



Meharry Medical College School of Medicine (MMCSOM) Policies and Procedures	Revised	01/21/2025
	Effective Date	01/28/2025
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Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE) Policy	Supersedes	3/10/2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for administering and utilizing the Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) as a tool for evaluating students' readiness for clerkships and the USMLE Step 1. The policy aims to ensure students achieve adequate mastery of basic science content to support their academic success and inform curriculum enhancement/effectiveness through performance data analysis.

POLICY STATEMENT

Comprehensive Basic Science Exam (CBSE) evaluates content aligned with the USMLE Step 1 and serves as a valuable tool for students and faculty alike. CBSE results provide detailed insights into individual student mastery of basic science concepts while enabling a broader analysis of class-wide performance.

Currently, the School of Medicine administers the CBSE at two key milestones:

1. After the pre-clerkship phase.
2. After the clerkship phase and prior to dedicated Step 1 study.

A strong foundation in basic science is essential for both success in clinical clerkships and achieving a passing score on USMLE Step 1. The CBSE acts as a predictive tool, guiding students to identify areas of focus in their studies and increasing their likelihood of passing USMLE Step 1 on their first attempt.

Beyond individual performance, aggregate CBSE results offer critical feedback for curriculum evaluation. These results help identify areas that may require reinforcement, revision, or improvement, ensuring the curriculum remains rigorous and continues to meet the evolving educational needs of students.

DEFINITIONS

CBSE equated percentage score: the percentage of content mastered. It is statistically adjusted by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to account for exam difficulty and may not reflect the actual number of questions answered correctly.

POLICY

CBSE Timing:

- First Gateway CBSE (Post-M2) must be taken after completing Unit 10 in the M2 year
- Second Gateway CBSE (Post-M3) must be taken following completion of the M3 year.

First Attempt Promotion Criteria:

- Students achieving an equated score of 50% or higher on their first CBSE attempt will be promoted to the clerkship phase
- Students achieving an equated score comparable to a 90% probability of passing USMLE Step 1 within one (1) week (e.g.: ~mid 60%) on their first CBSE attempt will be allowed to take USMLE Step 1.

Second Attempt and Promotion Criteria:

- Students are required to retake the CBSE one (1) week after their first attempt.
- Students achieving an equated score of 50% or higher on their second CBSE attempt will be promoted to the

clerkship phase

- Students **achieving an equated score between 42% and 49% on the second attempt** will be strongly advised NOT to proceed to clerkships due to high likelihood of multiple clerkships and/or NBME failures.
- The Office of Academic Affairs will require students to attend an in-person counseling session where they will strongly advise enrollment in ASMD 420 for further CBSE preparation and remediation before progressing to clerkships.
 - **“Against Dean’s Advice” Option:** Students may choose to proceed to clerkships without further remediation by signing Exhibit A, acknowledging their understanding of the academic risks associated with proceeding to clerkships without demonstrating mastery of pre-clerkship knowledge.
- **Scores below 42% on the second attempt:**
 - Students will NOT be promoted to the clerkship phase and must enroll in ASMD 420 for further CBSE preparation and remediation.

Failure to Progress After Three Attempts:

- The ASMD 420 course director will determine when students are prepared to retake the CBSE.
- Students who fail to achieve an equated score of 50% or higher after three (3) CBSE attempts will be referred to the Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC) for automatic dismissal due to failure to meet academic progress requirements.
- All remediation and the third CBSE attempt must be completed by the end of the spring semester.

EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Against Dean’s Advice Form