

MBBS Program Assessment Guidelines

Intent

To provide guidance for staff and students about the management of the assessment of learning and performance of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) Program.

Scope

All staff involved in the teaching, assessment and administration of the MBBS Program and all students enrolled in the MBBS Program.

Acknowledgment

The MBBS Program Assessment Guidelines have been developed in accordance with the [JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment \(LTA\) Policy](#).

Guidelines

1. Guiding Principles for Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of learning as it provides information about the degree to which students have mastered the learning outcomes.

Assessment in the MBBS program provides regular feedback on how individual students are performing against the learning outcomes. Assessment will be matched to the learning outcomes of the curriculum, and will:

- Assess knowledge and understanding of the course content,
- Have an emphasis on assessing the learning of concepts, applied knowledge and skills,
- Include assessment of effective acquisition of the required skills,
- Be relevant to patient care and professional development, and
- Include assessment of development of appropriate attitudes toward the role of a doctor and his/her responsibilities to the community.

Assessment requirements and the semester/yearly overviews are outlined in each year level Subject/Year Outline, available on Learn JCU, Subject/Year Outline Tab, in the relevant year level.

Assessment can be Formative or Summative.

Staff involved in Assessment are obliged to disclose any potential or identified Conflict of Interest.

2. Formative Assessment

Formative Assessment is designed to help students recognise and develop strengths and areas of knowledge and skill that require improvement. Likewise, it assists staff in understanding how students are progressing and allows (if necessary) revision of certain content to be made in a timely manner. In formative assessment, marks do not count in the final subject result.

Formative tasks may take the form of:

- Year 1-3 Online Weekly Quizzes: These are non-compulsory self-study tests comprising 10-15 questions per module each week.
- Short interactive quizzes that Academic staff may run during Lectures, Guided Learning Sessions or Synthesising Sessions.

- Professionalism: The Professionalism Portfolio aims to provide feedback to students on their professional and ethical reflective development and to review the evidence of progress in these domains. The assessment process is spread over several assessment items, which differ from year to year. (Note that in addition to this formative review, the Professionalism Portfolio may also contribute to summative assessment in each year).
- Formative assessment tasks that model assessment methods that will be used in the end of semester exams.

3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is used to determine the degree to which a student has met the learning outcomes and to progress in the course of study. Student performance on summative assessment components support the pass/fail decisions by indicating that students know enough to proceed to the next stage of education. It includes both graded assessments and hurdles.

- Hurdles are assessment components that all students **must** complete to a pre-determined level as per the task requirement, in order to progress to the following year but which do not contribute to the final result that is converted to a grade. Students must remediate the hurdle assessment until competency is achieved. Remediation could entail re-doing the hurdle.
- Graded assessment components are those for which students receive a mark that contributes to the final result that is converted to a grade. Students might be required to pass one or more piece of graded assessment as per the task requirement.

Some graded assessment items contribute to determine the recipients of the JCU and the College of Medicine & Dentistry (CMD) Prizes, bursaries and scholarships.

3.1. On-Course Assessment

- On-Course Assessment is the summative assessment that students have to do outside the examinations period. It can take the form of a hurdle or graded item.
- These assessment items are compulsory and require formal documentation. The tasks may include Quizzes, Professionalism Portfolio, Essays, Assignments, Posters, Oral presentations, Supervisor Report, Log Book, etc. On-course assessment links directly with the learning outcomes, available in the relevant subject outlines on each year's LearnJCU site.
- Students who do not complete all on-course assessments to a satisfactory standard will have a Results Withheld (RW) grade recorded against their academic results. Results Withheld processes are outlined in the Incomplete Course Components Process.
- All on-course assessment items must be completed to a satisfactory standard in the current teaching period (1 or 2), in order to meet the subject progression requirements. Note that a 'satisfactory standard' may not require an item to receive a passing grade, but should reflect a demonstrable attempt to meet the requirements of the assessment items.
 - The pass mark for on-course assessment in the Foundation years (1-3) is 50%. The pass mark for hurdles can be higher and will be indicated in the Item description or Year level Assessment overview, in the Subject Outline.
 - The pass mark for on-course assessment in the Clinical years (4-5) is 60%.
 - If a task is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the student may be required to resubmit and/or re-sit the assessment task until a satisfactory level is reached. The original grade will stand and will be included in the calculation of the final result if the item is graded.
 - Marked items will be returned to students in a timely manner, accompanied by written feedback. Students in MBBS 1 to 4 will receive their work marked via the Home Group or Clinical Pathological Case (CPC) tutorials. MBBS 5 and 6 students will be notified when and where they can collect their work.
 - Students may discuss individual assessments with the module/year coordinator and/or the Site Academic Advisor. Advice and remediation may be arranged as required.

3.1.1. Principles of quality on-course assessment

- As required by university policy, all on-course assessment items should demonstrate student proficiency of subject or course learning outcomes (LTA CP4) and reflect the principles of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) and Subject Outline policies.
- English language and numeracy development should be an explicit focus in course assessment plan in accordance with the English Language and Numeracy Policy. In addition, students should receive adequate explanatory and diagnostic feedback so that students are able to improve their practice (LTA CP8).
- Time should be set aside by lecturers to discuss the marking criteria with students before the final submission date.
- The marking systems will be standardised across the programs according to the following criteria. Variations to this approach may be possible in exceptional circumstances but need to be approved prospectively by the Assessment Committee and relevant program groups.
 1. The graded system used for marking written tasks and oral presentations is:
 - Clear Fail
 - Borderline Fail (Borderline Pass is also used for the Clinical years)
 - At expected standard
 - Above expected standard
 - Outstanding
 2. Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory is used where students meet the stated levels of competence
 3. For clinical examination or clinical skills, student performance is graded in terms of competence against a particular standard:
 - Fail: (Significant/critical omissions or errors)
 - Borderline Fail/Borderline Pass: (occasional or some omissions or errors)
 - At expected standard: (Good, isolated minor omissions or errors, clearly demonstrates standard expected)
 - Outstanding: (Very good, impeccable, perfect, with no error.)

3.1.2. Moderation of on-course assessment

- It is important that an organised and documented plan for moderation of major on-course assessment items exists, focusing upon grade bands, selected students or specific items of assessment (LTA CP5).
- Appropriate assessment criteria should be prepared and (where appropriate) shared with students.
- Major assessment tasks should be moderated through a process of consensus moderation pre- and post-assessment to ensure consistency of judgment. Where multiple markers contribute, subject coordinators should organise processes such as blind cross-marking of items across a range of student achievement levels, and strategies for reaching consensus.
- All major assessment items receiving a failing grade should be double-marked.
- A record of assessment moderation is required to be submitted at the end of each study period using the prescribed Assessment Moderation Register.
- To comply with Assurance of Learning requirements, marked samples of student achievement across grade junctures should be archived.

3.1.3. Submission of assessment items

- Students are responsible for keeping a copy of any submitted assessment item and are strongly encouraged to back up their work.
- The format of submission is described in the Subject/Year/Rotation Outline.

- Any hard copy should be submitted by the set deadline as per the following:
 - 1 x Assignment Cover Sheet to be attached to the assessment item:
 - 1 x Paper copy to be submitted in a designated Assignment box (outside the Student Education and Placement Unit (SEPU) reception area or Clinical school)
- Any electronic copy should be submitted by the set deadline as per the following:
 - 1 x Electronic copy via appropriate electronic drop boxes on subject/rotation related LearnJCU sites. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.
 - The assignment should be submitted as a **single Word document** (not front page, then body, then references).
Failure to submit according to the task requirements will attract a late penalty.
- Students are strongly encouraged to check the plagiarism percentage using the Test drop box on the Medicine course site.
- Consent Forms may be required including patient consent where relevant.
- In the situation whereby a student is not able to submit in person (due to being on an approved placement) then he/she will post the item to the relevant staff as per the Subject/Rotation/Year Outline. The date submitted will be the date stamp on the envelope. Alternatively, students can designate a fellow colleague who can print and submit the item on their behalf.

3.1.4. Penalty for late submission

Any task submitted after the due time on the due date is regarded as late and incur a penalty of 5% of the available mark per 24 hour period or part thereof.

When a student does not undertake a required activity without prior approved extension, he/she should make a written request to re-schedule the activity. The College will endeavour to re-schedule the activity as soon as possible, where possible. The College cannot guarantee that it will occur within the current rotation or study period. Late penalty will apply until the College is able to re-schedule the activity (see example 2 below).

Example 1:

An assignment is due at 9:00am on a Monday. It is collected from the Assignment box or saved into the SafeAssign DropBox in LearnJCU on the Wednesday at 9:00am, two days after it was due. If the student assignment scored 45 / 50, the penalty will be calculated as follows:

5% x 50 marks x 2 days = 5 mark penalty. The final mark would be 40 / 50.

Example 2:

An oral presentation is scheduled at 11am on a Wednesday. A student does not deliver and sends an email on the same day to apply for a re-schedule. The College is able to re-schedule the presentation on the Wednesday of the following week. The maximum mark for the presentation is 100. The late penalty will be calculated as follows:

5% x 100 marks x 7 days = 35 mark penalty. Should the student be awarded a 75% for the presentation, the final mark would be 75 – 35 = 40 / 100.

3.1.5. Penalty for not meeting the word limit

Graded written assessment items normally have a designated word count range that must be strictly adhered to. The word count range for each assessment item will be indicated in the subject outline and will normally be the target word count \pm 10%.

Students must indicate the actual word count on the assessment item cover page.

The content that exceeds the upper range of the word limit might not be marked.

The penalty for submission of an item with a word count outside the word count range = 10% of the available marks deducted.

The penalty for not stating or mis-stating word count = 10% of the available marks deducted.

Example

A written assignment task indicates a target word count of 2000 words, therefore the word count range is 1800-2200 words. A student assignment has the word count of 2202 words. The assignment has received a mark of 79 / 100. The penalty for outside word range = 10%; final mark awarded = 69 / 100

3.1.6. Extensions

- Requests for an extension for submission of work must be made in writing to the coordinator of the activity via email at least 24 hours prior to the due time and date. This email correspondence must also copy in the Year Administrator (e.g. mbbs1@jcu.edu.au for MBBS1)
- Requests for extensions after the due date will not be granted except in circumstances when it was impossible for the student to make the request.
- Extensions will only be granted where a serious and/or unforeseeable event has prevented the student from completing the work (illness or other serious and/or unforeseeable personal or family circumstances).
- A request for an extension must be accompanied by documentary support, such as a medical certificate, death notice, counsellor's certificate, police notice, or notice of jury duty. The documentation must cover either the due date of the assessment or the required preparation period; and be submitted no later than 7 working days after the expiration of the certificate; and include an original plus one photocopy.
- The time required will be negotiated with the coordinator responsible for the activity, taking into account the circumstances leading to the request. This will normally not be more than one week.
- Unacceptable reasons for extensions include work commitments including clinical placement, social commitments, sporting or other community commitments, routine, non-urgent medical, dental or other appointments, computer or printer failure (Students are expected to adopt the routine practice of 'backing up' assignments to protect themselves in the event of computer failure).

3.1.7. Remarking of assessment items

The College makes every effort to assess students in a fair, valid and reliable way. Students may request a re-mark of their assignment/review of their final grade under the [Finalisation and Publication of Student Results Policy](#).

The student requesting a re-mark must supply a clean copy of the assessment item, as well as the original marked version to the Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry. This will be accompanied by a written request for a re-mark.

Students should be aware that re-marking might result in a lower final mark than the original mark awarded.

- Marks incorrectly added: Incorrect additions will automatically be corrected when drawn to the attention of the relevant Academic. This should be done within 7 days of the return of the assignment. No requests will be considered beyond this time.
- Dissatisfaction with marks awarded: Refer to the [Review of Assessment and Student Access to Scripts and Materials policy](#)
- Dissatisfaction with Final Subject Grade: Refer to the [Student Appeal Procedure](#)

3.1.8. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when writers claim ownership of written words or ideas that are not their own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and any instances of plagiarism will be dealt

with promptly according to relevant University policies and procedures. All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry and are subject to the provisions of the <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services/student-academic-misconduct-requirements-policy>.

The College's On-Course Assessment Writing Style Guide for Students (available on the Medicine Courses Site) and the [JCU Guidelines for avoiding plagiarism](#) provide ways to avoid plagiarism by accurately referencing others' work.

3.2. Examinations

3.2.1. Format

- Examinations are graded assessments.
- Examinations are conducted within the JCU Study Period (SP) 1 and SP2 examination periods and examinations timetables are published on Student Online.
- Different methods will be employed to assess different aspects of performance (e.g. written and clinical tests).
- Examination formats used in the course include:
 - Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and Extended Match Questions (EMQ)
 - Key Features Questions (KFP)
 - Short Answer Questions (SA)
 - Multi Station Assessment Tasks (MSAT) – Year 1-3
 - Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) – Year 4-5
- Details of these formats will be explained by the Year Academic Coordinators and are provided in the Medicine Programs Examinations overview.
- Students will be given prior exposure to all examination methods used so that they will be familiar with examination techniques.
- Examination content will be based on the learning outcomes from the course for that year.

3.2.2. Supplementary examinations

- Supplementary examinations should not be considered an additional opportunity to pass a subject. Supplementary examinations are conducted to collect additional information about student performance, where necessary to make a decision about progression. Supplementary examinations are conducted as per the College's calendar.
- Supplementary examinations cover the same content as the main examinations. The precise format of the Supplementary examinations will be advertised to students before the exams.
- Students who are granted a Supplementary examination will be required to meet with the Associate Dean, Student Support or authorised officer to discuss their results in the summative assessment tasks. This should act as a guide to self-remediation and the support resources available to assist, prior to sitting a supplementary examination.
- Supplementary examinations are offered at the Townsville campus.

3.2.3. Deferring examinations

- If you are unable to attend an exam at the scheduled time due to extenuating circumstances/circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferred exam. Deferred exams are granted in exceptional circumstances such as severe medical conditions or family or personal trauma as outlined in the [Special Consideration, Supplementary, Deferred and Special Examinations Policy](#).

- Deferred examinations mirror the content, format and weighting of the main SP1 and SP2 examination periods.
- For students who sit deferred exams, supplementary examinations will not normally be used in the determination of progression. In circumstances where the Assessment Committee deems that supplementary examinations are required, this may not be until the next designated exam period for the subject, which may be up to 12 months later.
- Deferring a supplementary or deferred exam is not usually possible, and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances (e.g. hospitalisation). If the application is approved, students will not usually be able to sit the exam until the next time the subject is offered, which may be up to 12 months later.

Policies and information related to Examinations are available via the links below: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services>

3.2.4. Special Consideration

- Students who have difficulties or serious circumstances which may affect his/her ability to sit the exam successfully or perform at his/her best before or up to the day of an exam, can apply for special consideration. [JCU Special Consideration, Supplementary, Deferred and Special Examinations Requirements](#)
- Students who require special arrangements for their examinations should contact the [Student Accessibility Services](#)

4. Overall Result and Grade

4.1. Guidelines

- Results are finalised in accordance with [the Finalisation and Publication of Student Results Policy](#) and the [Distribution of Grades Policy](#).
- Students should be aware that raw scores may be scaled prior to the awarding of an overall grade.
- Results are compiled according to JCU guidelines but may be moderated to reflect the particular assessments used in the Medicine programs.
- Students MUST pass their selective subject (MD3000) in SP1 of MBBS3 in order to progress to MBBS 4.
- Students who have completed all requirements and are in a good Academic Standing for Study Periods 3 and/or 1 are given a KU (continuing unit) against their academic result for these study periods. The KU results will be converted to the grade obtained by combining all the assessment components.
- MBBS Year 6 Assessment is non-graded. Students are awarded a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory overall grade. The MBBS course Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated based on grades awarded from MBBS Year 2 to Year 5 and includes Year 2 or Year 3 selective.
- The progression decisions are made by the Assessment Committee based on de-identified combined results (On-course and Examinations).
- Students who are approved to sit deferred examinations will not normally be offered Supplementary examinations.
- The Assessment Committee will consider applications for special consideration in the decision making process (See [Special Consideration explained document.](#))
- Assessment is always subject to final ratification following the examination period and no single result represents a final grade in a subject.

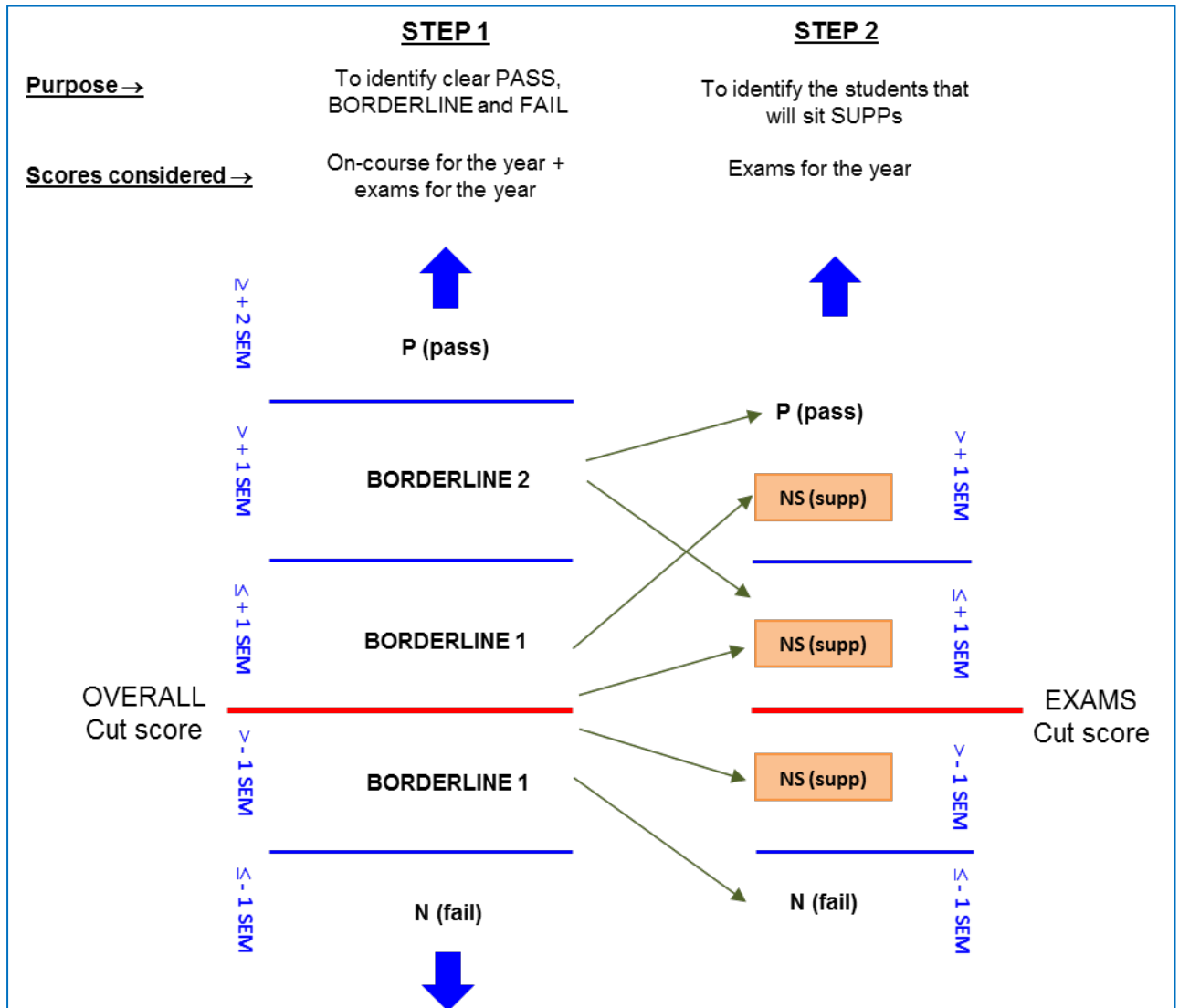
4.2. Calculating Pass marks (cut-scores) for assessment items

- The pass mark for written examinations is determined through an appropriate process that incorporates standard-setting procedures.
- The pass mark for OSCE / MSAT examinations is determined using a borderline regression statistical method.
- The overall pass mark for the year is calculated as a weighted average of the individual pass marks of all assessment components for the year.
- The standard error of measurement (SEM) is used to support progression decisions (Figure 1).

4.3. The Progression decision

- Students' final marks for the year are calculated by applying the weighting of individual assessment components to the marks obtained for each of these assessment components.
- The overall year pass mark and SEM are used to separate students' final marks into clear Pass, Borderline and Fail groups (Figure 1).
- Students whose marks fall within or below the borderline range for the SP1 exams may be provided an opportunity to undertake supplementary exams in the designated SP1 supplementary exam period. Students whose year mark falls within the borderline range for the year may be offered supplementary examinations. Scores of Main and Supplementary exams will be averaged to obtain the final result that will be used to determine Supp Pass (SP) and Supp Fail (SN) results.
- Students with significant Professionalism issues might not progress to the following year.
- Students who fail the year are required to submit a statement of reasons showing why they should be allowed to re-enrol in the course. ([Statement of reasons](#))

Figure 1



The complete Pass/Fail algorithm is available on the Medicine Course site in the Rules and Guidelines in the Assessment folder.

4.4. Release of Results and Grades

- Grades will be released to students via eStudent by the JCU scheduled dates.
- The College will provide students with feedback on their individual performance in each exam paper in the SP1 and SP2 examinations.
- Students are responsible for keeping a record of feedback on Assessment.
- Students who are required to undertake supplementary examinations will be notified of this in writing shortly after the final results are ratified.
- Students who have sat supplementary and deferred examinations will be notified of their results in writing by the College of Medicine and Dentistry shortly after the supplementary/deferred examinations results are ratified.

4.5. Correctives

Students may be required to undertake correctives, or directed electives especially but not only in Year 6 to attend to performance issues on rotation, specific discipline knowledge weaknesses during Year 5 or the Year 5 exams or as a result of requiring supplementary exams. The broad areas of the correctives will be determined by the Director of Clinical Studies and the relevant Rotation Academic Coordinator. The student will be advised of the possibility

of requiring a corrective to take the place of the clinical elective in Year 6 shortly after they receive their Year 5 exam results. The design and details of the corrective will be based on the identified individual deficiencies and perceived needs of the student who will meet with the site Academic Advisor and Rotation Academic Coordinator early in the year. A learning plan to correct the deficiencies as well as an assessment program will be developed and reviewed on a regular basis.

4.6. Review of Assessment and Appeals

Requests for review of exam results and/or final grades must be made in writing to the Dean of Medicine and Dentistry following the procedure outlined in the JCU

[Review of Assessment and Student Access to Examination Scripts and Materials Policy.](#)

Related documents, legislation or JCU Statutes

[JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy](#)

[Assessment, Exams and Results](#)

[Subject Outlines](#)

[Review of Assessment and Student Access to Examination Scripts and Materials Policy](#)

[Finalisation and Publication of Student Results Policy](#)

[Distribution of Grades Policy](#)

[Special Consideration, Supplementary, Deferred and Special Examinations Requirements](#)

Administration

Approval Details

NOTE: Printed copies of this procedure are uncontrolled, and currency can only be assured at the time of printing.

JCU Approval Details

Policy Sponsor	Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic
Version no	16-2
Date for next Major Review	20/12/2019

College Endorsement

Owner	Dean, College Medicine and Dentistry
Custodian	Board of Studies (Medicine)

Revision History

NOTE: A minor amendment will not result in a change of the next major review date.

Approval date - the date the approval authority approved the establishment, minor or major amendment or disestablishment

Implementation Date - the date the policy was published in the Policy Library and is the date the policy takes effect

Version	Approval date	Implementation date	Details	Author
16-2	20/12/2016	22/12/2016	Guideline aligned to fit within the Policy and Delegation Framework as a supporting document to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy; 4.4 removed that failing grade students receive notice prior to official release of results.	CMD ADLT; Team Leader Assessment, Manager Academic Services
16-1	Apr 2016	Apr 2016	Dec 2015 - New 50% pass mark for Foundation years. Physician Assistant excluded. Clarification on progression rules for Deferred students.	Acad services – Assessment

15-1	10 Feb 2015	Feb 2015	10 Feb 2015 - New penalty process for not meeting word limit	SEPU Assessment
14-1	18 Feb 2014	Feb 2014	18 Feb 2014 - Switch order of On-course and Examinations in document. Inclusion of Moderation in process. Addition of Prizes and Scholarships in related documents section	SEPU Education
13-1	26 March 2013	Mar 2013	22 Feb 2013 - Title changed to Medicine Programs Assessment Guidelines and Procedures. Merged Assessment and Assignment Guidelines. Outline of Making decision process	SEPU Education
12-1	Apr 2012	May 2012	30 April 2012 - Updated wording from policy to guidelines	SEPU Admin
12	2011	2011	August 2011 - Reviewed	

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