

Formative Assessment Policy

Office of Accountability:	Student Assessment Subcommittee
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Definitions

Formative Assessment	A range of assessment procedures designed to monitor learning and provide ongoing feedback to both instructors and learners that can be used to improve both teaching and learning.
Narrative Assessment	Written descriptions of a learner's progress and performance, including strengths and areas for improvement, to help guide learning.
Phase 1-3	The first two years of the M.D. program.
Phase 4 (Clerkship)	The last two years of the M.D. program.
Summative Assessment	A process used to evaluate learner achievement at the end of a period of instruction.
Learner participation	Completion of the formative assessment activities and tools.

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Overview

The Undergraduate Medical Studies (UGMS) Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council, has responsibility for the oversight of undergraduate medical education, including learner assessment and relevant policies and procedures.

The Student Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) of the UGMS Committee has responsibility for developing and reviewing an overall strategy for learner assessment for the curriculum leading to the M.D. degree, advising the UGMS Committee on learner assessment policy and its implementation, and evaluating all aspects of the assessment of learner achievement in the curriculum. More specifically, the SAS is mandated to (1) recommend methods and systems of assessment and (2) advise on and monitor procedures for formative and summative assessment of cognitive and non-cognitive learning objectives.

The following elements of [Standard 9](#) from the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) guide the policy requirements for formative assessment:

CACMS Element 9.4 states, in part: “a medical school ensures that, throughout its medical education program, there is a centralized system in place that employs a variety of measures (including direct observation) for the assessment of student achievement.”

CACMS Element 9.5 states: “a medical school ensures that a narrative description of a medical student’s performance, including his or her non-cognitive achievement, is included as a component of the assessment in each required learning experience in the medical education program whenever teacher-student interaction permits this form of assessment.”

CACMS Element 9.7 states: “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, year-long required learning experiences) formal 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.”

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Formative assessment is used to monitor and support learning progress during instruction. It facilitates continuous feedback to learners and instructors concerning academic strengths and weaknesses, in preparation for the summative assessments administered during each course and rotation. Formative assessments do not contribute to the final grade for a course and are considered low stakes assessments. Formative assessment feedback to instructors is used to inform and adjust teaching practice.

Purpose

To outline the approach to formative assessment in Phases 1-4 of the undergraduate medical curriculum.

Scope

The Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) program.

Policy

The UGMS Committee mandates that each learner in the M.D. program must be assessed and provided with ongoing formal feedback concerning strengths and weaknesses, in a timely and effective manner, during each required course and clerkship rotation.

1.0 Formative Assessment: Phases 1-3

1.1 All required courses, regardless of duration, must provide formative assessment.

1.1.1 In courses of less than 4 weeks' duration, alternative methods of formative assessment (e.g., self-testing, instructor consultation) rather than formal formative assessment and remediation may be used to permit learners to measure their progress in learning.

1.2 All learners enrolled in each required course must have the opportunity to participate in formative assessment.

1.3 Each learner must have opportunities to receive feedback by the mid-point of each required course to allow sufficient time for remediation. Learners experiencing

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academic difficulties must have the opportunity to approach the appropriate Phase Lead for assistance.

- 1.4 Narrative description of medical learner performance, including non-cognitive achievement, must be provided to learners in each required course as part of their formative assessment wherever teacher-learner interaction permits this form of feedback.
 - 1.5 The provision of formative assessment in each required course is monitored by the Student Assessment Subcommittee.
- 2.0 Formative Feedback: Phase 4 (Clerkship)
- 2.1 In non-elective courses within Phase 4, or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences, of at least 4 weeks' duration, learners must receive one –on-one in person feedback on performance at the midpoint of the course or rotation, preferably in writing.
 - 2.2 For non-elective courses within Phase 4, or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences, of less than 4 weeks' duration, an alternate means of formative assessment (e.g., self-testing, supervisor consultation) must be provided that will allow medical learners to measure their progress in learning.
 - 2.3 Narrative description of medical learner performance, including non- cognitive achievement, must be provided to learners in each non-elective course within Phase 4 or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences as part of their formative assessment wherever teacher-learner interaction permits this form of feedback.
 - 2.4 The provision of formative assessment in each non-elective course within Phase 4 or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences is monitored by the Student Assessment Subcommittee.

Procedures

- A.0 Formative Assessment: Phases 1-3
 - A.1 Each Phase Lead develops a formative assessment plan for each required course

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in the Phase.

- A.2 The assessment plan is provided to learners by the end of the first scheduled week of the course.
 - A.3 The Education Specialist for Assessment (MESAC) includes data on formative assessment in the Assessment Report as specified in the [Summative Assessment Procedure for Phases 1-3](#).
 - A.4 Review of the Assessment Report by the Phase Lead and Student Assessment Subcommittee follows the procedures outlined in the [Summative Assessment Procedure for Phases 1-3](#).
 - A.5 Assessment plans and methods may be subject to formal review by the Program Evaluation Subcommittee upon recommendation from the Student Assessment Subcommittee.
- B.0 Formative Assessment: Phase 4 (Clerkship)
- B.1 Each course lead or Clerkship Discipline Coordinator in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences develops a formative assessment plan.
 - B.2 For all non-elective courses within Phase 4 or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences 4 weeks or more in duration:
 - B.2.1 The course lead or Clerkship Discipline Coordinator in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences includes a mechanism for providing learners with one-on-one in person feedback about their performance at the midpoint of the course or rotation.
 - B.2.2 The mechanism for one-on-one in person feedback and the process for identifying learners in academic difficulty are provided to learners at the beginning of the course or rotation.
 - B.3 For all non-elective courses within Phase 4 or each rotation in the case of MED 8710 Core Experiences less than 4 weeks in duration, alternate means are provided by which a medical learner can measure their progress in learning.
 - B.4 For longer educational experiences (longitudinal integrated clerkship, year-long

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courses), formative assessment occurs approximately every six weeks.

- B.5 The Education Specialist for Assessment (MESAC) includes data on formative assessment in the Assessment Report as specified in the [Summative Assessment Procedure for Phase 4 Courses](#).
- B.6 Review of the Assessment Report by the Phase Lead and Student Assessment Subcommittee follows the procedures outlined in the [Summative Assessment Procedure for Phase 4 Courses](#).
- B.7 Assessment plans and methods may be subject to formal review by the Program Evaluation Subcommittee upon recommendation from the Student Assessment Subcommittee.