



OTAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL
Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou

Standards for Assessment for the MB ChB programme

20 February 2017

Why does the MB ChB programme need standards for assessment?

The Otago Medical School believes that developing, working towards, and meeting standards for assessment will support the planning, implementation, evaluation and quality improvement of assessment methods and decisions and meet the requirement for AMC accreditation.

The Standards for Assessment for the MB ChB programme will:

- be the guiding principles used when assessing students.
- define how assessment methods are planned, implemented and evaluated.
- clarify expectations of and for students and staff regarding the purpose and use of assessments within the course, and how information from those methods is translated into decisions.
- ensure that assessment methods, the results produced and the decisions arising, are reliable, valid, cost efficient, acceptable, feasible, have the desired educational impact and reflect the outcomes of the course.
- create consistency in the design and implementation of assessments across the course.
- meet the course accreditation requirements for assessment.

What are the principles of good assessment practice?

The assessment of student performance at the University of Otago follows four principles:

1. All internal assessment should inform learning;
2. Assessments will centre on essential knowledge and skills;
3. Both internal assessment(s) and final examinations will usually be necessary; and,
4. The workload associated with assessment requirements will be reasonable and the tasks will be fully described early enough to give students time to fit them in alongside their other commitments.

The Otago Medical School has expanded on these principles, incorporating evidence from the literature, often summarised as consensus opinion, regarding accepted good practice with regard to assessment in education and medical education.

The six principles that the Otago Medical School recognises as describing good assessment practise are:

- **Clear educational value and rationale.** It is widely accepted that assessment drives learning. Given that assessment shapes what students will learn, it is vital that the assessments reflect the purpose and what is valued within the curriculum.
- **Programmatic assessment and blueprinting.** A programme of assessment is the planned and deliberate use of assessments aligned to important characteristics reflecting core elements of the curriculum map, rather than an arbitrary or uncoordinated selection of assessment methods and content. The MB ChB programme of assessment will have both the whole and component assessments aligned and blueprinted against the Curriculum Map.

A programme of assessment is planned so that an overall picture of the student's performance can be formed through repeated observations and assessments in varying contexts by multiple assessors. As well as providing evidence for high-stakes decisions about progression towards practice, programs of assessment are designed to maximise learning throughout the course. Decisions are made on attributes (through a collection of evidence) rather than on individual assessments.

- **Fair and transparent processes and decision-making.** Generally assessments contribute to decisions regarding whether a student is able to continue in the course and progress to graduation. Therefore it is vital that assessment standards and processes are fair and available.
- **Quality feedback.** Students should be provided with feedback following assessments to allow them to reflect and improve their practice. Students should also have the opportunity to provide feedback about their assessment experiences.

- **Sustainability.** The resources required to develop, implement and maintain assessments, including the provision of feedback on individual student's performance and feedback on cohorts of students' performance, should be sustainable over time.
- **Evidence-informed and practice-based.** Continuous quality improvement of assessments should be informed by available evidence and be subject to a process of quality assurance.

Review and development of these Standards for Assessment

These Standards for Assessment have been developed by the MB ChB Assessment Sub-Committee (MASC) following a review of the literature (e.g. The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014); Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice (Winter 2014), Vol. 33; Medical Teacher (2011), Vol 33, 2016-14) and standards used by other relevant institutions (e.g. Medical Colleges, Medical Councils, and Medical Schools).

This document was submitted to MCC for discussion at their 21 October meeting, and with their approval was circulated for comment to MEREC, SPCs, CSCs, BoCs, and Domain groups. The resulting feedback has been incorporated into this document.

Implementation plan

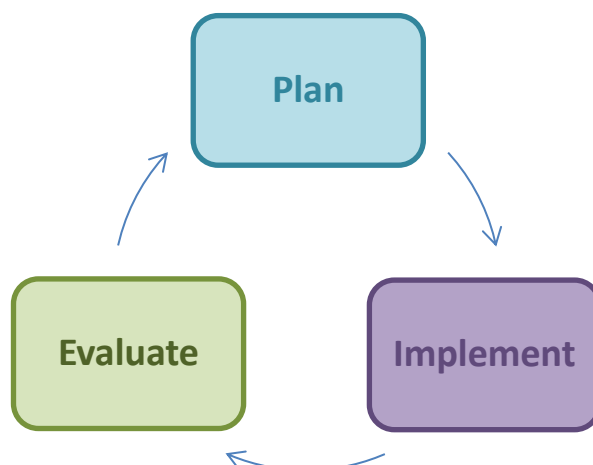
Adoption of these standards by Module/Programme Convenors is encouraged, but not mandatory, during 2017.

With the endorsement of MCC, MASC are asking the examination organising sub-committees to pilot the adoption of these standards as they plan, implement, and evaluate the 2017 end-of-year examinations, and to report back on their progress throughout the year.

Otago Medical School Standards for Assessment

The standards have been grouped thematically into categories aligned with the principles of good assessment practice and with the development cycle for programs of assessment (refer Figure 1), which commences with a period of planning prior to implementation, and is followed by an evaluation process that feeds back into future planning. Documentation related to all stages of this cycle could be published.

Figure 1. The developmental cycle for a programme of assessment.



A brief description of purpose highlighting the key areas for consideration prefaces each group of standards. As a guide, columns to the right of each standard indicate its relevance to Module and Programme convenors (M/PC); Student Progress Committees (SPCs); Boards of Censors (BoCs); End-of-year examination committees for ELM2, ELM3, and ALM5 (E); and the Otago Medical School (OMS) MB ChB Curriculum Committee and its Assessment Sub-Committee (MCC/MASC).

Planning standards						
A programme of assessment includes a range of assessments, with methods that are matched to the required purpose of the assessment, and implemented at an appropriate stage of the curriculum.		M/PC	SPC	BoC	E	OMS*
1. Clear educational value and purpose						
<i>Standard 1.1</i>	The purpose of the proposed programme of assessment (including individual assessments) at each progression decision point is clearly documented and available, including how it relates to the next stage of the course and/or to practise in postgraduate year 1 (PGY1).	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 1.2</i>	The progression decisions that are based on the assessment results are clearly documented and available.	–	✓	✓	–	–
2. Programmatic assessment and blueprinting						
<i>Standard 2.1</i>	Assessments promote learning throughout the course.	✓	–	–	✓	–
<i>Standard 2.2</i>	Assessments are selected and blueprinting to cover the depth and breadth of the Curriculum Map.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 2.3</i>	Assessments are sufficient to meet all the purposes, and are not excessive.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 2.4</i>	The core elements of the Curriculum Map that are assessable by each assessment are documented and available to staff and students.	✓	–	✓	✓	–

*Module/Programme Convenors; Student Progress Committees; Boards of Censors; End-of-year examination committees for ELM2, ELM3, and ALM5; and the Otago Medical School

Implementation standards

Implementing high quality assessment tools and a programme of assessment requires:

- the use of fair and transparent assessment processes and decision making;
- sustainability of assessments and the assessment programme;
- the provision of feedback to students; and,
- the development of communication and training resources to engage staff and relevant stakeholders.

The process of implementing assessments includes a consideration of the effect on students, staff and other relevant stakeholders, and how assessments will be developed, implemented and evaluated, including process, educational purpose, construction, psychometric properties and outcomes.

M/PC SPC BoC E OMS*

3. Fair and transparent processes and decision-making

<i>Standard 3.1</i>	The level of performance set as the pass standard for each assessment is determined according to the levels of learning contained within the Curriculum Map.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.2</i>	The standards and thresholds used to inform decisions related to performance in assessments are criterion-referenced where appropriate, and/or developed using recognised methodologies for standard setting.	✓	–	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.3</i>	A process of quality assurance is in place for all stages of the assessment process, including, where relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of items, • construction of the assessment, • maintenance of security, • data gathering, collation and validation, and • dissemination of results. 	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.4</i>	Blueprints, policies and criteria for progression through the course are documented and available publically.	✓	✓	✓	–	✓
<i>Standard 3.5</i>	Students are provided with clear information about the purpose and processes of assessments.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.6</i>	Students, assessors and staff are informed to whom assessment information will be provided, and how it will be used.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.7</i>	The process for review and appeals is documented and available to staff and students.	✓	✓	✓	–	✓
<i>Standard 3.8</i>	The process for alternative arrangements and special consideration is documented and available to staff and students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Standard 3.9</i>	High stakes decisions for individual students are made by Student Progress Committees and Boards of Censors drawing on all relevant available information.	–	✓	✓	–	–
<i>Standard 3.10</i>	The measures employed to guard against bias in decision-making are documented and available to staff and students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.11</i>	Decision-making processes are subject to quality assurance measures.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.12</i>	Information and resources for students and assessors are available prior to the implementation of new assessments or revised assessments.	✓	–	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 3.13</i>	The process for providing support to students failing to progress as expected is documented and available to staff and students.	–	–	–	–	✓
<i>Standard 3.14</i>	The procedures to inform the Fitness to Practise Committee (and if needed, the Medical Council of NZ), where fitness to practice concerns arise related to assessment are documented and available to staff and students.	–	–	–	–	✓

4. Sustainability		M/PC	SPC	BoC	E	OMS*
<i>Standard 4.1</i>	Logistical support for developing and maintaining assessments is appropriately resourced and managed.	✓	–	–	✓	✓
<i>Standard 4.2</i>	Assessors are appropriately selected, trained, and supported, and their roles are clearly defined.	✓	–	–	✓	–
5. Quality feedback						
<i>Standard 5.1</i>	Each individual assessment generates tailored feedback for students on their progress in order for them to plan their future learning needs and opportunities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 5.2</i>	The programme of assessment generates tailored feedback for individual students on their progress through the curriculum overall in order for them to plan their future learning needs and opportunities.	–	✓	✓	–	–
<i>Standard 5.3</i>	Staff are provided with assessment performance data for cohorts of students in order to evaluate the current learning environment and plan future developments.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 5.4</i>	Staff are provided with assessment performance data of the students for whom they have educational responsibility, in order to plan future learning needs and opportunities for those students.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 5.5</i>	Staff receive training/guidance to ensure all feedback provided to students is supportive and constructive.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–

*Module/Programme Convenors; Student Progress Committees; Boards of Censors; End-of-year examination committees for ELM2, ELM3, and ALM5; and the Otago Medical School

Evaluation standards						
Regular evaluation of assessment tools and a programme of assessment is essential to maintain the quality of assessment results and decisions, and to ensure the purpose of the assessment aligns with curriculum standards.						
		M/PC	SPC	BoC	E	OMS*
6. Evidence-informed and practice-based						
<i>Standard 6.1</i>	Assessments and the programme of assessment are evaluated regularly, with major reviews occurring periodically and findings informing continuous quality improvement.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 6.2</i>	A range of appropriate evaluation methods, using published research and feedback from staff, assessors and students, and other relevant stakeholders, are used to review assessments and the programme of assessment.	✓	✓	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 6.3</i>	Adverse impact of any changes made to assessments is evaluated and minimised; the appropriate period of notice is given to staff and students prior to implementation of changes.	✓	–	✓	✓	–
<i>Standard 6.4</i>	New or significant changes to individual assessments or to the programme of assessment include a period of consultation with students, staff and additional stakeholders, as directed by MCC/CSCs.	✓	–	✓	✓	✓

*Module/Programme Convenors; Student Progress Committees; Boards of Censors; End-of-year examination committees for ELM2, ELM3, and ALM5; and the Otago Medical School

Notes:

Standards 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10 are covered by the *Assessment Policy and Procedures* document. Standard 3.11 is covered in the Student Progress Committee and Board of Censors Terms of Reference. Standard 5.2 undertaken by the Retained Knowledge Test Co-ordinator.