



# VCU

## Clinical Supervision of Medical Students Policy

### Policy Statement and Purpose

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The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the supervision of medical students in clinical environments. The LCME requires all medical schools to establish and follow processes that ensure medical students in clinical settings are performing functions appropriate for their current level of training, and that these students receive adequate supervision from qualified individuals while performing these functions in order to ensure both patient and student safety.

### Stakeholders

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The faculty, staff, students, and health care professionals supervising students of the VCU School of Medicine are responsible for knowing this standard operating procedure, its contents, and provisions.

### Definitions

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**VCU SOM:** Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine.

**LCME:** Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The group with authority to accredit medical education programs leading to the MD degree in the United States and Canada.

**CC:** Curriculum Council.

**OME:** Office of Medical Education.

**CD:** Course/Clerkship Director, Assistant Director, and/or Co-Director.

**Direct Supervision:** The supervisor is physically present in the clinical environment with the student and patient.

**Indirect Supervision:** The supervisor, while not physically present, is on duty and is immediately available to be called to the physical location of the student and patient.

**Supervisor:** The individual providing direct or indirect supervision of students in a clinical learning environment. Supervisors may include physicians, residents, fellows, and other health care team members supervising an activity within their scope of expertise or practice.

### Responsibilities

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**VCU** School of Medicine

**Supervisor:** Supervisors are responsible for providing direct or indirect supervision of students in the clinical learning environment. These individuals are responsible for ensuring the clinical activities in which students are participating are appropriate for the student's current level of training, ensuring the safety of both the student and patient. Supervisors are responsible for fostering progressive responsibility and providing opportunities for students to demonstrate increasing independence in performing clinical activities when appropriate.

**Students:** Students are responsible for knowing these procedures, understanding their current competency levels as they related to clinical activities, and engaging in direct communication with supervisors to ensure the safety of patients and themselves while in clinical learning environments. Students are also responsible for informing supervisors of their need for assistance and/or additional training prior to performing a clinical activity for which they feel underprepared.

**CD:** CD's are responsible for ensuring these procedures are distributed to and reviewed by faculty, residents, and any health care team member who may be supervising students in a clinical learning environment. CD's are also responsible for ensuring individuals supervising students in clinical learning environments are only providing supervision for activities that fall within their scope of expertise and/or area of focus.

## Procedures

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### Supervision of Students

- All students operating with a clinical learning environment must receive adequate supervision while performing activities.
  - Supervisors
    - Supervisors must only provide supervision for activities that fall within their scope of expertise and/or area of focus.
    - Supervisors must be appropriately trained to provide supervision of medical students in a clinical learning environment.
      - Supervisors must be aware of the learning objectives for the specific clerkship in which they are supervising students.
      - Supervisors must be adequately prepared for the supervision of students, delivery of educational content, and evaluation of students in the clinical learning environment.
    - Supervisors must determine the appropriate level of supervision for individual students within the clinical learning environment based on a variety of factors:
      - Level of training of the student
      - Previous experience and skill of the student with the specific clinical activity
      - Familiarity with the ability of the student to complete the specific clinical activity
      - Input from the student on their ability to perform the specific clinical activity



- Acuity of activity and level of risk to the patient
- CD's
  - CD's must ensure supervisors are adequately prepared for the supervision of students, delivery of educational content, and evaluation of students in the clinical learning environment.
    - CD's will distribute Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) and course/clerkship specific objectives to all individuals operating in a supervisory capacity for students in the clinical learning environment.
    - CD's will ensure all individuals operating in a supervisory capacity for students in the clinical learning environment have access to training content in educational delivery methods, clinical expectations, evaluation, and assessment of medical students.
- Students
  - Students are expected to demonstrate self-awareness of their level of competence and only perform clinical activities that are appropriate for their level of skill and/or training.
    - Students are responsible for informing clinical supervisors if they need additional training or assistance prior to and/or while performing a clinical activity.
  - Students must be directly or indirectly supervised while performing activities in the clinical learning environment, and are responsible for reporting any concern(s) regarding a lack of adequate supervision by following the reporting and escalation procedures outlined in this document.
    - Students must not provide care or execute clinical activities without adequate supervision.
    - Students must not perform clinical procedures without direct supervision.
      - Supervision must occur by a member of the physician healthcare team, or other health professional supervising procedures within their scope of practice.

### Reporting Concerns and Escalation Procedures

- Students who have concerns about the adequacy of supervision they are receiving in a clinical learning environment should address their concerns utilizing the following avenues:
  - Immediate Supervisor
    - Students should address the concern(s) as soon as possible with the immediate supervisor.
  - Course/Clerkship Director, Assistant Director, and/or Co-Director
    - Students who are uncomfortable addressing the concern(s) with the immediate supervisor or feel the concern(s) may need additional attention should notify the CD of the concern(s).



- The Office of Medical Education
  - Students who wish to escalate the concern(s) beyond the CD may address the concern(s) with following individuals within the OME:
    - Assistant/Associate Dean(s) for Student Affairs
    - Assistant/Associate Dean for Clinical Medical Education
    - Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs
- VCU SOM Learning Environment and Mistreatment Webpage
  - Students who wish to report the concern(s) anonymously may submit them utilizing the “Report a Concern” button on the Learning Environment and Mistreatment Webpage on the VCU SOM OME Website.

### **Compliance Reporting**

- Monitoring compliance with these procedures and determining if students are receiving adequate supervision in clinical learning environments will occur through a review of multiple data points:
  - End of Course/Clerkship Evaluations
    - Students completing an End of Course/Clerkship Evaluation will be asked if they received adequate supervision while in the clinical learning environment.
  - Curricular Reviews
    - Individual Course/Clerkship Reviews and Phase Reviews
      - CD’s will provide information regarding their internal processes within the course/clerkship for ensuring the procedures within this document are followed by all individuals providing clinical supervision of students within the course/clerkship.
- These items will be reviewed by the CC on an annual basis, with additional reporting at more frequent intervals available by request of the CC.

### **Related Policies** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Review Cycle and Revision History** \_\_\_\_\_

The policy is reviewed and may be revised by the Curriculum Council as necessary, but at least every three years.

**Current Revision Approved: 07.14.22**

### **Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards** \_\_\_\_\_

LCME Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the MD Degree:

- LCME Standard 9, Element 3