



VCU

Narrative Assessment Policy

Policy Statement and Purpose

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the narrative assessment of students. The LCME requires institutions to have a defined process for the provision of narrative assessment within required courses and clerkships, providing learners with written assessment of their progress, strengths, and opportunities for improvement in order to support professional development and individual growth. To comply with these standards, the VCU SOM has established this policy, outlining the requirements for the inclusion of narrative assessment throughout the curriculum.

Stakeholders

The faculty, staff, and students of the VCU SOM are responsible for knowing this standard operating procedure, its contents, and provisions.

Definitions

CC: Curriculum Council.

CD: Course/Clerkship Director.

Formative Assessment/Feedback: Information communicated to a medical student in a timely manner that is intended to modify the student's thinking or behavior in order to improve subsequent learning and performance in the medical curriculum (LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, Element 9.7).

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.

M1/M2/M3/M4 Years: Refers to the first, second, third, or fourth year of the curriculum, respectively.

MSPE: Medical Student Performance Evaluation.

Narrative Assessment: Written comments from faculty that assess student performance and achievement in meeting specific objectives of a course or clerkship, such as professionalism [and] clinical reasoning" (LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, Element 9.5). These comments should include a description of the learners' strengths and opportunities for improvement.

OME: Office of Medical Education.

Summative Assessment: Evaluation of student learning at the end of a defined instructional unit.



VCU

School of Medicine

VCU SOM: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine.

Responsibilities

CD: The CD is responsible for ensuring adequate opportunities for narrative assessment are included in the delivery of the course/clerkship, and that these opportunities are appropriately timed to maximize student learning.

CC: The CC monitors the curriculum for opportunities that would allow narrative assessment and ensures narrative assessments are distributed appropriately throughout the curriculum.

OME: The OME collaborates with CD's to ensure faculty and residents are adequately trained on how to provide narrative feedback.

Procedures

M1 and M2 Years

- Faculty/facilitators must provide students with narrative assessment on their performance any time a session with twelve (12) or fewer students meets at least four (4) or more times with the same faculty facilitator.
 - In all other instances, narrative assessments are encouraged but not required when teaching methodologies are appropriate (examples: simulation, history and physical gathering, assessments of reasoning).
- During the M1 and M2 years, students will receive narrative assessment that includes one or more of the following aspects:
 - Clinical skills, as observed during medical interviews, patient presentations, physical examinations and from medical documentation
 - Teamwork skills, interpersonal communication and professionalism during small group and medical simulation sessions
 - Use of evidence, fluency of written communication and critical thinking during required experiences
- Narrative assessment may be summative or formative

M3 and M4 Years

- All required clerkships, acting internships, and clinical electives must include narrative assessment on all clinical assessment and feedback forms, at the mid-rotation feedback session, and summative narrative assessment of overall performance on the final performance form.
- Narrative summative assessments for all M3 clerkships and narrative summative assessments for M4 acting internships and clinical electives through block 4 are included in the MSPE.

Related Policies

Formative Assessment and Feedback Policy
Grade Appeals in the Clerkship Phase Policy
Medical Student Performance Evaluation Policy

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.

Currently Approved Version: 06.11.2026

Previously Approved Versions: 03.09.2023

Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards

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

- LCME Standard 9, Element 5