

AMSAT FAQs

Below are a list of frequently asked questions and answers about the AMSAT



Question

When should I score an item using a '3'?

Answer

When the student has demonstrated performance of the item that is the minimum performance that you would consider necessary to achieve safe beginning level practice.

Question

When should I score an item using a '4'?

Answer

When the student has demonstrated performance of the item in a way that leaves no doubt that the practices are consistently at a proficient level standard.

Question

When should I score an item using a '5'?

Answer

When the student has demonstrated an excellent performance in relation to an item. This performance would be superior to that of a student scoring a 3 for the same item.

Question

How is the AMSAT scored?

Answer

Each item on the AMSAT relates to a specific competence statement and therefore stands alone. All items must be assessed at a 'satisfactory performance' level to pass the component of a clinical placement/course. The final mark is not to be a total sum of scores as this does not reflect strengths and weaknesses of the individual.

Question

How do I assess a student if they don't demonstrate one of the behaviours described in the behavioural cues provided?

Answer

The list of behavioural cues is not meant to be exhaustive, nor are the cues meant to be a checklist. They are meant to provide a representative range of examples and demonstrate the principle that 'feedback to students needs to describe the behaviour that the student needs to demonstrate in order to achieve a higher grade'.

Question

Should I rate the student on each behavioural cue?

Answer

No. The student is rated on each of the 25 items on the AMSAT. The behavioural cues provide examples of observable behaviours that indicate competency for particular items. Clinicians may use these and other relevant examples to provide feedback to students on the behaviours they are looking for as evidence of competence on a particular item.

Question

The student was not happy with a 3 and complained. What should I say?

Answer

Describe to the student the behaviours they would need to demonstrate in order for you to feel comfortable about their abilities and award them a 4, or be delighted with their abilities and award them a 5. Students need to be clear about why you think their behaviours demonstrate the satisfactory performance level. The aim of feedback

is to encourage students to become the best practitioners they can be. Provide the student with specific examples to illustrate behaviours that would achieve a higher grade.

Question

If a student scores 1s and 2s will the clinician who assesses recommend to the university to fail the placement?

Answer

Yes. Students are required to meet the requisite behaviours and practices in all domain areas to pass the clinical placement. Therefore, if a student scores 1s or 2s for any of the assessment items, they have not met the requirements of that domain and as such cannot be recommended by the assessor to have passed the placement. It is very important that students are given explicit advice regarding the behaviours that they would need to demonstrate to achieve a pass. It is vital your initial focus is on objectively rating each item, and not on an overall result.

Question

I have a student who has been outstanding. Can I give them 5s?

Answer

Certainly! Raters have a tendency to avoid scale extremes, however, it is very important to use the entire score range. Students should be given the worst or best scores if that is the most appropriate rating. All students should be told what it is they need to do to score a 4 or 5 and they should aim for excellence.

Question

Is the student judged against a beginning level practitioner or their expected ability for their stage of the course?

Answer

Some programs have traditionally used beginning level competencies as the benchmark against which to judge student performance, while others have used the performance that would be expected at the particular stage of the course. For consistent and

meaningful use of the AMSAT across programs, the student should be judged on each item relative to their stage of practice.

Question

What do you mean by “1. Expected behaviours and practices not performed”?

Answer

A score of 1 indicates that the student has unsatisfactory performance and not reached the minimal acceptable standard for that item. It is very important that students who do not achieve the minimal acceptable standard are provided with very clear examples of the behaviours that they need to demonstrate in order to achieve this. Behavioural cues are provided to assist clinicians who facilitate student learning to give appropriate feedback and direction.

Many relevant performance indicators have not been listed. For example, ‘does not take calls on mobile phone while assessing a woman’ is not listed as a behavioural cue, but it could clearly be raised by a clinician who chose to mark a student below 3 for professional practice. Clinicians and students should collaborate to ensure that performance behaviours and strategies to achieve the required improvement are clear.

Question

What is a fair definition of a beginning level standard?

Answer

In overall terms a student who scores a 3 for most items is performing at a beginning level standard and they are likely to be able to:

- acceptably managing a variety of women with non-complex needs
- able to identify the women’s care needs with her
- establish care goals and prioritises these goals
- identify appropriate midwifery actions
- provide midwifery care safely and effectively within a reasonable time frame,
- demonstrate an awareness of limitations and where/when to seek assistance.

Question

What is a fair definition of an excellent standard?

Answer

In overall terms a student who scores a 5 for most items is performing at an excellent beginning level standard and is likely to demonstrate all performances expected for satisfactory performance level standard and also demonstrate:

- the ability to work relatively independently, thoroughly and sensitively.
- efficient while sensitive to the needs of women
- flexibility and adaptability
- competent linking of theory and practice
- appropriate reflection and insight
- rational and concise arguments for clinical decisions
- excellent time management

Students who score 3s for most items will be on a path between satisfactory performance and excellent performance.

Question

Time management is an important attribute for a graduate. Where is it rated on the AMSAT?

Answer

Time management is not listed as a separate item as it is an important component of several of the aspects of practice. You will observe in the behavioural cues that time management is reflected under the following items in domain 1 & 2, under statements 2, 5 & 6.

Question

How do I assess items in domain 4, statement 14 - '*uses research to inform midwifery practice*' during a clinical placement?

Answer

Perusal of the behavioural cues for using research shows that if the student is applying EBP to their midwifery care they are considering not only available current research evidence but also women's preferences, expertise of clinicians and available resources in deciding on the best management plan. This item also means that the student shows the ability to seek out any information relevant to the care of women. The student should access "pre-appraised" research evidence – i.e. clinical practice guidelines and systematic reviews. Students should make use of available online databases to locate relevant "pre-appraised" evidence (e.g. Cochrane, Clinical Evidence). It does not mean that the student has to do a literature review whilst on clinical placement, however if time is allocated to the student during the placement to search the literature on a particular topic, this is appropriate and would be assessed under this item. Involvement of the student in quality assurance activities during placement would also enable assessment under of this item.