Assessment System – Direct Observation

Rationale
Direct observation of medical students during clinical encounters with patients is conducted for the purpose of providing feedback and assessment of student achievement, including student acquisition of the knowledge, behaviors, and skills specified in the Brody School of Medicine Institutional Learning Objectives. Direct observation of clinical skills is essential to ensure medical student development and improvement in performing appropriate histories, physical examinations, and communication skills.

Scope
Compliance with this procedure is mandatory for all Brody School of Medicine (BSOM) faculty members who teach, facilitate, or precept medical students in the core clerkships.

Definitions
Direct Observation: An assessment based on the direct observation of a medical trainee’s clinical skills that is designed to provide feedback on skills essential to the delivery of high-quality clinical care.

Responsibilities
This procedure requires collective supervision by all current department chairs and clerkship directors in the Brody School of Medicine. The clerkship directors are responsible for ensuring that direct observation is taking place, and for informing the department chair of any issues that may impede full compliance with this procedure. The department chair works collaboratively with the clerkship director and is ultimately responsible for ensuring departmental compliance with the procedure.
Faculty/Residents

- BSOM faculty participating in core clerkships must conduct direct observation of medical students during designated clinical encounters with patients for the purpose of performing student assessments and providing feedback.
- During clinical encounters, faculty members must directly observe part or all of a patient’s history and mental status/physical exam.
- Faculty members must document the direct observation utilizing a Direct Observation Form as designated by the clerkship.
- Completed Direct Observation Forms must be submitted to the Clerkship/Course Director.

Procedures for Implementation and Review

Completion of clerkship requirements will be affirmed through a written document, either in paper or electronic form, containing the signatures of faculty members responsible for determining that define clinical objectives have been met by each student.

Clerkship Leadership

- Written documentation of direct observation completion is reviewed by clerkship leadership (e.g., clerkship directors, site director, associate clerkship directors) to determine whether each student has been directly observed.
- At the mid-clerkship feedback session, the clerkship director discusses the status and/or results of the direct observation with the student.
- If direct observation has not occurred by the last week of the rotation, the student’s clerkship preceptor or other supervisor will be identified and contacted directly by a designated midpoint evaluator. Clerkship Directors then work with the faculty to ensure an evaluation is scheduled prior to the end of the clerkship.
- At the end of the clerkship, clerkship leadership is responsible for completing initial review of each written document to verify whether participating faculty members have completed Direct Observation Forms. Completed forms are collected by clerkship leadership and maintained in the student’s file.
- If clerkship leadership determines that full compliance with this policy has not been achieved by participating faculty, a list of preceptors and/or other supervising faculty members who failed to provide director observation is provided to the department chair for further action.
Office of Medical Education

- At the end of the clerkship, the Office of Medical Education surveys students on whether they have been directly observed performing relevant portions of history taking and physical exams. A yearly summary is reviewed by the ECC and its subcommittees and shared with department chairs and clerkship leadership.

Schedule for Review and Update

- The policy is reviewed and may be revised by the Executive Curriculum Committee as necessary, but at least every three – five years.

Related Policies

None

Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards

LCME 9.0 Teaching, Supervision, Assessment, and Student and Patient Safety
LCME 9.5 Narrative Assessment
LCME 9.7 Formative Assessment and Feedback