

Policy: Exam Development

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE:	LAST REVISION DATE:	RESPONSIBLE DIVISION/DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE
2015	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundational Education Subcommittee

POLICY STATEMENT

All exams must be developed in a systematic and standardized manner to ensure alignment with program objectives and to maintain academic integrity and fairness.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Academic Year 1 and 2 courses.

REASON FOR POLICY

To support curricular management

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITIONS

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

Course Directors (for courses) or Unit Directors (for units)
Associate Director for Academic Support Services
Assistant Dean for Foundational Education
Foundational Education Subcommittee

RELATED RESOURCES

CONTACTS

Questions about this procedure should be directed towards the Assistant Dean for Foundational Education and Associate Director, Academic Support Services, Office of Medical Education.

POLICY HISTORY

Initial Effective Date: 2015

Review Dates (*review performed, no updates*):

Revision Dates (*updates made to document*): June 2025

Comments on Revision (*if applicable*):

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PROCEDURE STATEMENT

- A. The Course Director (CD) for longitudinal courses or Unit Director (UD) for units selects the types and format of exams.
 - More than one type of exam may be administered at any given point. For example, when not enough questions are found in the NBME database, the final exam may have two components, an NBME and an internally developed exam.
 - Open ended question exam and OSCEs should follow standard format.
- B. The CD/UD develops exams in conjunction with course faculty.
 - For internally generated exams: The UD for units or CD for courses without units communicates the expected number of questions per session and other instructions to the course faculty. The course faculty submits the questions to the UD/CD, who assembles the exam.

- For exams from the National Board of Examiners (NBME): The UD/CD and teaching faculty select the questions from the NBME data bank.
 - NBME questions cannot be copied or reproduced.

C. The UD/CD must vet all questions before submitting the exam for review.

Criteria for vetting of questions:

- All content tested has been taught in class prior to the exam.
 - The CD/UD must communicate clearly to the students and in the syllabus if there are questions coming from required reading assignments that were not covered in lectures/in class sessions.
- Content tested is adequately distributed (i.e., core knowledge is tested, important material is not omitted, and content is neither over- nor under-represented).
 - The number of questions per topic should be proportional to the time dedicated in the course to that topic. The total needs to be distributed at the discretion of the course director among the major exams. For example, if students are expected to watch a 1h recording, and then attend a 2h CBL on the topic, the number of questions for that topic should be proportional to 3h (not 1h).
- The difficulty level of questions is appropriate for the course and period of study.
- Questions selected should not overlap (e.g., avoid questions testing the same SLO).
- Exams should contain application questions that are clinically relevant.
- Questions testing isolated facts or information not covered sufficiently in class should be avoided.
- Questions discarded during prior review processes or post-exam analyses must be deleted, replaced, or modified.
 - This information is provided in the assessment report.

D. CD/UD are responsible for tagging all exams. All questions must be tagged with:

- Educational program objective (EPO)
- Course level objectives (CLO)
- Session title
- Type of question (application vs. recognition)
- Additional tagging may occur up to the Course/Unit Director discretion (e.g., session-level objective, discipline, keywords).
- For internally generated exams, questions are tagged with a unique question identifier.

E. CD/UD are responsible for submitting the exam alignment map using a standard format (for all exams) to the Associate Director for Academic Support Services for review before administration.

- The Assistant Dean for Foundational Education reviews the alignment of the exam with course content and objectives.
- The CD or UD must address any misalignment before administration.

F. Performance by EPO based on this process is monitored by the Foundation Education Subcommittee on an annual basis.