



Course & Clerkship Formative & Narrative Feedback

Senior Leader: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Assistant Dean for Assessment and Evaluation

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Policy Statement

The University of Minnesota Medical School sets the expectation and guidelines for providing students with formative and summative assessments by faculty (including narrative assessments) that offer effective feedback on performance.

Procedures

I. General Expectations

Courses and clerkships may exceed the requirements for feedback (formative or summative). In addition, Course and Clerkship Directors are encouraged to seek opportunities to incorporate feedback whenever possible.

II. Formative Feedback & Assessment

Formative feedback and assessments include a variety of formal or informal methods (see “Definitions” below). Formative feedback is most effective when it permits a student to evaluate their learning and progress in a course/clerkship in a manner that allows sufficient time to remediate any issues.

It is required that students be provided some formative feedback and assessment opportunities by the midpoint of courses or required clinical clerkships of four or more weeks in length. For courses or clerkships fewer than four weeks in length alternate means must be implemented.

Formative Narrative Feedback & Assessment

It is expected that narrative assessments be provided by faculty whenever faculty-student interaction permits. Formative narrative feedback and assessments are provided as follows:

- **Foundations Phase (FP) courses:** courses containing either longitudinal groups or lab sessions that include small groups (<12 students) having the same facilitators for the majority of sessions
- **Clinical Immersion Phase (CiP) required clerkships :** included as part of the EPA Assessment System and as a component of the mid-clerkship feedback procedures
- **Specialty-Specific Phase (StP) clerkships:** Acting Internship in Critical Care and Emergency Medicine will have narrative assessment included as part of the EPA Assessment System and as a component of the mid-clerkship feedback procedures

III. Summative Assessment

Course & Clerkship Formative & Narrative Feedback

Summative assessments include a variety of formal methods for evaluating performance at the end of a course of clerkship (see “*Definitions*” below) that result in a grade.

Summative Narrative Assessment

- **Foundations Phase courses:** summative narrative assessment are provided at the end of courses where faculty-student interaction permits it, as defined above
- **Required Clerkships:** summative narrative assessments are entered into official evaluation systems and may be used for grading as defined in the Syllabus. Any “below expectations” individual rating must be accompanied by a summative narrative assessment

IV. **Exceptions for Narrative Feedback and Assessment**

There may be instances where a Foundations Phase course meets the criteria for providing narrative feedback and assessment but the Course Director(s) have determined it is not feasible as a standard component of the course. In these cases, the Course Director must submit a request to the Assessment Committee for consideration, describing the reasons why narrative feedback and assessment cannot be provided in their course; exceptions will be evaluated and approved by the relevant curriculum subcommittee.

V. **Monitoring and Quality Improvement**

Periodic review of courses will be conducted to monitor compliance with this policy; incidents of non-compliance will be reported to the relevant curriculum subcommittee for appropriate action.

Additional Contacts

Role/Title	Contact	Email
Office of Assessment and Evaluation	Esther Dale	dasa0002@umn.edu

Definitions

Narrative Feedback and Assessment

The LCME defines narrative assessment as, “Written comments from faculty that assess student performance and achievement in meeting the objectives of a course or clerkship.” Narrative assessments, which can be either formative or summative, may include feedback and observations related to: behaviors, attitudes, interpersonal skills, peer/faculty interactions, and/or personal and professional development. Narrative assessments may include free-form narrative impressions or be chosen from a prescribed set of options that are of a descriptive nature. Assessments should include actionable suggestions for improvement, especially in cases of at-risk students.

Formative Feedback and Assessment

Assessments given to a student at a point in time that allows sufficient opportunity for them to modify their thinking or behavior in order to improve their subsequent learning and performance in the medical curriculum (eg., quizzes, practice tests, study questions, formative OSCEs).

Summative Assessment

A formal assessment used to evaluate student learning and performance at the end of a course or clerkship as measured against a standard or benchmark.

Course & Clerkship Formative & Narrative Feedback

LCME Accreditation Relevance

This policy ensures the UMMS meets Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 9.5: NARRATIVE ASSESSMENT. “A medical school ensures that a narrative description of a medical student’s performance, including non-cognitive achievement, is included as a component of the assessment in each required course and clerkship of the medical education program whenever teacher-student interaction permits this form of assessment.”

Element 9.7: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK. “The medical school's curricular governance committee ensures that each medical student is assessed and provided with formal formative feedback early enough during each required course or clerkship to allow sufficient time for remediation. Formal feedback occurs at least at the midpoint of the course or clerkship. A course or clerkship less than four weeks in length provides alternate means by which medical students can measure their progress in learning.”

History

Approved by: Education Council (renamed MSEC), June 2020

Reviewed and Approved: Medical Student Education Committee (MSEC), July 2022

Reviewed with Minor Updates: August 2023

Reviewed and Approved: Medical Student Education Committee (MSEC), as per RCC.5, October 2024

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