



Consent for Sensitive Exams Under Anesthesia

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Assistant Dean for Curriculum

Policy Contact: Assistant Dean for Curriculum

Policy Statement

Educational sensitive exams under anesthesia will only be performed when they repeat or are equivalent to an exam that is performed as part of the planned procedure.

Attending physicians who supervise students in performing educational sensitive exams will obtain consent, in advance, from the patient or their surrogate decision-maker, for any educational exam that will be performed under anesthesia and document this consent in the medical record.

Supervisors will only permit students to perform an educational sensitive exam if consent has been granted and is noted in the medical record. The student will be informed that consent was obtained for the educational sensitive exam before it is performed. If this does not occur prior to initiating the exam, students will confirm that consent was obtained before performing the exam. Students will decline exams that are not consented without risking any negative consequences.

Reason for Policy

The University of Minnesota Medical School commits, in all its work, to [Put Patients First](#)¹. We honor the autonomy and self-determination of our patients. We continually balance patient autonomy with the value of complete and rigorous training for our students, knowing this training will allow them to serve their future patients. Striking this balance can be achieved through a consistent approach for obtaining patient consent for participation in education.

The University of Minnesota Medical School also commits to [Empower Students](#)². This policy reduces ambiguity and empowers students to consistently confirm consent. This will reduce moral distress for students by outlining their role on the team as part of routine adherence to an approved procedure designed to protect patients.

The University of Minnesota Medical School also commits to [Optimize the Learning Environment](#)³. This policy supports student training by demonstrating the importance of patient consent, especially for exams that can be experienced as intrusive, uncomfortable, or have the potential to introduce historical trauma into the medical encounter.

This policy supports the achievement of [Graduation Competencies](#), including nearly every competency in the domain of Professionalism as well as competencies in the domains of Knowledge for Practice,

¹ University of Minnesota Medical School Strategic Plan 2019-2023, page 10

² University of Minnesota Medical School Strategic Plan 2019-2023, page 6

³ University of Minnesota Medical School Strategic Plan 2019-2023, page 8

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Interpersonal and Communication Skills, and Interprofessional Collaboration (P1-6, KP3, ICS 2&3, IPC1)

In addition to the reasons outlined above, this policy conforms to the Centers for Medical & Medicaid Services, “[Revisions and clarifications to Hospital Interpretive Guidelines for Informed Consent](#).”

Procedures

1. Supervisors overseeing educational sensitive exams under anesthesia will operate within their scope of practice.
2. Educational sensitive exams under anesthesia will be performed while under usual supervision. For a detailed policy governing student supervision, see the "Student Supervision During Clinical Activities" Policy.
3. Students will report an alleged violation of the policy to the policy contact as part of their professional responsibilities.
4. If there is any potential for repercussions to the student, named individuals will be excluded from an assessment role for the student.
5. Any suspected retaliation for a student adhering to this policy will be addressed according to the University of Minnesota’s [policy on retaliation](#).

Additional Contacts

Role/Title	Name	Email
Assistant Dean for Curriculum, TC	Katherine E. Murray	kemurray@umn.edu
Director, Clinical Immersion and Transitions	Holly Proffitt	proff022@umn.edu

Definitions

Educational exam: Physical examination performed exclusively for the purpose of demonstrating anatomical findings and improving exam technique and accuracy on the part of a learner. Educational exams are not required to perform a procedure or intervention on behalf of the patient.

Sensitive exam: Pelvic, breast, urogenital, or rectal examination.

Under Anesthesia: Any change in patient consciousness or awareness brought about through medical intervention.

Trauma-informed care: Effective care that promotes healing and recovery by considering and attending to the impact of trauma on the patient’s condition.

Related Information

Visit the [Medical Student Policies Webpage](#) for information on these related policies:

- Student Supervision During Clinical Activities Policy

History

Approved: Education Council, May 2021

Amended: Reviewed and approved, May 2022

Reviewed and Approved: Medical School Education Committee (MSEC), October 2024