Undergraduate Medical Education

Student Assessment Practices and Procedures

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Lead Writer: Student Assessment Committee
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Preamble

This document outlines the procedures specified by the Student Assessment Committee (SAC) in order that courses follow the Student Assessment Policy in assessing curricular objectives. These procedures are developed by the SAC and approved by the MD Program Executive Committee. The procedures will be reviewed annually and revised, as needed, in order to ensure that the policy is followed and administrative practices run smoothly.

1.0   Governance of Student Assessment, Policy and Practice

1.1.   Practices and procedures in this document will be overseen by the SAC and approved by the MD Program Executive Committee. The CFRC will be responsible for ensuring that courses are in compliance with policies and procedures set out by the SAC.

2.0   Narrative Feedback

2.1.   As per the Student Assessment Policy section 2.9, narrative description of student performance must be included as part of the assessment in all courses where student-teacher interaction permits. The process for provision of these narrative assessments must ensure that they are shared with the student and they are reviewed by the Course Director or relevant delegate. Any areas of concern should be discussed by the Course Director at the examiners' meeting.

3.0   Preclerkship Assessment

3.1.   As stated in the Student Assessment Policy section 3.2, an assessment plan must be in place for each course and the schedule of assessment events (formative and summative) and their relative weightings must be displayed on the course page prior to the beginning of the course. The Year Directors will review the assessment schedules of all courses within a term to avoid overloading students with assessments in any given week.

3.2.   It is the role of the Year Director to coordinate set the assessment schedule in a term and to communicate the overall assessment schedule to the students. Across all courses within a term, all reasonable efforts will be made to have no more than two major assessment in any week, where "major assessment" is described as any assessment that requires significant student preparation, regardless of the weight assigned to the assessment. Examples of major assessments would include midterms and unit tests, RATs, OSCEs, many written assignments, many performance based assessments, and many oral presentations. Minor assessments include on-line quizzes, open-book graded team assignments, low-stakes short in-class quizzes, and some short written assignments, self-assessments and peer-assessments.

3.3.   If there are concerns about assessment workload, student input will be sought in planning the assessment schedule, via the student representative on the Student Assessment Committee or delegate.

Weighting of Assessments:

For courses with numeric grades, the suggested weighting of assessments throughout the term is provided in the following table:

Assessment method	Rationale	Recommendations
Quizzes/lab quizzes	Encourage frequent opportunities for self-assessment	
SGL (small group learning) mark – individual	Guide studying and ensure important concepts are learned	
SGL marks – group	Encourage development of collaborator and professionalism competencies. Limit the contribution of group work to individual results unless peer assessment strategies are in place	0-25% per category – the total weighting of all these assessment methods in any one course should not exceed 50% of the final mark
Assignments	Encourage opportunities for non-exam-based assessments, provide feedback about written communication skills	
Midterm examinations or unit tests*	Provide exposure to exam format, guide study efforts, reduce emphasis on final exam	5-25%
Summative examination/assignment	Ensure learning objectives are met at the end of course	45-70%

4.0 Examination Procedures - Pre-clerkship and Clerkship Curricular Courses (section 4.0 of Student Assessment Policy)

4.1. Examination Development

- As per the Student Assessment Policy section 4.1, examinations will be constructed according to the course assessment blueprint.

- For each question used (MCQ or SAQ or OSCE station), the author will provide information about the course objective(s) being assessed, and any MCC presentation or key concept being assessed. Submission of other key words is strongly encouraged. The correct answer must be noted for MCQs, and an answer key must be provided for SAQs and OSCE stations.

- The schedule for examination preparation will be set by the Curricular Coordinators and approved by the Year Directors by beginning of each term.

- The schedule will be as follows:

  Midterm examinations and unit tests:
  T = midterm or unit test
  T minus 2 business days → Midterm or test is posted to ExamSoft
  T minus 1 week → Final Version of exam questions to Curricular Coordinators and Questions uploaded to ExamSoft by the Curricular Coordinator
  T minus 3 weeks → all questions to Curricular Coordinators
  (Notification of timelines to be circulated 2 weeks before the term starts)

  Final examinations:

  T = exam dates
  T minus 2 business days → Exam is posted to ExamSoft
  T minus 2 weeks → Questions uploaded to ExamSoft by the Curricular Coordinator
  T minus 3 weeks → Final Version of exam questions to Curricular Coordinators
  T minus 4 weeks → Exam review by Course director, SAC rep, and Assessment Consultant (+/- Year Director)
  T minus 5 weeks → All questions to Curricular Coordinators
  T minus 9 weeks → Curricular Coordinator to notify Faculty of timelines for exam questions

Examination review:

A draft of the final examination will be reviewed 4 weeks prior to the examination date. This review will be carried out by the course director, the Assessment and Evaluation consultant, and the term student assessment representative. The purpose of the meeting is to review all submitted questions for quality, accuracy of the answer key, and alignment with course objectives and assigned MCC presentations (see section 4.1 in the policy).

4.2.   Post-examination review

- Technical reports of the final examinations will be distributed to the Course Director, the SAC term representative, and the Assessment and Evaluation Consultant prior to the Examiners' meeting to allow for any necessary adjustments to the exam results.

- Technical analysis of the examination will follow applicable sections of the Student Assessment Policy, section 4.0

- If items are deleted from the exam based on this review, marks will be re-calculated prior to the Examiners' meeting.

- A list of deleted items will be given to the Curricular Coordinator for removal from the Question Bank if it was determined that the question itself was flawed after discussion with the Course Director, Assessment and Evaluation Consultant, and the SAC term representative.

- Review of examination difficulty will consist of comparing the descriptive statistics to those from the exams of previous years and across courses within the term and looking at the statistics of old questions versus new.

4.3   Failed Summative Assessments for OSCE's or Final Exams Containing Short Answer Questions (SAQ's)

- All failed summative assessments are remarked prior to Examiners' meeting if at all possible.

- For OSCE examinations, the Chief Examiner reviews videotaped recordings of stations where students had failed or were borderline. Stations are remarked where applicable.

- For final exams containing SAQ's, the SAQ is remarked by the original marker* for that particular question: the new mark stands whether it has gone up or down.

  If the original marker is unable to remark the question, the Course Director will remark the question. Should the Course Director not be able to remark the question the Director of Assessment will advise.

5.0   Meeting of the examiners

5.1.   Purpose: Examiners' meetings will provide a venue for the examiners for a discrete portion of the curriculum to review student progress and achievement in that portion of the curriculum, in order to make decisions about student grading and to make informed recommendations to the Progress & Promotions committee to support students to succeed, about reassessment, and possibly about remediation. The Progress and Promotions committee may accept, reject, or change the recommendations.

5.2.   **Attendees:**

5.2.1.   For the pre-clerkship terms, the attendees include all Course Directors for the term, the SAC representative for the term, the Assessment and Evaluation consultant, the Year Director, a representative from FSGL, and the Academic Advisor. The Year Director will chair the meeting. The curricular coordinator will attend the meeting and will take minutes.

5.2.2.   For the clerkship curricular courses, the attendees will include the course directors, the Year Director, the Assessment and Evaluation consultant, and a Student Assessment committee representative.

5.2.3.   For clerkship clinical courses, the attendees will include the course directors, the Year Director, the Assessment and Evaluation consultant, and a Student Assessment committee representative.

5.3.   **Schedule:**

5.3.1.   For the pre-clerkship and clerkship curricular courses, the Curricular Coordinator will schedule the Examiners' Meeting in conjunction with the Year Director to take place at a time no more than 10 working days after the last exam in the relevant period. The date should be finalized 2 months ahead of time, and communicated by the Curricular Coordinator to all attendees. Where required, the Year Director may call a meeting on an ad-hoc basis.

5.3.2.   For the clerkship clinical courses, the Curricular Coordinator will schedule the Examiners' Meeting in conjunction with the Year Director. These are to take place on a monthly basis and on an ad hoc basis when needed.

5.4.   **At the Meeting – Preclerkship and Clerkship Curricular Courses**

Step 1 – Individual Course Review

The processes outlined in the table below should be carried out for each course being discussed at the examiners' meeting. The curricular coordinator for the Term or course will attend the examiners meeting to take minutes. Formal motions should be made for each decision point.

Focus of Review	*Main Points of Discussion*
Exam Review	Stats, questions deleted, and average comparison tables are reviewed. Are there any extenuating considerations that pertain to the examination? Are there recommendations for the following year? If the exam was felt by the course director and the examiners that an examination was particularly difficult in a given year, consideration may be given to scaling the marks per section 4.5 of the SAC policy.
Clear Passes (65%+ in the course, and 60%+ on the final exam)	The motion will be tabled that it is recommended that all these students passed the course. This is the recommendation that will be brought to P & P by the Year Director.

Failures Applies to any required component of the course, and/or <60% on the final exam – applies equally to the OSCE	If at all possible, all failed summative assessment (e.g. OSCE or final exam) should be remarked or reviewed prior to the Examiners' meeting. If a re-mark beforehand is not possible, it should normally be arranged for as soon as possible after the Examiners' meeting, except where it is mathematically impossible for a student to a achieve a pass due to poor performance in the rest of the course. The criteria by which the student failed the course should be clearly described by the course director (e.g. – failing the final exam, or not completing mandatory assessments) Are there known extenuating circumstances that might explain the failure? What were the student's deficits? Which objectives were not met? (See section 6.6 of the Student Assessment Policy) The motion will be tabled that it is recommended that all these students did NOT pass the course. This is the recommendation that will be brought to P & P by the Year Director. What are other recommendations for P & P to consider? (These are generated to respond to concerns raised about student performance to identify appropriate resources to support the student, and to determine the most appropriate method(s) to reassess the student to ensure they have met course objectives.)
	Failures usually generate recommendations to P & P to have the student meet with the Academic Advisor, a representative from Student Affairs, and the course director. Other recommendations may also be appropriate depending on the student's performance.
Borderline Pass For most courses - course mark between 60 and 65% or if concerns were raised by the course director, for Clinical and Communication Skills, a mark between 60% and 70% on the OSCE is considered a borderline pass.	Are there extenuating circumstances that might explain the student's performance? What were the student's deficits? Which objectives were not met? How were they not met? (See section 6.6 of the Student Assessment Policy) Given that this student has a borderline pass, what are the recommendations to go to P & P? (These are generated to respond to concerns raised about student performance to identify appropriate resources to support the student, and to determine the most appropriate method(s) to ensure continuing success in the curriculum.) Usually: Students will usually only meet with the course director if the student only struggled in one course, but a student may need additional meetings (Year director, academic advisor, student affairs, other) if there is a pattern of performance that is concerning (see Step 2 below).

Other areas of concern These are concerns that are raised about students who are demonstrating challenges in any aspect of the curriculum – e.g., borderline performance in a competency.	For any one course, the Course Director may bring forward concerns about any student who is demonstrating challenges. Examples include concerns about professional behaviour, attendance, time management, communication skills, or concerns about the student's health, based on direct interactions with the student and faculty. The Course Director should provide evidence to support their concerns (e.g. copies of emails, summaries of meeting with the student). The examiners can review these and determine what recommendations they would like to make to P & P about the expressed concerns.

Step 2 – Review of Student Performance Across the Term

The Year Director will lead the discussion about students who are showing concerning patterns of performance across more than one course in the term. The examiners will review this data, to respond to concerns raised about student performance to identify appropriate resources to support the student, and to determine the most appropriate method(s) to ensure continuing success in the curriculum.

For Terms 2, 3, and 4, the FSGL representative will report on any areas of concern from FSGL tutors, or peer or self-assessment at this point in the meeting (as these cross multiple courses).

Usually:

- If concerns are raised in more than one course, the examiners will recommend to P&P that the student meet with the academic advisor, in addition to relevant course directors.
- If concerns are raised about wellness, stress, etc., the examiners will recommend to P&P that the student meet with student affairs.
- If concerns are raised from FSGL tutors or from peer assessments, the examiners may recommend to P&P that the student meet with the FSGL Director, and/or the Academic Advisor, and/or Learner Wellness. If appropriate, they may recommend that P&P refer the student to the Professionalism Advisory Committee.

Other options for the examiners to consider (as recommendations to P&P):

- Meeting with the Year director, if it was thought this might help improve performance in upcoming courses through a discussion about upcoming expectations.
- Referral to the Professionalism Advisory Committee if the issues fall under their Terms of Reference.

5.5.   **Post Examiners' Meeting:**

1. Minutes are generated by the Curricular Coordinator and reviewed by the Year director. They are circulated to the attendees electronically for final approval.
2. These are sent to Progress and Promotions with relevant documentation.
3. The Year director, or designate, presents the results and the recommendations to the P&P committee.
4. The course report including the above statistical information, a review of processes during the term and the de-identified results of the examiners' meeting, including recommendations made to the P&P Committee, will be made to the SAC, by the SAC term representative.

5.6.   **At the examiners meeting – Clerkship Clinical Courses**

This is in development as of August 21, 2014. Anticipated completion is October 2014. The principles will, where possible, reflect those laid out for the pre-clerkship courses.

6.0   Clerkship Assessment

6.1.   As stated in the Student Assessment Policy section 3.2, an assessment plan must be in place for each course (including clerkship courses) and the schedule of assessment events (formative and summative). For the clerkship courses, the Student Assessment clerkship representative reviews these annually and reports to the SAC. Once approved, course plans are used for all iterations of the courses within a given graduating class.

6.2.   Assessments are not weighted in clerkship; students are required to pass each component of the assessment plan for a given clerkship course. The required expectations to achieve a passing grade on any given component of assessment are defined at the Clerkship examiners' meeting. These are displayed on the course page prior to the beginning of the course. Borderline performances on clinical assessments are discussed at Clerkship examiners' meeting. Recommendations from Clerkship examiners' meeting to Progress and Promotions will take into account all clinical assessments for a student within a course.

6.3.   With respect to scheduling – the NBME examinations will be scheduled by the UG office, and approved at the clerkship committee. Normally, students should not be required to study for multiple NBMEs at once, but this might be required if there are extenuating circumstances (such as a rescheduled NBME missed due to illness).

6.4.   All NBME failures will be reported to the Clerkship examiners' meeting, the Progress and Promotions Committee, and to the Academic Advisor at the next available opportunity. The Course Director will explore whether the student requires referral to the Director of Student Affairs because of stress or extenuating personal circumstances.

6.5.   A pattern of two or more NBME failures will be referred to the Academic Advisor and will be brought to the Clerkship Examiners' meeting for a recommendation and to the Progress and Promotions Committee for a decision.

6.6.   Locally developed examinations used in clerkship will undergo the same development and review procedures as in the preclerkship courses.

7.0   Guidelines for timeliness of feedback to students about assessments

7.1.   **Preclerkship and Clerkship Curricular Courses**

   7.1.1.   For the following assessments, the guidelines for providing marks or grades to students are:

- Midterms/unit tests/final exams: 15 working days
- Written assignments: 15 working days
- OSCEs: 20 working days
- All other assessments: 10 working days. If the Course Director anticipates a longer turnaround time, he/she should discuss the assessment with the Year Director, who may refer the concern to the Student Assessment Committee for review.

7.1.2.   Final course marks:

- Final course marks will be visible to students as soon as all assessment marks are entered into the Gradebook and released (i.e., made visible to students in the Gradebook). If students have performed poorly, they will be contacted by the Course Director as soon as possible after the last assessment marks have been entered and released in the Gradebook. This should normally occur 10-15 days after the final exams were written by the students.

- Students will be notified that these marks are not finalized until they are reviewed and approved by the Progress & Promotions Committee at their next meeting.

7.2.   **Clerkship Courses:**

7.2.1.   This is in development as of August 2014, with a projected completion date of October 2014, but the timelines for feedback will be consistent with the 5 weeks maximum time limit noted in the SAC policy.