Formative Assessment and Feedback for Medical Students Policy

—This policy applies to Gateway Curriculum students.—

Background

Formative assessment and feedback are critical to high-quality medical education, and, as such, they are central to the educational mission of Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM). In keeping with LCME Standard 9.7, WUSM is committed to ensuring that each medical student is assessed and provided with formal formative feedback early enough during each required course or clerkship to allow sufficient time for improvement. For the purposes of this policy, formative assessment is defined as any no/low stakes assessment performed during the learning experience for the purposes of providing formative feedback. Formative feedback is defined as information communicated to a medical student in a timely manner that is intended to modify the student’s thinking or behavior to improve subsequent learning and performance in the medical curriculum.

Policies

All students must receive meaningful formal formative assessment of and feedback on their performance during each of the required courses and clerkships of all phases of the Gateway Curriculum at WUSM. At minimum, this feedback should occur at the midpoint of the course or clerkship, although formative assessment and feedback occurring before and after this point are also encouraged.

Required courses or clerkships that are less than four weeks in length must provide an alternate means by which each student can measure their progress in learning at a point that still allows sufficient time for improvement.

Directors of required courses and clerkships are responsible for documenting that each student has received formative assessment and feedback. The Committee for Oversight of Medical Education (COMSE) will conduct oversight of student responses on both internal and external surveys for all required modules and clerkships. In the event that a given module, course, or clerkship fails to demonstrate that each student has received formative assessment and feedback, additional inquiry will be conducted by the Associate Dean for Medical Student Education. In the event that a consistent pattern of noncompliance is identified, the COMSE will make specific recommendations for remediation.

Guidelines

Quality feedback ought to include reinforcement of things done well, identification of room for improvement or omissions, and specific strategies for improvement. Evidence for this feedback in the form of specific examples and observations should also be included.

The Washington University School of Medicine Formative Assessment and Feedback for Medical Students Policy was last approved by the Oversight Committee on Medical Education on Oct. 5, 2020. All substantive edits to this policy require approval by the Oversight Committee on Medical Education governing body.