Criteria for Letter of Distinction

Family & Ambulatory Medicine
The letter of Distinction is an opportunity for faculty members to distinguish a student who has demonstrated extraordinary performance in a required clerkship. Only truly remarkable performances will be recognized; merely performing ahead of peers and being the best competitor should not suffice. A Letter of Distinction can be obtained from both Family Medicine and Ambulatory Internal Medicine if all requirements are met:

- The marks on the medical student's evaluation forms must be all 6's and 7's with the majority (at least 5) being 7.
- These marks are determined by averaging each contributing faculty member's evaluations for each category during the rotation.
- Final examination grade must be above the 90th percentile.
- The student must demonstrate professionalism in attitude and behavior throughout the clerkship both clinically and in the combined didactic/workshops/orientation/OSCE sessions with excellent group participation and attendance.
- All course requirements and assignments must be completed on time.

Inpatient/Internal Medicine
Students who perform in a particularly outstanding manner throughout the Required Inpatient Medicine Clerkship will be awarded a Letter of Distinction. The criteria needed to earn a Letter of Distinction include a high outstanding performance in both 4 week blocks of the clerkship (scores of 7 in at least 5 out of the 8 areas of evaluation at each site) and a shelf exam score of 83 (standardized score, not percentile) on the Internal Medicine Subject Exam. To understand what demonstrates an outstanding clinical performance, please see the descriptors listed below.

- Letters of Distinction are awarded by unanimous vote of the Junior Medicine Clerkship Committee at its bimonthly meeting.
- History taking: Precise, logical, thorough, reliable, purposeful, and focused. Includes all pertinent positives and negatives.
- Physical examinations: Very complete, accurately done, directed toward patient's problem(s), and elicits subtle findings.
- Case Presentations: Extremely clear, organized, complete, accurate, and polished presentation appropriate in length to the situation. Uses precise, accurate terminology.
- Write ups: Outstanding, conscientious and accurate in recording patients' histories and physical exams. Differential diagnoses are extensive. Outstanding analysis of patient's problems. Therapeutic plans are thorough.
- Medical Knowledge: Extensive, well-applied knowledge of disease, pathophysiology, diagnosis, and therapy. Consistently up to date. Familiar with relevant current journal articles.
- Physician Patient Interactions: Does not use jargon. Communication with patients and families reflects clarity and empathy. Effective communicator with teams, staff et al.

Neurology
You may be awarded, at the discretion of the Clerkship Directors, and in consultation with Site Directors and your evaluators, a Letter of Distinction for the 3rd Year Neurology Clerkship if you meet the following criteria:

- Meet all the requirements for completion of the clerkship listed previously.
• Score ≥80 percentile (based on 2011-2012 national norms) on the NBME Subject Examination.
• Accumulate consistently exemplary (typically in the “Outstanding” range, all or most 7’s with remainder 6’s) ratings on your final evaluations, with supportive narrative comments from your evaluators.
• Conduct yourself professionally in all interactions with faculty, residents, staff, and patients.

Obstetrics/Gynecology
Letters of Distinction are considered for students who score at the 85th percentile or above on the written examination and are judged to have outstanding ratings (6,7) on all categories of the evaluation.

Pediatrics
Your final evaluation and grade will incorporate your clinical evaluations from all settings, as well as your score on the written examination. Letters of Distinction will be awarded to those students who excel in all areas (more specifically, to students who receive 7’s or “high outstandings” in the majority of the evaluation categories), with a final examination grade that is at least 82.

Radiology
Letters of distinction are not given in Radiology because of the limited contact of faculty with students.

Surgery
Criteria for Letters of Distinction in Surgery
• Criteria: Excellence in Clinical, Practical, and Shelf Examination
  • Clinical: Uniformly Excellent to Outstanding ESS Evaluations from Residents and Faculty in all blocks (General and Specialty). Must receive a score of 5.5-7 in every category

To understand what demonstrates an outstanding clinical performance, please see the descriptors listed below:
• History taking: Precise, logical, thorough, reliable, purposeful, and focused. Includes all pertinent positives and negatives.
• Physical examinations: Very complete, accurately done, directed toward patient's problem(s), and elicits subtle findings.
• Case Presentations: Extremely clear, organized, complete, accurate, and polished presentation appropriate in length to the situation. Uses precise, accurate terminology.
• Write ups: Outstanding, conscientious and accurate in recording patients' histories and physical exams. Differential diagnoses are extensive. Outstanding analysis of patient's problems. Therapeutic plans are thorough.
• Medical Knowledge: Extensive, well-applied knowledge of disease, pathophysiology, diagnosis, and therapy. Consistently up to date. Familiar with relevant current journal articles.
• Physician Patient Interactions: Does not use jargon. Communication with patients and families reflects clarity and empathy. Effective communicator with teams, staff et al.
• Practical: Excellent Performance. Must receive a score of 90 percent or above.
• Shelf Exam: Consider those that score 85 or above (standardized score, not percentile) on the Surgery Subject Exam.

Psychiatry
• Receive a cumulative score of 6.25 or above on the clinical evaluation
• Score at the 80th percentile or above on the shelf evaluation
• Meet all stated clerkship requirements in a timely manner with no deficiencies or delays

SBHC
Systems-Based Healthcare will award a Letter of Distinction for students who have made unusually outstanding contributions to their groups. This includes group participation, reflective writing, and review and critique of assigned readings. Unlike in other courses, the emphasis is less about being “right” more often than others, but is about actively questioning and being reflective. There are no examinations in this course, and only two grades: Pass and Fail.

Longitudinal Preceptorship
Students are not eligible for Letters of Distinction in this course.