate that approximately 50% of medical students suffer from burnout, which limits their ability to deliver high-value patient-centered care in the future. All medical schools are challenged with creating an educational system that maintains or improves the wellbeing of students throughout training (Ishak et al., 2014; Dyrbye & Shanafelt, 2016). Switching to a pass-fail grading system is one of the evidence-based organizational changes that has been shown to reduce burnout. In addition, medical schools that have implemented this change have seen similar course performance as well as performance on national standardized exams (Dyrbye & Shanafelt, 2016).

In summary, the College of Medicine is requesting to revise the M.D. program grading system to be in line with the national expectations of competency-based performance standards and to address the high rates of stress and burnout in our medical students. Currently, elective courses in the M1 and M2 academic years are pass-fail whereas numeric grading is used in all other courses in the College of Medicine. We propose a tiered system of implementation, beginning with pass-fail grading for all elective courses, followed by required courses for the incoming class in fall 2018 (Table).

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Class of 2019	M4 electives pass-fail			
Class of 2020	M3 course grading unchanged	M4 electives pass-fail		
Class of 2021	M2 course grading unchanged	M3 course grading unchanged	M4 electives pass-fail	
Class of 2022	All M1 courses graded pass-fail	All M2 courses graded pass-fail	All M3 courses graded pass-fail	All M4 courses graded pass-fail

Students enrolled in the M.D. program in the College of Medicine are the only students enrolled in any of the affected courses.

Current Senate Rule 5.1.2.3

All professional program (MD degree) courses in the College of Medicine will determine a minimum level of competency. Courses taken for grade will reflect student performance with a numeric value of three significant digits between 0.700 and 1.00 (70.0%-100%) for those students achieving minimum competency. The course performance will be valued at the achieved numeric performance for each credit hour. Students failing to achieve minimum competency will receive one of the grades below. For courses taken on a pass/fail basis, the achievement of minimum competency will be the only determination.

Class rank will be determined by multiplying the numeric value assigned for each course by the total number of credit hours for that course and summing all courses taken for grade. Pass/Fail courses will not contribute to determination of class rank.

E Represents failure to achieve minimum competency and unacceptable performance in a numerically graded or pass/fail course. It is valued at zero (0) quality points for each credit hour.

P Represents achievement of minimum competency and a passing grade in a course taken on a pass/fail basis. It is not used in quality point calculations.

W Denotes withdrawal from the college or from an elective course. W must be approved or recommended by the Student Progress and Promotion Committee. Withdrawal from a required course is not permitted, except when a student withdraws from the college. A student may withdraw from an elective and the W will remain on the record.

U Represents unsatisfactory performance in a specific area of course requirements. It is conferred instead of an E grade when evidence exists that the student might earn a passing grade (0.700 or above) upon completion of make-up work. In the interim the U will be valued between 0.600 and 0.699 depending on student performance for each credit hour. The temporary grade must be replaced with a permanent grade before the student can be promoted to the next year of the curriculum. The quality point calculation will then utilize the numeric grade conferred after the make-up. Failure to satisfactorily make up the work will result in the assignment of an E grade as described above. [US: 3/18/96; US: 5/9/2011]

I Represents incomplete work at the time grades are submitted for courses. It is conferred only when there is a reasonable possibility that a grade of C or better will be earned upon completion of the work. All I grades in required courses must be replaced by a passing grade before a student can be promoted to a subsequent year. If a student later withdraws from the College, an outstanding 'I' grade can revert to a W grade at the discretion of the Student Progress and Promotion Committee.

Proposed Senate Rule 5.1.2.3 (tracked changes version)

All professional program (MD degree) courses in the College of Medicine will determine a [minimum](#) level of competency. [Courses taken for grade will reflect student performance with a numeric value of](#)

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Proposed Senate Rule 5.1.2.3 (clean version)

All professional program (MD degree) courses in the College of Medicine will determine a minimum level of competency. Students will receive one of the grades below.

E Represents failure to achieve competency and unacceptable performance in a pass/fail course.

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Current Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.A

The College of Medicine is charged with the education and training of competent physicians. Competence must be assured not only in the students' fund of knowledge and technical expertise, but also in their standards of personal and professional conduct. Student progress shall be carefully monitored to certify that students have acquired appropriate knowledge, skills, behavioral characteristics, and ethical principles. To this end, students are responsible for conforming to all rules and regulations specified by the *Health Care Colleges Code of Student Professional Conduct*, the "Technical Standards" detailed in the *College of Medicine Bulletin*, and the academic standards established in these *University Senate Rules*.

The Student Progress and Promotion Committee (SPPC) is charged with the monitoring of student progress through the curriculum. The SPPC regularly reviews each student's performance and makes recommendations to the Dean on such actions as graduation, promotion, remediation, dismissal and leaves of absence. Final authority on all matters of student progress and promotion is vested in the Dean of the College of Medicine except as otherwise provided below.

Assessment Criteria

- 1.** Student work is assessed by the faculty through the assignment of grades upon completion of all required courses and clerkships. Basic science grades are based upon such measures as written and oral examinations, laboratory practicals, and case write-ups. In the clinical years, grades are accompanied by detailed descriptive comments reflecting the instructors' impressions of each student's knowledge, attitudes, and technical skills.
- 2.** Departmental faculty determine the level of student competence in the course or clerkship for which they are responsible. Within four weeks of the termination of each course, every department shall submit to the Office of Medical Education a grade, and where possible, written comments on each student's performance. The Office of Medical Education will promptly provide every student a copy of this grade sheet.
- 3.** Because of advanced academic pursuit in a biomedical discipline, some students may wish to bypass a particular first or second year course. With permission of the Instructor of Record and the SPPC, a student may sit for an "opt-out" examination. The course director will determine the appropriate level of performance for bypass privileges.
- 4.** Passing scores are required on both the Step 1 written examination (taken at the end of Year 2) and Step 2 written examination and clinical skills examination. Students have from the end of their third year through December 31 of their fourth year to sit for both parts of the Step 2 examination. Students have three attempts to pass each part of the examination before dismissal, with appeals. Students are not required to take Step 2 examinations in any particular order. [US: 4/12/2004]

5. Students will be required to pass a Clinical Performance Examination (CPX) prior to graduation. Students who do not initially pass the examination will be required to participate in remediation activities and pass a retest. [US: 3/18/96]

Proposed Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.A (tracked changes version)

The College of Medicine is charged with the education and training of competent physicians. Competence must be assured not only in the students' fund of knowledge and technical expertise, but also in their standards of personal and professional conduct. Student progress shall be carefully monitored to certify that students have acquired appropriate knowledge, skills, ~~behavioral characteristics, and attitudes, and ethical principles~~ethical principles. To this end, students are responsible for conforming to all rules and regulations specified by the *Health Care Colleges Code of Student Professional Conduct*, the "Technical Standards" detailed in the *College of Medicine Bulletin*, and the academic standards established in these *University Senate Rules*.

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1. Student work is assessed by the faculty through the assignment of grades upon completion of all required courses and clerkships and the assignment of ratings on specific measures of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and ethical principles. ~~Basic science grades are based upon such measures as written and oral examinations, laboratory practicals, and case write-ups. In the clinical years, grades are accompanied by detailed descriptive comments reflecting the instructors' impressions of each student's knowledge, attitudes, and technical skills.~~
2. Faculty determine the level of student competence in the course or clerkship for which they are responsible. Within four weeks of the termination of each course, every department shall submit to the Office of Medical Education a grade, and where possible, written comments on each student's performance. The Office of Medical Education will promptly provide every student a copy of this grade ~~sheet~~.
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~~4.3.~~ Passing scores are required on ~~both~~ the [United States Medical Licensure Exam \(USMLE\) Step 1 written examination \(taken at the end of Year 2\)](#), [USMLE Step 2 CK examination](#) and [USMLE Step 2 written examination and clinical skillsCS examination](#). ~~Students have from the end of their third year through December 31 of their fourth year to sit for both parts of the Step 2 examination.~~ Students have three attempts to pass each part of the examination before dismissal, with appeals. Students are not required to take Step 2 examinations in any particular order. [US: 4/12/2004]

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Proposed Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.A (clean version)

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Current Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.B

The education of a physician is a complex process, longitudinal in character, with many incremental steps. To assure that students graduating from the College of Medicine have the necessary knowledge, skills, demeanor, and ethical principles essential to professional competence, the following procedures will be used to evaluate and promote students:

1. General. At regular intervals the SPPC will review the academic record of each student and make specific recommendations addressing promotion, remediation, or dismissal. Beyond these recommendations, potential actions include but are not limited to the adjustment of academic load, repetition of curriculum segments, and participation in counseling sessions.
2. Promotion to sequential semesters or years in the curriculum is contingent upon attaining the expected level of performance as prescribed by the Faculty of the College of Medicine. Students attaining a numeric average of 93.0% or higher in their current academic year will be promoted to the subsequent year With High Distinction. Students attaining a numeric average of 90.0% to 92.9% in their current academic year will be promoted to the subsequent year With Distinction. These accomplishments will be noted in their academic records and on their transcripts.

Commencement honors of High Distinction and Distinction will be awarded at graduation for students who attain the appropriate numeric average achievement, i.e., 93% for High Distinction, 90.0% to 92.9% for Distinction. [US: 3/18/96]

3. A non-promotional category will identify students who are not being promoted due to unfulfilled requirements. These students may be involved in remediation activities, be working to complete an "I" grade, or be retained for not passing the CPX. Students in the non-promotional category will be promoted upon satisfactory correction of the deficiency or dismissed.
4. A non-routine promotion category will identify students receiving a numeric average of 76.0% to 79.9% in their current academic year. It will indicate marginal performance and warrants close monitoring. Marginal performance may indicate the need for remediation or repetition of curriculum segments. Continued marginal performance may be justification for dismissal.
5. A student receiving a numeric grade below 70.0% has performed at an unacceptable level. To redress the grade, the SPPC will review both the student's academic record and the recommendations of the Instructor of Record. The SPPC will determine a plan of action which may include remediation, repetition of all or a portion of the course, clerkship, or curriculum year, or dismissal from the College.
6. The Student Progress and Promotion Committee determines how many repeat attempts are allowed. Unlimited opportunity to repeat courses, clerkships or curriculum sequences is neither feasible nor desirable.

7. A probation category identifies those students who attain a numeric average of 70.0% to 75.9% for any academic year. Students promoted while on probation must improve their academic performance in the subsequent academic year or risk dismissal.

8. Dismissal from the College of Medicine will result when students have an annually calculated numeric average of 69.9% or below; receive two or more numeric course grades below 60.0%; receive three or more numeric course grades between 60.0%-69.9% (inclusive); receive a numeric course grade below 70.0% while on academic probation; or fail any of the comprehensive standardized examinations on three attempts. At the discretion of the SPPC and the Dean, students may be dismissed if they receive two numeric course grades below 70.0%.

Proposed Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.B (tracked changes version)

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~~3.~~

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~~repetition of curriculum segments. Continued marginal performance may be justification for dismissal.~~

~~7.2.~~ A student ~~failing to achieve competency in any course or clerkship receiving a numeric grade below 70.0%~~ has performed at an unacceptable level. To redress the grade, the SPPC will review both the student's academic record and the recommendations of the Instructor of Record. The SPPC will determine a plan of action which may include remediation, repetition of all or a portion of the course, clerkship, or curriculum year, or dismissal from the College.

~~8.3.~~ The Student Progress and Promotion Committee determines how many repeat attempts are allowed. Unlimited opportunity to repeat courses, clerkships or curriculum sequences is neither feasible nor desirable.

~~4. Students who fail a course or fail to meet the competency standards for any academic year will be placed on probation and remediation will be required. A probation category identifies those students who attain a numeric average of 70.0% to 75.9% for any academic year. Students promoted while on probation must improve their academic performance in the subsequent academic year or risk dismissal.~~

- ~~i. Students who satisfactorily complete the remediation requirements for probation will be removed from probation.~~
- ~~ii. Students who are on probation and fail to meet the remediation requirements will be dismissed from the College of Medicine.~~
- ~~iii. Students who are on academic probation may not be allowed to participate in University extracurricular activities, or to serve as officers or committee members in campus organizations.~~

~~9.~~ Dismissal from the College of Medicine will result when students ~~have an annually calculated numeric average of 69.9% or below; receive two or more numeric course grades below 60.0%; receive three or more numeric "E" course grades between 60.0%–69.9% (inclusive); receive an numeric "E" course grade below 70.0% while on academic probation; or fail any part of the United States Medical Licensing Examination comprehensive standardized examinations on three attempts. At the discretion of the SPPC and the Dean, students may be dismissed if they receive two numeric course grades below 70.0%.~~

Proposed Senate Rule 5.3.3.3.B (clean version)

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2. Promotion to sequential semesters or years in the curriculum is contingent upon attaining the expected level of performance as prescribed by the Faculty of the College of Medicine.

3. A student failing to achieve competency in any course or clerkship has performed at an unacceptable level. To redress the grade, the SPPC will review both the student's academic record and the recommendations of the Instructor of Record. The SPPC will determine a plan of action which may include remediation, repetition of all or a portion of the course, clerkship, or curriculum year, or dismissal from the College.

4. The Student Progress and Promotion Committee determines how many repeat attempts are allowed. Unlimited opportunity to repeat courses, clerkships or curriculum sequences is neither feasible nor desirable.

5. Students who fail a course or fail to meet the competency standards for any academic year will be placed on probation and remediation will be required.

- i. Students who satisfactorily complete the remediation requirements for probation will be removed from probation.
- ii. Students who are on probation and fail to meet the remediation requirements will be dismissed from the College of Medicine.
- iii. Students who are on academic probation may not be allowed to participate in University extracurricular activities, or to serve as officers or committee members in campus organizations.

6. Dismissal from the College of Medicine will result when students receive three or more "E" course grades; receive an "E" course grade while on academic probation; or fail any part of the United States Medical Licensing Examinations on three attempts.

Brothers, Sheila

From: Houlihan, Meredith C
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 7:57 AM
To: McCormick, Katherine; Brothers, Sheila
Cc: Mattacola, Carl; Griffith, Charles H; Feddock, Christopher; Garces, Helen; Beatty, Dorcas
Subject: HCCC Transmittal: Program Change - College of Medicine Grading System Change
Attachments: 2017 Grading System Change with amendments.docx; 2017 Grading System Change - Levels of Approval signed.pdf

January 24, 2018

TRANSMITTAL

TO: Katherine McCormick, Chair; Sheila Brothers, Coordinator
Senate Council

FROM: Carl Mattacola, Chair; Meredith Houlihan, Coordinator
Health Care Colleges Council

The Health Care Colleges Council approved the following proposal and is now forwarding it to the Senate Council for review:

College of Medicine

- Program Change: College of Medicine Grading System Change

Meredith Houlihan
Executive Assistant

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University of Kentucky College of Medicine
2017 Program Change RE: Grading System

Timeline and Levels of Approval

Please see timeline below and levels of approval regarding the grading system change proposal for medical students at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine (UKCOM).

- **September 18, 2017** – Proposal presented to the UKCOM Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee voted in favor, 13-0-1, to move forward with the proposal to change the COM grading system for medical students to pass/fail. Proposal moves forward to UKCOM Faculty Council.

UKCOM Curriculum Committee Chair: Christopher Feddock, M.D.

- **October 17, 2017** – Proposal presented to UKCOM Faculty Council. Faculty Council voted unanimously, 8-0, to endorse the proposal to change the COM grading system for medical students to pass/fail. Proposal moves forward to HCCC.

UKCOM Faculty Council Chair: Sidney W. Whiteheart, Ph.D.

- **November 3, 2017** – Proposal submitted by Dorcas Beatty on behalf of UKCOM to HCCC for presentation at the November 21st meeting.

Submitted by,



Charles "Chipper" Henry Griffith, III, MD, MSPH
Vice Dean for Education
Emery Wilson, MD Dean's Professorship
Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
University of Kentucky College of Medicine

Appendix: National Changes in Medical Education

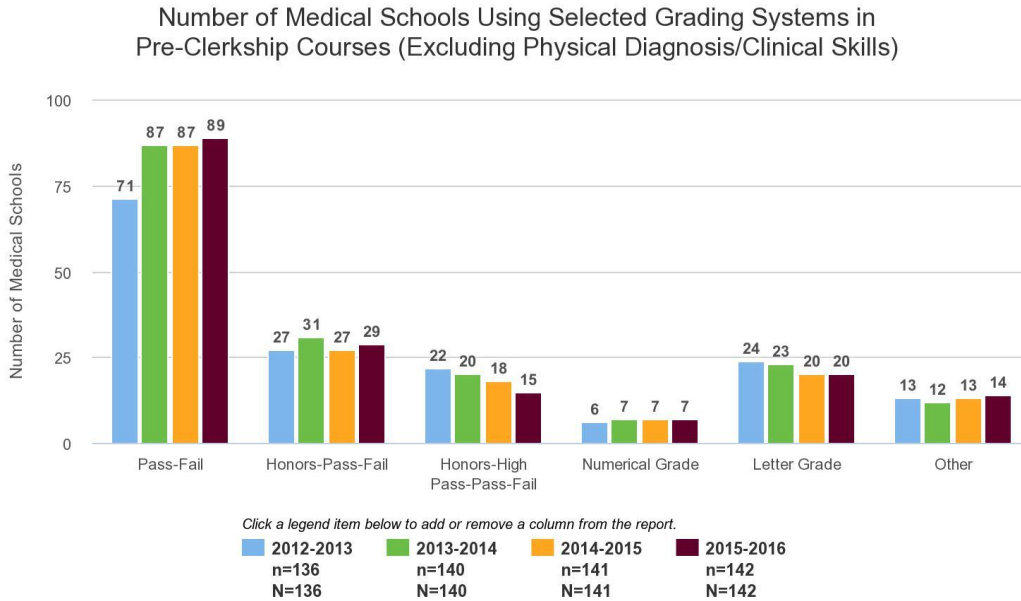


Figure 1: Number of Medical Schools Using Selected Grading Systems in Pre-Clerkship (M1 and M2) Courses. Data from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Annual Medical School Questionnaire Part II, 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

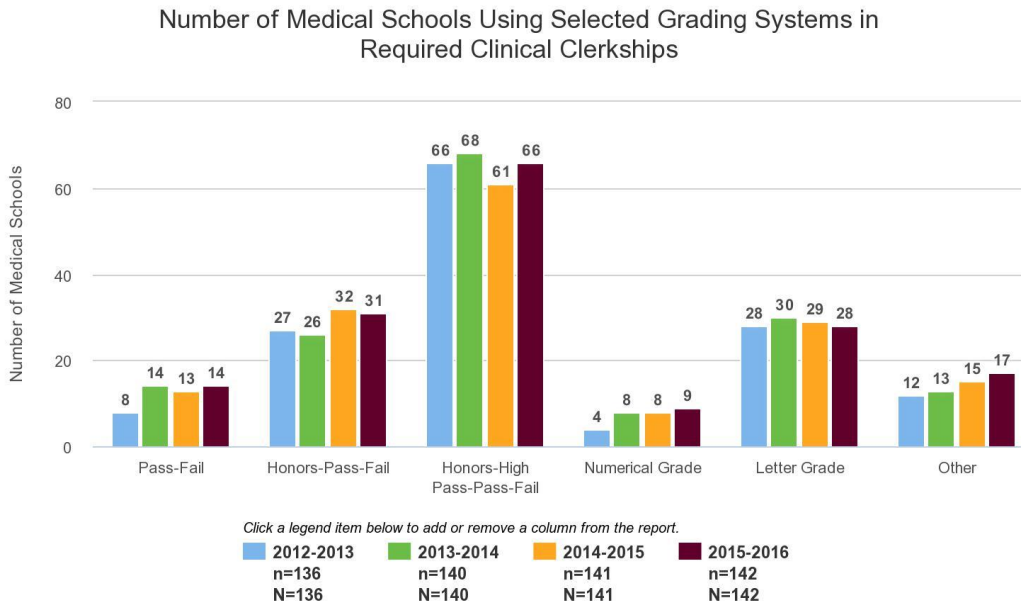


Figure 2: Number of Medical Schools Using Selected Grading Systems in Required Clinical Clerkships (M3). Data from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Annual Medical School Questionnaire Part II, 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

Number of Medical Schools Using Selected Grading Systems in Electives

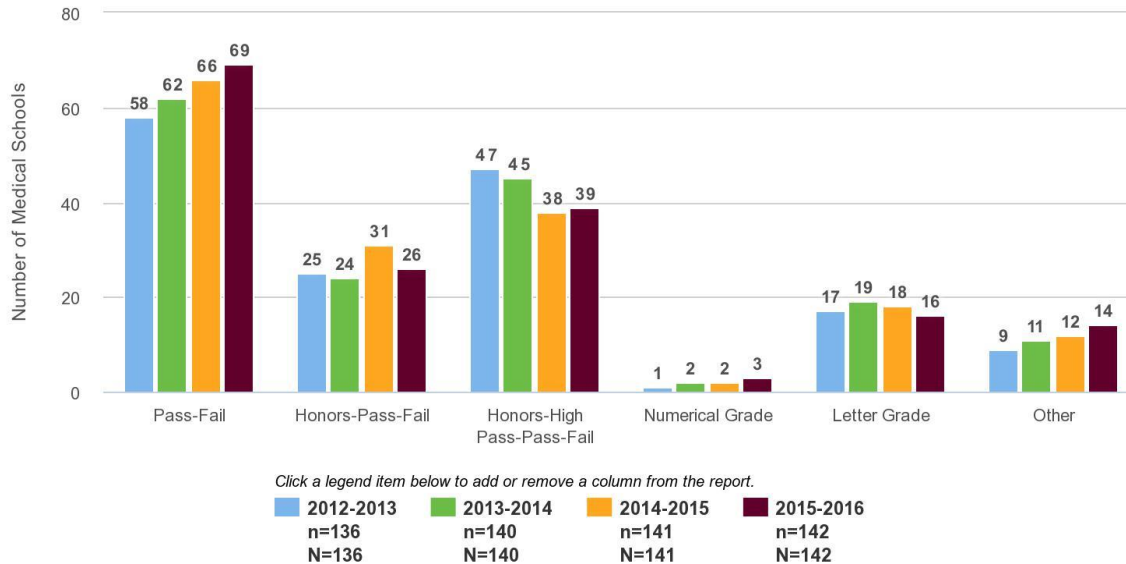


Figure 3: Number of Medical Schools Using Selected Grading Systems in Electives (M1-M4). Data from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Annual Medical School Questionnaire Part II, 2012-2013 through 2015-2016.

References:

Association of American Medical Colleges. Grading Systems Use by US Medical Schools.

<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/cir/406418/11.html>. Accessed 9/11/2017.

Ishak W, Nikravesh R, Lederer S, Perry R, Ogunyemi D, Bernstein C. Burnout in medical students: a systematic review. Clin Teach. 2013;10(4):242-5.

Dyrbye L, Shanafelt T. A narrative review on burnout experienced by medical students and residents. Med Educ. 2016;50(1):132-49.