



UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

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Office of the Dean
School of Medicine
SOM-DPM-025-2020
December 30, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR FACULTY, STAFF AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

SUBJECT: Narrative Assessment

A. Reissuance and Purpose. This Dean's Policy Memorandum (DPM) reissues School of Medicine (SOM) DPM-012-2014 "Narrative Assessment," (*Reference (a)*) and establishes policy regarding the use of narrative assessment in required courses, modules, and clerkships, in compliance with current accreditation requirements from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (*See Enclosure 1*).

B. References. *See Enclosure 1.*

C. Definition. *See Enclosure 2.*

D. Policies and Responsibilities.

1. A narrative description of medical student performance, including non-cognitive achievement, must be provided to students during and/or at the end of each required module, course, or clerkship, as part of their assessment, wherever teacher-student interaction permits this form of feedback. Narrative feedback is considered a vital assessment tool within the overall program of assessment that allows for more rich individualized information than standard checklist forms and exam scores can provide.

2. Commonly used narrative assessments in the pre-clerkship period include the written and oral feedback provided to students regarding their clinical and pathology case write-ups, small group participation, oral and/or written presentations, and reflective papers.

3. Commonly used narrative assessments in the clerkship and post-clerkship periods include the provision of written and oral feedback regarding their clinical skills, clinical notes and write-ups, small group and/or team participation, oral presentations, reflective papers, as well as their demonstrated teamwork, leadership and professionalism. The feedback should focus on whether the student is meeting expectations for their level of training, specific strengths, and a plan for next steps for improvement.

4. These assessments are shared with the students upon completion of an individual activity and/or at the completion of the module/clerkship.

E. Effective Date. This DPM effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis N. Pangaro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Louis N. Pangaro, MD, MACP
Interim Dean
School of Medicine

Enclosures:

1. References
2. Definitions

REFERENCES

(a) SOM DPM-012-2014, "Narrative Assessment," dated September 17, 2014 (herby canceled).

(b) Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), "Function and Structures of a Medical School," Element 9.5: NARRATIVE ASSESSMENT: A medical school ensures that a narrative description of a medical student's performance, including his or her 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. (Functions and Structure of a Medical School: Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the M.D. Degree, dated March 2014 effective July 1, 2015).

DEFINITIONS

1. **Module:** A module is the basic organizational format for the Pre-Clerkship Instructional Period. A module is generally based upon an organ-system theme to include significant basic and clinical science with particular attention given to anatomic, physiologic, pathologic, microbiologic, pharmacologic, and clinical correlations. Modules may also contain other academic features that enhance the overall theme of the modules and/or contribute to the development of a military-medical physician. There are seven pre-clerkship modules, all of which include clinical skills and other components related to the professional development of a physician.
2. **Course:** A course is an organizational format used in both the Pre-clerkship and Post-clerkship period to denote educational content that is primarily determined by a single department or in which cumulative knowledge is not assessed in the same way as modules and clerkships. In the case of the Military Medicine 100 and Military Medicine 200 curriculum, the content is largely determined by the Military and Emergency Medicine Department. Another example is 'Bench to Bedside and Beyond' which is designed to introduce new information or reinforce information that was previously taught in the curriculum.
3. **Pre-Clerkship Period:** The Pre-Clerkship Period extends from the first day of instruction until the completion of all seven modules. It contains basic science content accompanied by extensive clinical education and military medical studies and field exercises (Military Medicine 100).
4. **Clerkship Period:** The Clerkship Period extends for twelve months following the Pre-Clerkship Period and consists of significant focused clinical exposure to the disciplines of Family Medicine, Surgery, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. During the Clerkship Period there may also be an opportunity for a selective experience.
5. **Post-Clerkship Period:** The Post-Clerkship Period consists of a series of four week clinical clerkships and sub-internships, a six week educational experience known as Bench to Bedside and Beyond (B-3), Military Medicine 200 (which includes Military Contingency Medicine/Operation Bushmaster), and a six week review period in preparation for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1. Students must also sit for the USMLE Step 2 CK and USMLE Step 2 CS. Students are encouraged to participate in the Capstone Program if this fits into their educational plan.
6. **Assessment:** Assessment is the process by which information is gathered about student performance in the curriculum. Ascribing a meaning or value to those assessments is the process of evaluation, and an administrative decision about assessments and evaluation leads to a grade.