



## 2022 CHARACTERISTICS OF CLINICAL CLERKSHIPS SURVEY

To analyze trends related to medical school clerkships and collect feedback about the NBME® clinical science assessment portfolio, NBME conducted the Characteristics of Clinical Clerkships Survey in October 2022. This survey gathered information on structure, content, and assessment in medical school clerkships. Clerkship Directors at both domestic and international medical schools were invited to participate.

In this report, you can find aggregated results about the 2022 Characteristics of Clinical Clerkships Survey. This survey was not a census or audit of clerkship structure and format, and results cannot be generalized to the population of all clerkships. However, you can see trends on third-year, traditional, discipline-based clerkships and the usage of Clinical Science Exams in this context.

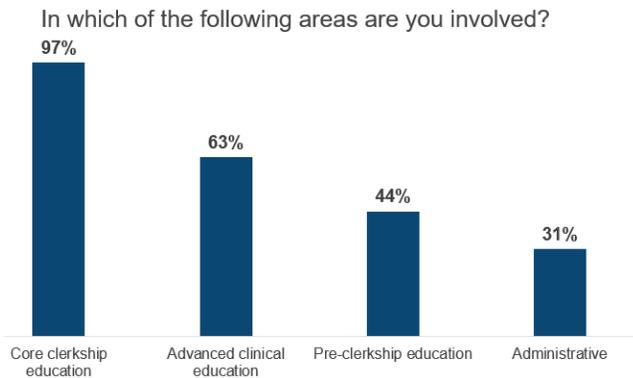
Some of the survey results highlights include:

- **Time Crunch:** Clerkship Directors often fill multiple roles at their school and are likely short on time; half of all respondents are involved with more than one clerkship.
- **Off-Site Students:** Most schools have some percentage of students who complete clerkships at either a Regional Medical Campus or other off-site location.
- **Changes to Clerkships:** There appears to be a slight shift toward more frequent, shorter clerkships.
- **Assessments Used During Clerkships:** Forty-seven percent of respondents administer one to three assessments during a clerkship, while another 25% administer four to six assessments. The most common assessment types are multiple-choice exams, workplace-based assessments, and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs).
- **Importance of NBME Exam Attributes:** Respondents rated relevance of content, currency of content, and inclusion of national comparison data as the most important attributes of the NBME clerkship exams; relevance and currency increased in importance from January 2020 to October 2022.
- **Changes to Grading:** A quarter of respondents expect their clerkship grading to change, most likely to pass/fail (17% currently use pass/fail).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CLERKSHIPS

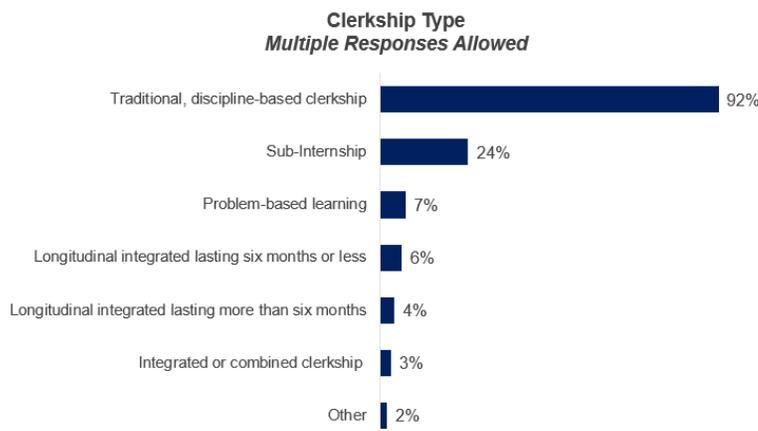
### Survey Respondents

Survey respondents (n = 178) were Clerkship Directors from primarily **LCME-accredited (98%)** medical schools based in the **U.S. (96%)**. One survey response per clerkship discipline per school was allowed; respondents represented 84 schools. Respondents indicated they fill multiple roles at their schools, and approximately **50%** are involved with more than one clerkship.

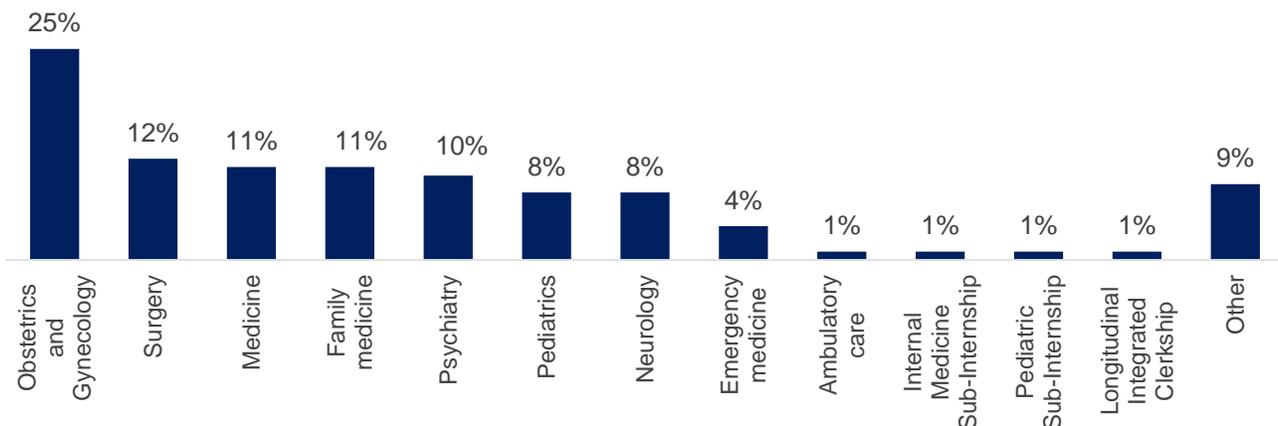


## Clerkship Type

Most respondents said their primary clerkship is a **traditional, discipline-based clerkship (90%)** and some additionally classified their clerkship as a sub-internship (**24%**). Almost all respondents said their clerkship is required for their school's curriculum (**97%**).



## Which clinical clerkship rotation or elective clerkship rotation do you direct at your school?



## Clerkship Rotation Timing

Survey participants were asked about the length and timing of their clerkship/elective rotations; **76%** said the **first rotation** begins between April and July and **73%** said the **last rotation** begins between March and June.

Most respondents said their schools scheduled **six or more rotations (89%)** in an academic year during the **third year (83%)**. Compared to the last time NBME surveyed Clerkship Directors in 2020, the 2022 survey results show a trend toward more frequent, shorter clerkship rotations. The **6-week clerkship** was the most selected option in both survey waves; however, the 2022 results showed **4-week lengths** as the second most popular option as compared to **8-week lengths** in 2020.

### Most Frequent Clerkship Length

2020	2022
<b>6 Weeks (38%)</b>	<b>6 Weeks (30%)</b>
<b>8 Weeks (29%)</b>	<b>4 Weeks (27%)</b>

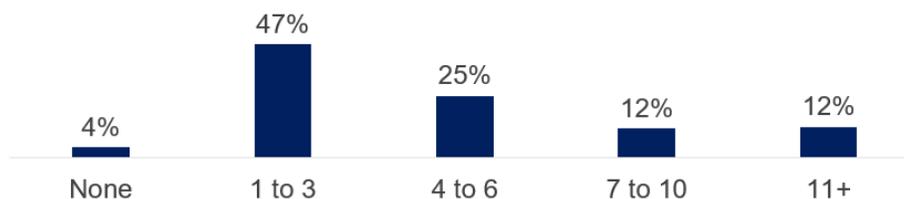
## Regional Medical Campuses

On average, survey respondents said their schools had two Regional Medical Campuses (RMCs), and approximately 60% have at least some of their students completing clerkships at RMCs or other off-campus locations. **Nearly 25%** of respondents had **most of their students (76-100%)** completing their clerkships at RMCs.

## ASSESSMENT IN CLERKSHIPS

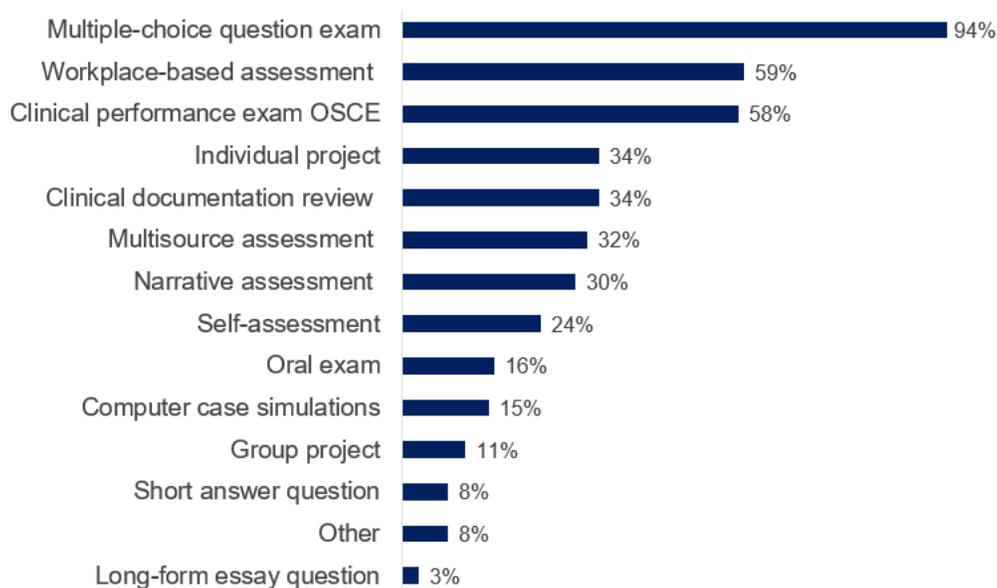
Respondents shared information on the number and types of assessments they administer during their clerkships. Most directors say they administer between **one and six assessments** (of any kind) throughout their clerkship.

### Number of Assessments Administered



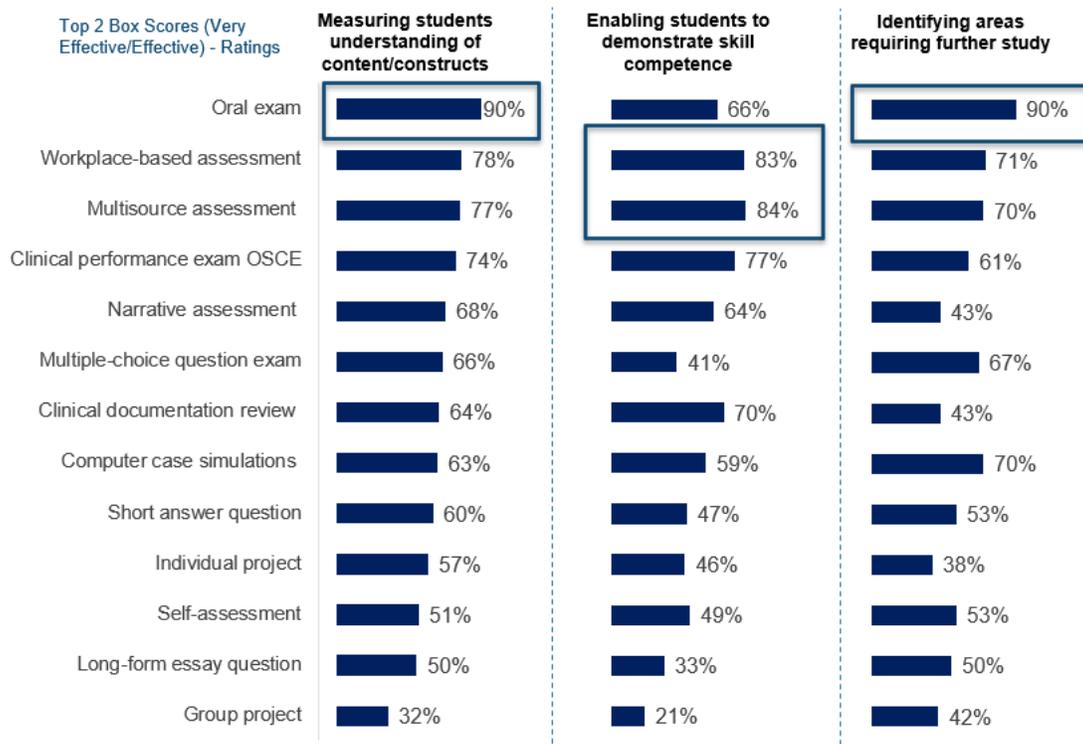
**Almost all (94%)** administer a multiple-choice exam, and **more than half (58-59%)** administer a workplace-based assessment and/or objective structured clinical examination (OSCE).

## Methods used to assess learners:



Directors rate the effectiveness of assessments differently depending on the construct to be measured.

## How effective are each of the following assessment types at...



## IMPORTANCE OF NBME EXAM ATTRIBUTES

Survey respondents rated the importance of different attributes in their decision to use the NBME exam. Three attributes increased in importance from January 2020 to October 2022: *Relevance of content*, *Up-to-date/current content*, and *Performance feedback provided to faculty*.

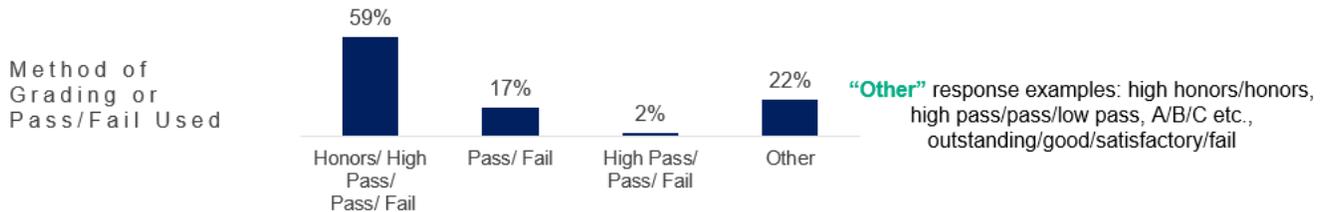
<b>TOP TWO BOX: Very/Extremely Important</b> <i>Sorted by 2022 Importance</i>	<b>2020</b> <b>(A)</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>(B)</b>	<b>Δ WAVE</b> <b>OVER WAVE</b>
<b>Relevance of content</b>	81%	<b>89%<sup>A</sup></b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Up-to-date/current content</b>	73%	<b>87%<sup>A</sup></b>	<b>14%</b>
National comparison data	83%	86%	3%
Appropriate level of difficulty	80%	85%	5%
Practice for student with USMLE type questions	77%	85%	8%
Depth of content	77%	83%	6%
Breadth of content	76%	83%	7%
Consistency with prior year assessments	83%	82%	-1%
Alignment to national curriculum	76%	82%	6%
Alignment to school curriculum	70%	80%	10%
Convenience of off-the-shelf product	79%	74%	-5%
Performance feedback provided to students	61%	71%	10%
To gauge readiness for USMLE*	66%	70%	4%
Variety of question formats	50%	60%	10%
Fulfills LCME requirement	54%	60%	6%
<b>Performance feedback provided to faculty</b>	42%	<b>59%<sup>A</sup></b>	<b>17%</b>

\*Letter indicates statistical significance between proportions at the  $\alpha = .05$  level.

## CLERKSHIP AND EXAM GRADING

### Grading Methodology

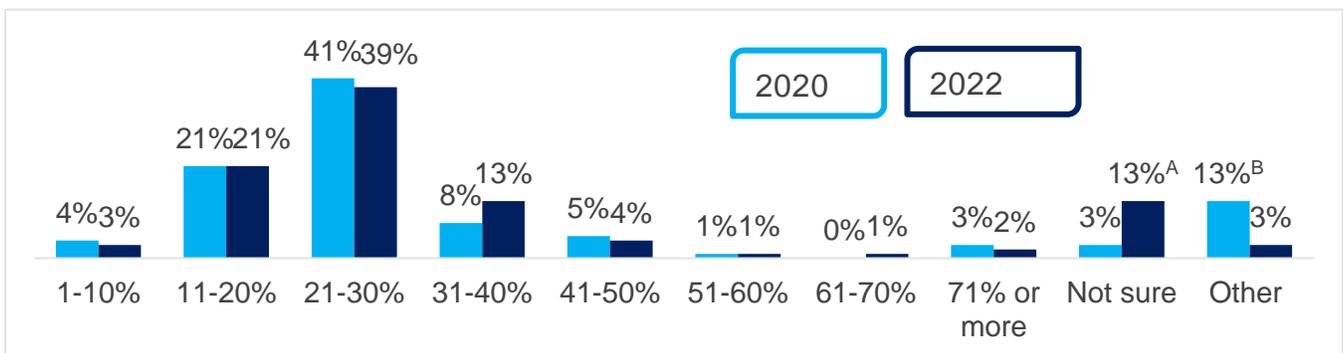
The most popular grading method selected by respondents was **Honors, High Pass, Pass, Fail (59%)**. However, **24%** expect their grading method to change in the next few years, with pass/fail being the most cited change. Currently, **17%** of respondents already use **pass/fail** for their clerkship.



### Use of NBME Clinical Science Subject Exams

There was only minimal difference in the responses of the 2020 and 2022 Clerkship Directors who responded to NBME’s survey regarding the weight given to NBME Subject Exams when determining final grades or pass/fail.

#### Weight Given to NBME Subject Exams:



Approximately **30%** of Clerkship Directors who use an NBME Clinical Science Exam are unaware of NBME’s grading guidelines. Grading guidelines were developed by a nationally representative group of Clerkship Directors to assist schools and institutions in setting passing and honors standards for students taking NBME Clinical Subject Exams. Every two to three years, NBME facilitates a review of the guidelines with faculty members to update and ensure the continued appropriateness of the guidelines. Grading guidelines for each exam are available on [MyNBME<sup>SM</sup> Services Portal](#).

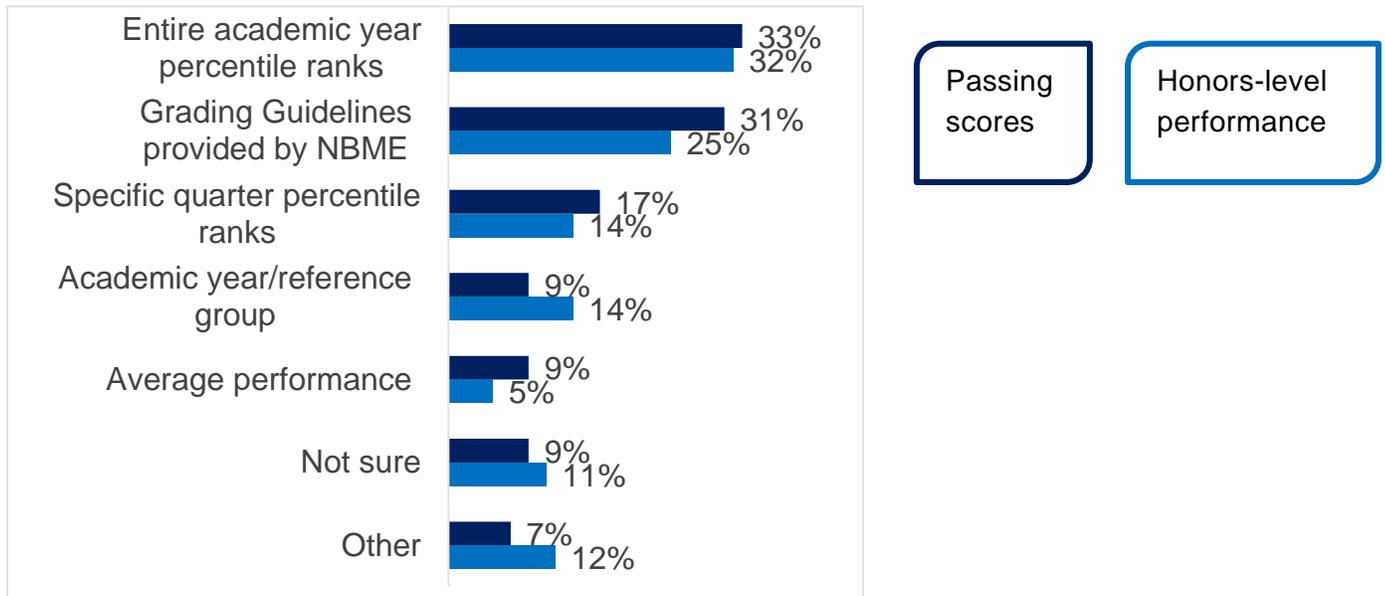
Most of the survey respondents said their institutions require students to pass the NBME Subject Exam and use the exam scores to determine honors-level performance. Results were similar in 2020.

## NBME Subject Exam Passing and Honors Requirements

**92%** require students to **pass** the NBME Subject Exam.

**74%** of respondents who include honors in their grading schema use NBME Subject Exam scores to determine **honors-level performance**.

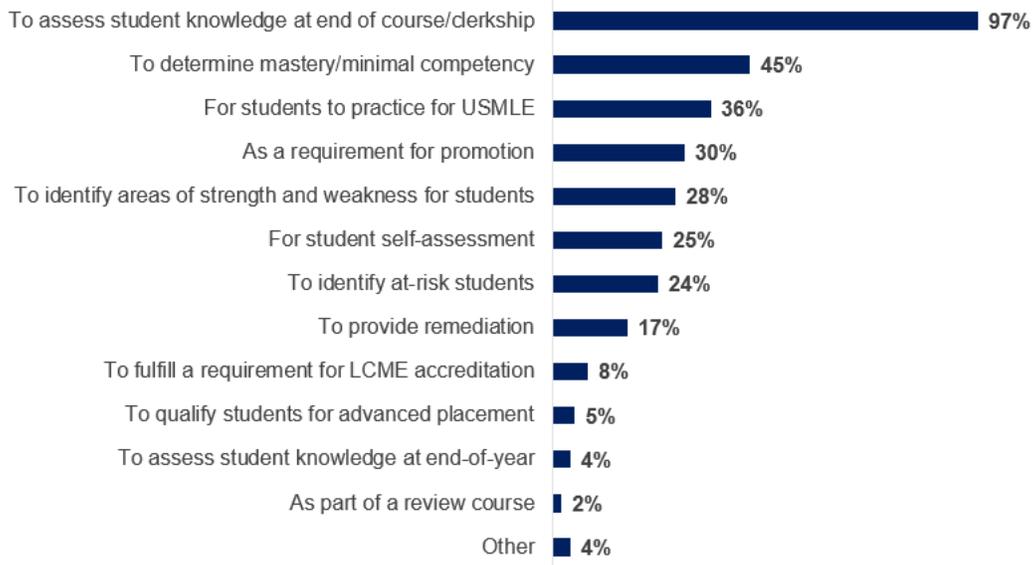
### Passing scores and honors-level performance based on:



<i>What is the minimum <b>equated percent</b> correct score used to determine passing in your program?</i>	<i>What is the minimum <b>equated percent</b> correct score used to determine honors in your program?</i>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="background-color: #003366; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">60%</div> <div>Median minimum passing equated percent correct score</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="background-color: #003366; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-right: 10px;">80%</div> <div>Median minimum equated percent correct score used to determine honors</div> </div>

Almost all survey respondents use NBME Clinical Science Subject Exams to assess student knowledge at the end of course/clerkship, and **45%** use the exam to determine mastery/minimal competency.

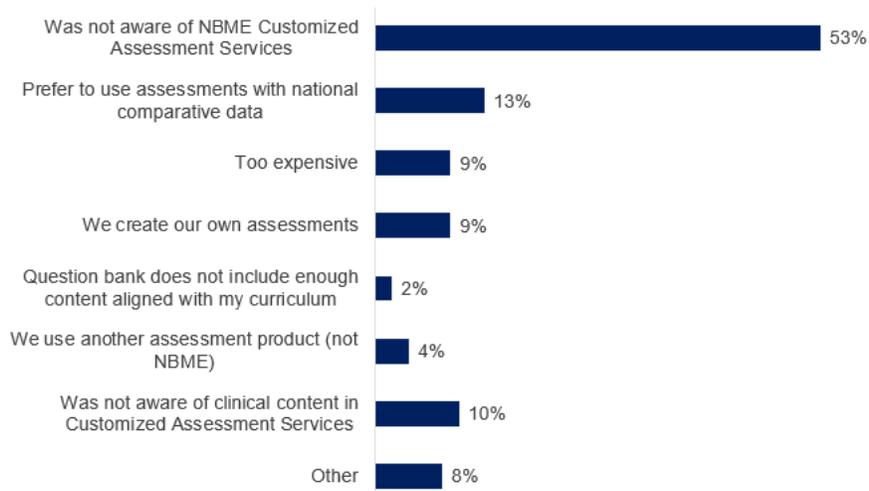
### Purpose of Using Exam Multiple Response



## CUSTOMIZED ASSESSMENT SERVICES

**Ninety-two percent** of respondents do not use NBME Customized Assessment Services (CAS) during clerkships. Some respondents who use CAS also use Clinical Science Subject Exams, but others do not. The lack of awareness (**53%**) was a main reason for not using CAS in their clerkship assessments. With recently added clinical science content, CAS could be a useful tool for clerkship directors to create midpoint exams in traditional clerkships, or to create customized exams tailored to their curriculum in longitudinal integrated clerkships or hybrid clerkships.

### Reasons for not using CAS:



## **CONCLUSION**

Thank you to the Clerkship Directors who shared information for the 2022 Characteristics of Clinical Clerkships Survey. The results show the time and role pressure put on Clerkship Directors as well as fluctuations they may be managing with curriculum and grading. NBME will continue to enhance the Clinical Science Exam and other assessment resources to support clerkship needs.

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