

Formative Assessment Policy

Office of Accountability:	Dean, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	MD Program
Approver:	MD Curriculum and Program Committee
Scope:	Compliance with this policy extends to all members of the MD Program.

Overview

This policy documents the processes that ensure the medical education program provides medical students with formative assessment by the midpoint of any required learning experiences of four weeks or longer, as well as formative feedback every 6 weeks for longer required learning experiences (e.g. Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship). Longitudinal year-long courses at the preclerkship level are excluded from this timing, but will include formative assessment at several time points throughout the academic year.

Purpose

To ensure the MD Program meets or exceeds the **Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS)**

9.7-Timely Formative Assessment & Feedback

A medical school ensures that the medical education program provides timely formative assessment consisting of appropriate measures by which a medical student can measure his or her progress in learning. Each medical student is assessed and provided with formal formative feedback early enough during each required learning experience four or more weeks in length to allow sufficient time for remediation. Formal feedback occurs at least at the midpoint of the learning experience. In medical education programs with longer educational experiences (e.g., longitudinal integrated clerkship) formal assessment (still referred to as midpoint feedback) occurs approximately every six weeks. For required learning experiences less than four weeks in length alternate means are provided by which a medical student can measure his or her progress in learning.

POLICY & PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of a formative midpoint assessment is as a check-in partway through a course or clerkship to ensure the student is on track to completing the requirements of the course/clerkship.



Timing

This midpoint assessment can occur at any point during the preclerkship course or the clerkship rotation as long as there is sufficient time for remediation of any issues identified. For most courses and clerkships, this will likely occur within one week before or after the middle of the learning experience. For clerkships longer than 12 weeks such as longitudinal integrated clerkships, an interim assessment would be done approximately every six weeks. For longitudinal preclerkship courses, formative assessment is provided half-way through the learning experience (e.g. two year clinical skills program, formative assessment is provided at the end of year 1).

Process

The process will involve monitoring students’ performance on the various sources of assessment data. During preclerkship courses, formal written assessments (e.g. quizzes, mid-terms, or TBLs) should occur during the block to provide formal assessment on student performance. For clerkship rotations, MCQs and OSCEs may be included as formative assessments for the non-workplace based component if they are available early enough in the clerkship to allow time for remediation. All clerkships will have some form of midpoint formative assessment in the form of the MDPA Clerkship Assessments and/or Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) Observations

If a student is flagged on any assessment at any point in a course or clerkship, this will prompt the course/clerkship coordinator or designate to review the available assessment data and decide on an appropriate course of action, which would often lead to a learning plan with clear expectations for successful completion of the course or clerkship.

Documentation

During the preclerkship courses, formative assessment is documented through the Discovery Learning tutor assessments and low to medium-stakes knowledge-based assessments (e.g. quizzes and midterms) during the course. For the longitudinal preclerkship courses, formative feedback is documented through midpoint assessments (e.g. OSCE).

Although verbal formative feedback happens daily on most clerkship rotations, at least once during a clerkship (see timing above), an assessment will be documented in the MD Program assessment system indicating if the student is progressing as expected and whether there are any concerns that require attention to allow successful completion of the clerkship.

Student Meetings

Course/Clerkship coordinators or designate will meet with students who have assessment data indicating they are not on track to complete the requirements of the course. In clerkship, this designate may be the clinical preceptor who most recently worked with the student.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.

Committee on Accreditation of Canadian	The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) ensures that Canadian medical faculties’ MD programs meet the quality expected when producing tomorrow’s doctors. Medical schools demonstrating
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Medical Schools (CACMS)	compliance are afforded accreditation, a necessary condition for a program's graduates to be licensed as physicians.
Required Learning Experience	An educational unit (e.g., course, block, clerkship rotation or longitudinal integrated clerkship) that is required of a student in order to complete the medical education program. These educational units are usually associated with a university course code and appear on the student's transcript. Required learning experiences are in contradistinction to electives, which are learning experiences of the student's choosing.
Assessment	Any method of obtaining information from tests and other sources, used to draw inferences about an individual for the purpose of helping them improve (formative) or determining passing a stage of training (summative).
Formative Assessment	Assessment whose intention is to inform the student of areas to focus on. Such assessment can be zero stakes (e.g. verbal feedback), low, or medium stakes as long as there is a future opportunity within the course for the student to incorporate the assessment information into their learning
Summative Assessment	Assessment at the end of course to determine passing or failing that course

RELATED LINKS

No related links for this policy.

APPROVER	STATUS	DATE
MDCPC	Approved	17 March 2022