

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL TRAINEES IN ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY –

PRECLERKSHIP

Revised December 7, 2010

Approved at Undergraduate Medical Education Executive Committee December 7, 2010

PERFORMANCE BELOW EXPECTATIONS

Categories of weak performance that may be grounds for failing to achieve credit in a course and/or a need for extra work and remediation:

In order to achieve credit in a course, a student must demonstrate satisfactory performance in each of three separate, though related, domains:

1. They must achieve a satisfactory minimum overall grade in the course (60% or higher).
2. They must also satisfactorily complete those particular components that are specified by each individual course as being required for credit in the course
3. They must also demonstrate appropriate professional behaviour. While a small number of minor lapses of professional behaviour is acceptable, a large number of minor lapses or a major lapse will trigger a process that can lead to the student failing to achieve credit in the course. This is described more fully in sections (iv) and (v) below, and also in the Professionalism Procedures found on the Office of the Registrar website.

Remediation

The criteria for automatically reporting to the Board of Examiners include a grade below 60% overall in the course. Also, if a student is not successful in completing a required program of extra work in a course (as described below), then they will also be reported to the Board. The Board may then determine that the student should receive a grade of "No credit" (failure) in the course, and the student will normally be required to complete remediation and reexamination. However, the Board may determine that the student should in fact receive credit for the course after review of comprehensive information about the student's performance. In this situation the referral to the Board of Examiners will remain on the student's file .

If a student demonstrates major lapses or a significant number of minor lapses in professionalism then this may also be considered grounds for a grade of "No credit" and this too may be reported to the Board of Examiners according to the usual process of managing lapses in professionalism.

Specific activities deemed likely to be helpful to the student, e.g. educational testing, exam-taking skills classes, and further work in areas of weakness, may be required at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.

Extra work

Even if a student achieves a grade of 60% or higher in a course as a whole and has had satisfactory professional behaviour, they may still be required to carry out extra work in that course, which may include assessment. This decision will be based on criteria specified for the particular course. These students are considered "borderline" and they are dealt with in section (ii) below.

Furthermore, weaknesses in two or more courses that by themselves might not be deemed to merit a grade of "no credit" in any one of them, may still lead a student to be required to carry out extra work and/or to be reported to the Board of Examiners under the procedures specified in section (iii) below.

If a student demonstrates a single major lapse in professionalism or the equivalent in minor lapses, then this may be considered "borderline" performance and lead to a requirement for extra work in professionalism mandated by the Preclerkship Director in consultation with the PreClerkship Committee; this extra work may include assessment.

PROCEDURES

i. Failure of a course due to overall standing of less than 60%:

Remediation

a) The course director in consultation with the appropriate course committee/faculty/academy director, subject to the approval of the Board of Examiners, will be responsible for the design and content of remedial work and will determine the level of performance expected in supplemental evaluation(s) such that students may meet the standard for successful completion of the course.

b) The student will be required to meet with the Preclerkship Director.

c) The student will be informed both orally and in writing 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 need to be informed that the consequences of not successfully completing the required remediation may include needing to repeat the course in the following academic year and therefore delaying their progress in the undergraduate medical education program. The student will be informed that they have the opportunity to respond to allegations of academic difficulty, especially if related to professionalism. 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.

d) The student may be required to meet with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, for the purpose of exploring reasons for performance below expectations and potential supports needed.

e) The Preclerkship Committee will be informed of the proposed educational experience and assessment for each student.

f) In the Preclerkship, the timing of the remediation will be determined in consultation with the course director, course committee, academy director, Preclerkship Director and student. The duration of the remediation will be dependent on the specific course in which the failure to achieve credit occurred.

g) Specific performance criteria that may differ from those normally used in a course or rotation may be required for successful completion of remedial work.

h) Upon successful completion of this remedial program, the course director will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the student be granted Credit for the course and that the mark be raised to 60%.

i) The Board of Examiners will make the final determination regarding successful completion of the remediation.

ii. Borderline performance, e.g. a mark less than 70% or a mark that is two standard deviations or more below the class mean in one or more of the components of a course or as determined for the specific course

a) At the discretion of the course director, a student with borderline performance may be required to complete extra work, consisting of additional education experience and assessment. The course director and relevant faculty will be responsible for the design and content of extra work and the level of performance which will be expected of the student so that they can meet the standard for successful completion of the course.

b) The student will be informed orally and/or in writing (by electronic mail) that their performance is below expectations, that the Board of Examiners *may* be informed of this fact, and that their performance *may* be discussed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

c) The Preclerkship Director and Preclerkship Committee will be informed of any proposed additional educational experience and assessment.

d) The student may be required to meet with the Preclerkship Director at the discretion or the request of the course director.

e) The timing of the proposed extra work and assessment will be determined in consultation with the course director, course committee, student and Preclerkship Director.

f) This educational experience and assessment must be successfully completed prior to the student being permitted to start the next year of their undergraduate medical education program.

g) Upon successful completion of the educational experience and assessment, the original grade will be allowed to stand.

h) The course director will not normally inform the Board of Examiners of such students unless the student does not achieve an acceptable level of performance in the extra work and assessment that is implemented by the course director. If that is the case, the course director will inform the Preclerkship Committee, and the student will be required to meet with the Preclerkship Director and, if necessary, with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs. In such a case, the Board of Examiners will be informed of the situation and will make the final determination regarding the need for formal remediation.

iii. Borderline academic performance in two or more courses

- a) The Preclerkship Director will identify such students and request a meeting to determine whether the student should meet with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, and if specific educational activities and evaluation are required beyond or in place of the extra work assigned by the relevant course directors.
- b) The student will be informed in writing by electronic mail that their performance is below expectations and that the Board of Examiners will be informed of this fact.
- c) The Preclerkship Director will inform the Preclerkship Committee of such students.
- d) The Preclerkship Committee will determine what additional educational experiences, resources and assessment may be indicated and the timing of such a program.
- e) This educational experience and assessment must be completed successfully prior to the student being permitted to start the next year of their undergraduate medical education program.
- f) Upon successful completion of the educational experience and assessment, the original grades will be allowed to stand.
- g) The course director will inform the Board of Examiners of such students. If the student does not achieve an acceptable level of performance on the extra work and assessment assigned by the course directors of the courses in question and/or by the Preclerkship Committee, the Board of Examiners will make the final determination regarding a formal remediation program. The student will be informed that they have the opportunity to respond to allegations of academic difficulty, especially if related to professionalism. 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.

iv. A major lapse in professionalism

For details, see the flowchart “Steps in Professionalism Review”.

- a) The course director will meet with any student who exhibits a major lapse and confirm that such a lapse has occurred. If this is confirmed, the course director will inform the Preclerkship Director.
- b) The student will be required to meet with the Preclerkship Director to discuss issues identified and the student viewpoint, with input from faculty members and course director(s) as appropriate. The Preclerkship Director will make a final determination as to whether the Major Lapse should stand.
- c) If so, the student will also be required to meet with the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs. The student will be discussed at the Preclerkship Committee in camera discussion of Students in Academic Difficulty. A plan for extra work in professionalism will be determined.
- d) The Preclerkship Director, in consultation with the course director, will determine whether to inform the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education. If the lapse is deemed to be particularly significant, and/or if there are further lapses, then a meeting between the student and the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, will be required.
- e) In cases where the Preclerkship Director has determined that the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, should be informed of the situation, the Vice-Dean will then determine whether to inform the Board of Examiners, which will make the final determination regarding the need for formal remediation. The student will have the opportunity to respond to allegations of academic difficulty, especially if related to professionalism. 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.
- f) Specific performance criteria that may differ from those normally used in a course or rotation may be imposed for successful completion of remedial work.
- g) Upon successful completion of this remedial program, the course director will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the student be granted Credit for the course.
- h) The Board of Examiners will make the final determination regarding successful completion of the remediation. In the event that remediation in professionalism is not successful, the Board of Examiners may determine that the student cannot proceed to the next year of the program, and/or may take other action according to its terms of reference.

v. Multiple minor lapses in professionalism

For details, see the flowchart “Steps in Professionalism Review”.

- a) The course director will meet with any student who exhibits three or more minor lapses in professionalism and confirm that such lapses have occurred. If this is confirmed, the course director will inform the Preclerkship Director.
- b) The student will be invited to meet with the Preclerkship Director to discuss issues identified and the student viewpoint. The purpose of the meeting is educational. Referral to the Associate Dean for Health Professions Student Affairs will be offered. The Preclerkship Director may determine that on further review the issues reported as minor lapses to the course director do not constitute minor lapses, and if so will adjust the student’s record accordingly.
- c) If there are further minor lapses of professionalism beyond the initial three lapses, then the student will be required to meet with the Preclerkship Director. Referral to the Associate Dean for Health Professions Student Affairs will be offered. The Preclerkship Director may determine that in fact the minor lapses did not occur, and if so will adjust the student’s record accordingly. Otherwise, the student will be discussed at the Preclerkship Committee in camera discussion of Students in Academic Difficulty. A plan for extra work in professionalism will be determined.
- d) If minor lapses continue to be identified, and are confirmed by the course director, then the student will be considered to have the equivalent of a Major Lapse in professionalism, and the procedures described above in section (iv. **A major lapse in professionalism**) will be followed.

COMMUNICATION REGARDING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

a) Communication to the Preclerkship Director from the course director regarding student performance should take place in a timely fashion, within two weeks of the time of an assessment that triggers the concern or within two weeks of the end of the course, whichever is earlier.

b) Communication between course directors, course officials, and Academy directors regarding a student's performance, including concerns about professionalism, may take place at UME leadership meetings (e.g. Preclerkship Committee, Academy Directors meeting, etc.) at the discretion of the Preclerkship Director or upon instruction from the Board of Examiners.

c) The student should be informed of such communications in a timely manner.

d) The student should have the opportunity to respond to allegations of academic difficulty, especially if related to professionalism. 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.

e) In the event that program modifications are proposed:

- i. Every effort must be made by course directors, Academy directors, and other faculty to ensure a confidential process and an environment of positive expectation among those responsible for the supplemental supervision, teaching, and evaluation.
- ii. If appropriate, the student should be involved in planning program modifications.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCUMENTATION BY COURSE DIRECTORS AFTER MEETING WITH STUDENT, DISCUSSIONS WITH COURSE COMMITTEE, PRECLERKSHIP DIRECTOR AND PRECLERKSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION TO PRECLERKSHIP DIRECTOR

No credit (failure): Remediation

1. Remediation being proposed to Board of Examiners

- a) Include information documenting that the student is in academic difficulty and on what basis (e.g. marks on evaluations). List the criteria for passing the specific course.
- b) Provide a description of the proposal for remediation, including where and when it is to take place.
- c) Provide a description of what the evaluations will be and the performance level to be achieved.
- d) Copy the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, the Faculty Registrar, and the Preclerkship Administrative Coordinator.
- e) Communication with the student will consist of the following:
 1. Students will have been notified about their performance being reviewed by the Board of Examiners prior to the Board of Examiners meeting, as described above.
 2. The Board of Examiners will communicate directly with the student, outlining the specific requirements of their remediation.
 3. The course director will communicate directly with the student with respect to the specific steps of the remediation process.

2. Following completion of remediation

- a) Include a description of the remediation program that was carried out.
- b) Include the results of the evaluation.
- c) If the remediation was successful, provide a recommendation that the grade in the course be recorded as Credit.
- d) If the remediation was not successful, indicate how the student's performance was deficient, provide any further recommendations, and state that Credit has not yet been obtained for the course.
- e) Copy the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, the student's Academy Director, the Faculty Registrar, the Preclerkship Administrative Coordinator, and the student.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCUMENTATION BY COURSE DIRECTORS AFTER MEETING WITH STUDENT, DISCUSSIONS WITH COURSE COMMITTEE, PRECLERKSHIP DIRECTOR AND PRECLERKSHIP COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION TO PRECLERKSHIP DIRECTOR

Borderline performance: Extra work

1. Extra work and evaluation proposed

- a) Include information documenting that in your opinion and that of your course committee/faculty, the student requires extra work and subsequent evaluation to meet the performance standards of your course.
- b) Provide a description of what the extra work will be, and where and when it will take place.
- c) Provide a description of what the evaluation will be and the performance level to be achieved.
- d) Include a statement that through successful completion of the extra work and evaluation, the student will meet the requirements for successful completion of the course.
- e) Indicate that if the extra work and evaluation do not meet the standard of performance required in the course, the Board of Examiners will be informed and subsequent formal remediation may be required.
- f) Copy the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, the Faculty Registrar, the Preclerkship Administrative Coordinator, and the student.

Send a copy of the letter to the student by email or registered mail, and require that the student acknowledge receipt of the letter.

2. Following completion of extra work

- a) Provide a description of the extra work and results of the evaluation.
- b) If the extra work was successful, include your recommendation that the student's grade be allowed to stand.
- c) Copy the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs, the Faculty Registrar, the Preclerkship Administrative Coordinator, and the student.
- d) If the student does not meet the performance standard of the course, indicate that you will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the student be considered for formal remediation and then copy the Vice Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, in addition to the above.

Appendix 1

Step 1: Initial Response to Minor Professionalism Lapses

Pre-clerkship/Clerkship Director is notified of professionalism learning issues when 3 or more evaluations with minor lapses are confirmed by course directors



Director sends email to student and offers **optional** appointment to discuss issues identified and student viewpoint with a collegial conversation. The purpose of the meeting is educational. Coaching and referral to the Associate Dean for Students Affairs is offered.

After collegial conversation and contacting Faculty or Course Director as necessary, Pre-clerkship/Clerkship Director feels minor lapses did not occur. Record is adjusted

Continued monitoring and documentation of process.

Step 2: Second Response to Continuing Minor Professionalism Lapses

Pre-clerkship/Clerkship Director is notified of continued professionalism learning issues if further minor lapses follow Step 1 response.



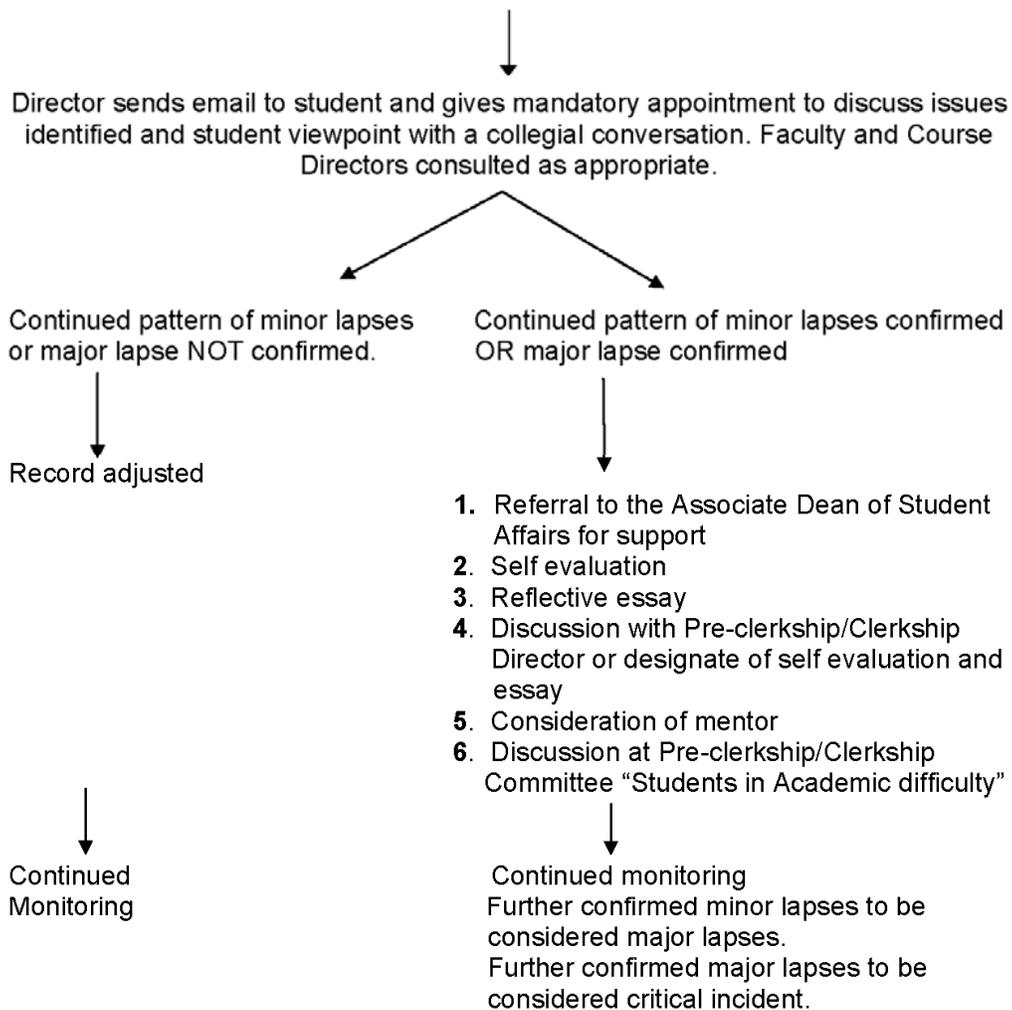
Director sends email to student and gives **mandatory** appointment to discuss issues identified and student viewpoint with a collegial conversation. Contact is made with Faculty or Course Directors identifying continued issues. Coaching and referral to the Associate Dean for Student affairs is offered.

After collegial conversation and contacting Faculty or Course Director as necessary
Pre-clerkship/Clerkship Director feels minor lapses did not occur
Record is adjusted

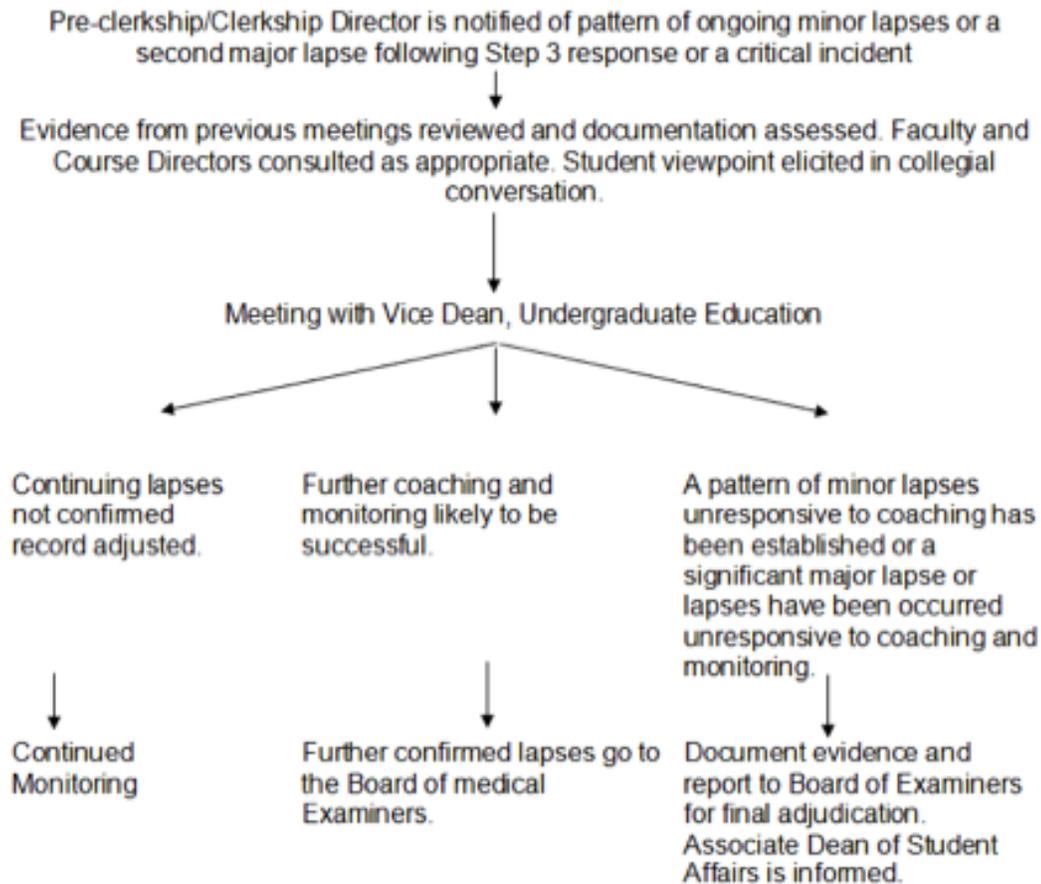
Continued monitoring and documentation of meeting.
Student informed that further lapses will be considered major lapse.

Step 3: Third Response to Continuing Minor Professionalism Lapses or Initial Major Lapse

Pre-clerkship/Clerkship Director is notified of continued professionalism learning issues if further minor lapses follow Step 2 response
OR initial major lapse confirmed by course director



Step 4: Second response to continued major professionalism lapses

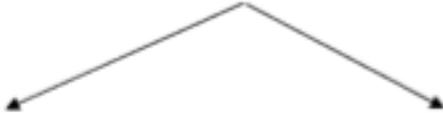


Step 5: Review by the Board of Examiners

Board of Examiners receives information from the Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, and others as required. Course directors may contact the Board directly if they need to appeal previous decisions



Board discusses material and reviews documentation



In view of Board of Examiners, unprofessional behaviour has occurred and has responded to monitoring and coaching.



Any further lapses to be reported to the Board of Examiners. Board of Examiners to advise on recording in academic file

In view of Board of Examiners, unprofessional behaviour has occurred and has NOT responded to monitoring and coaching.



Remedial action or dismissal from medical school is specified. Information is recorded on the student's academic file.