

## ***Guidelines for the assessment of MD students in academic difficulty – Clerkship (Years 3 and 4)***

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**Approval body:** MD Program Curriculum Committee

**Date of original adoption:** 7 December 2010

**Date of last review:** 20 June 2017

**Date of last amendment:** 20 June 2017

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### **1. Introduction**

“Academic difficulty” is a comprehensive term used to refer to all students who are identified, in accordance with these *Guidelines*, as demonstrating performance below expectations in the MD Program. These *Guidelines* are intended to support and ensure student achievement of course objectives and program competencies, with the ultimate goal being promotion through and graduation from the MD Program.

### **2. Mechanisms for identifying performance below expectations**

There are two formal mechanisms for identifying performance below expectations in Years 3 and 4 of the MD Program, as follows:

- i. *Based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and course grades:* In order to achieve credit in a Clerkship course, rotation or integrated OSCE, a student must achieve minimum grade and other performance requirements, as described in the MD Program’s [Standards for grading and promotion](#). A student who does not achieve the minimum grade requirements will be identified as being in academic difficulty in one of three ways:
  - a. *Borderline performance on marked assessments in a course:* Numerical marks for individual assessments within a Clerkship course that fall at or above 60% and below the ‘clear pass’ threshold established by the Clerkship course committee are deemed borderline. Borderline performance on an assessment, as well as marginal failure of an assessment, may lead to the assignment of ‘extra work,’ which is a short program of additional study, assignments, and/or clinical experience to ensure that the student has met the standards of the course. Procedures with respect to assignment of extra work assigned in response to borderline performance on marked assessments in a course are provided in Section 3.a.
  - b. *Borderline performance in a course:* Either a grade of “Credit (CR)” in a course or a program of formal remediation may be recommended to the Board of Examiners, at the discretion and in the best judgement of the Clerkship Director or course director, if a student:
    - has achieved an overall numerical grade in the course that is greater than or equal to 60% but less than 70%, or
    - has achieved an overall numerical grade of 70% or higher but has not met all additional expectations for marked assessments established by the course.Procedures with respect to borderline performance in a course are provided in Section 3.b.
  - c. *Unsatisfactory performance in a course based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and/or extra work:* A program of formal remediation will normally be recommended to the Board of Examiners if a student:
    - has not achieved a numerical grade of 60% in a course, or
    - has not performed satisfactorily on any non-marked learning activities of the course, including logging of clinical experiences in courses where this is relevant, by the time of the Board’s meeting, or

- has not achieved a satisfactory score, as established in advance, on any extra work assigned in response to borderline performance.

Procedures with respect to unsatisfactory performance in a course based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and extra work are provided in Section 3.c.

- ii. *Based on professionalism assessments and critical incident reports:* Satisfactory professionalism competency is a requirement to achieve credit in every course, and assessment of professionalism competency is included in every course. Satisfactory professionalism competency is required to progress from one year level to the next and to graduate from the program. Assessment of professionalism takes place through competency-based professionalism assessments. Professionalism incidents that require immediate action are addressed through critical incident reports. The MD Program's professionalism standards of achievement and procedures to address unsatisfactory progress with respect to professionalism are described in the [Guidelines for assessment of student professionalism](#).

### 3. Procedures to address performance below expectations in clerkship

(excluding professionalism assessments and critical incident reports)

#### a. Borderline performance on marked assessments in a course (extra work)

Following the identification of borderline performance on marked assessments in a course:

- Additional educational experiences and/or assessments (i.e. extra work) may be assigned to a student at the discretion of the course director. The course director is responsible, in consultation with the appropriate curriculum leaders, for the design and content of extra work, including the level of performance expected of the student to demonstrate that they have met the standard for successful completion of the course.
- The student will be informed orally and/or in writing that their performance is below expectations, that the Board of Examiners may be informed of this fact, and their performance may be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- The student may be required to meet with the Clerkship Director, at the discretion of the Clerkship Director or at the request of the course director.
- The timing of the proposed extra work will be determined by the course director in consultation with the student, course committee, and Clerkship Director. The extra work must be successfully completed in order for the student to be eligible to graduate from the program.
- The Clerkship Director and Clerkship Committee will be informed of any extra work.
- If the extra work is successfully completed, the original mark achieved on the assessment will be allowed to stand
- If the extra work is not successfully completed, a program of formal remediation will normally be recommended to the Board of Examiners, in accordance with the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#). Procedures with respect to unsatisfactory performance in a course based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and extra work are provided in Section 3.c.

#### b. Borderline performance in a course (remediation)

Following the identification of borderline performance in a course, either a grade of "Credit (CR)" in a course or a program of formal remediation may be recommended to the Board of Examiners, at the discretion and in the best judgement of the Clerkship Director or course director. If the decision is to recommend a program of formal remediation:

- The student will be required to meet with the Clerkship Director or delegate, as determined by the program.
- The student will be informed both orally and in writing by the Clerkship Director that their

performance is below expectations, that the Board of Examiners will be informed of this fact, and that their performance will be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners. Students will also be informed of the consequences of not successfully completing the required remediation, as set out in the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#). The student must be fully informed of their rights, including their right to provide a written submission to the Board of Examiners in the event that their performance is being reviewed by the Board.

- iii. The student may be required to meet with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs or delegate for the purpose of exploring health-related or personal reasons for their unsatisfactory progress and potential supports needed.
- iv. Subject to the approval of the Board of Examiners, the course director is responsible, in consultation with the appropriate curriculum leaders, for the design and content of the remedial work, including the level of performance expected of the student to demonstrate that they have met the standard for successful completion of the course. Specific performance criteria that may differ from those normally used in a course may be required for successful completion of remedial work. The timing and duration of the remediation will be dependent on the specific course in question, and will be determined by the course director in consultation with the student, course committee, and Clerkship Director. A program of formal remediation may include the repetition of one or more courses when they are next offered the following year, which may require a delay in promotion to the next year or level of medical training, including graduation from the program.
- v. Following the specified time period for completion, the course director will review the student's progress and decide, in consultation with the Clerkship Director, if the student has successfully completed the formal program of remediation.
  - a. If the course director decides that the student has successfully completed the formal program of remediation, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Examiners that the student be granted Credit for the course, with a grade of 60%, in accordance with the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#).
  - b. If the course director decides that the student has not successfully completed the formal program of remediation, the recommendation to the Board of Examiners from the Student Progress Committee will be governed by the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#).
- vi. The Board of Examiners will make the final determination regarding successful completion of the remediation.

**c. Unsatisfactory performance in a course based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and/or extra work (remediation)**

Following the identification of unsatisfactory performance in a course based on marked assessments, non-marked learning activities and/or extra work:

- vii. The student will be required to meet with the Clerkship Director or delegate, as determined by the program.
- viii. The student will be informed both orally and in writing by the Clerkship Director that their performance is below expectations, that the Board of Examiners will be informed of this fact, and that their performance will be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners. Students will also be informed of the consequences of not successfully completing the required remediation, as set out in the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#). The student must be fully informed of their rights, including their right to provide a written submission to the Board of Examiners in the event that their performance is being reviewed by the Board.
- ix. The student may be required to meet with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs or delegate for the purpose of exploring health-related or personal reasons for their unsatisfactory progress and potential supports needed.
- x. Subject to the approval of the Board of Examiners, the course director is responsible, in consultation



with the appropriate curriculum leaders, for the design and content of the remedial work, including the level of performance expected of the student to demonstrate that they have met the standard for successful completion of the course. Specific performance criteria that may differ from those normally used in a course may be required for successful completion of remedial work. The timing and duration of the remediation will be dependent on the specific course in question, and will be determined by the course director in consultation with the student, course committee, and Clerkship Director. A program of formal remediation may include the repetition of one or more courses when they are next offered the following year, which may require a delay in promotion to the next year or level of medical training, including graduation from the program.

- xi. Following the specified time period for completion, the course director will review the student's progress and decide, in consultation with the Clerkship Director, if the student has successfully completed the formal program of remediation.
  - c. If the course director decides that the student has successfully completed the formal program of remediation, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Examiners that the student be granted Credit for the course, with a grade of 60%, in accordance with the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#).
  - d. If the course director decides that the student has not successfully completed the formal program of remediation, the recommendation to the Board of Examiners from the Student Progress Committee will be governed by the MD Program's [Standards for grading and promotion](#).
- xii. The Board of Examiners will make the final determination regarding successful completion of the remediation.

#### **4. Procedures to address performance below expectations based on professionalism assessments and critical incident reports**

The MD Program's professionalism standards of achievement and procedures to address unsatisfactory progress with respect to professionalism are described in the [Guidelines for assessment of student professionalism](#).