



OTAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL
Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou

Standards for the System of Assessment for the MB ChB programme

July 2022

Why does the MB ChB programme need standards for our system of assessment?

The primary purpose of the Otago Medical School MBChB programme is to graduate students who are fit to practise as PGY1 doctors in New Zealand. As part of the programme, the system of assessment promotes and guides student learning and ensures minimum requirements are met by individual students. The MB ChB Assessment Sub-committee (MASC) believes that developing, working towards, and meeting standards for the system of assessment will support the planning, implementation, evaluation and quality improvement of assessment items, events and system, and will provide quality information to support sound and correct decisions to progress and graduate students.

What are the principles of good assessment practice?

The MB ChB programme has improved and expanded on the [University of Otago guidelines for assessment of student performance](#), incorporating evidence from the literature, often summarised as consensus opinion, regarding accepted good practice with regard to assessment in education, including medical education.

The six principles that the MB ChB programme 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 what is valued in the curriculum.
- **A system of assessment that is programmatic.** This is the practice of aggregating multiple pieces of information gathered over time and from several sources to gain the best picture of a student's capabilities, providing guidance to learning at multiple points, and making decisions based on the aggregation of the multiple pieces of information. Programmatic assessment relies on the underlying system of assessment events: the planned and deliberate schedule of assessments aligned to the core competencies of the Curriculum Map.
- **Fair and transparent processes and decision-making.** As assessment events are aggregated to inform decisions regarding whether a student is able to continue in the course and progress to graduation, it is vital that assessment standards and processes are fair and can be accessed by all staff and students.
- **Quality guidance.** Current learning is guided by student's understanding of planned assessments, and future learning is guided by feedback from assessment. Students should be involved in feedback processes following assessments to allow them to reflect and improve their practice. Students should also have the opportunity to provide feedback about their assessment experiences.
- **Sustainable resources.** The resources required to develop, implement and maintain assessments, including the feedback process 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

The first version of Standards for Assessment was developed by the MB ChB Assessment Sub-Committee (MASC) following a review of the literature and standards used by other relevant healthcare education institutions and certification bodies. Those standards were submitted to MB ChB Curriculum Committee (MCC) for discussion at their 2016 meeting, and with their approval was circulated for comment to the following sub-committees:

- Educational Research and Evaluation Sub-committee (MERECE)
- the ELM and ALM Student Progress Committees (SPCs)
- the ALM Curriculum Sub-Committee (the ALM CSC)

- the ELM and ALM Curriculum Sub-Committees (CSCs)
- the Boards of Censors for Years 2 and 5, 4 and 5, and 6 (BoCs), and,
- the Curriculum Map Domain groups.

Since that time the document has been reviewed to reflect changes in the curriculum and its organisation, and changes in assessment best practice. Important recent changes have followed the development of non-compensatable progression requirements (N-CPRs). The Standards for Assessment will follow a three-year review cycle, following review of the Strategy for the MB ChB system of assessment.

Glossary

System of assessment	Systems of assessment require a variety of different assessments at each step along the educational continuum with variety of purposes including student, faculty, and program accountability and improvement. These systems are remarkable in their complexity because they need to serve multiple purposes for multiple users and stakeholders, covering multiple competencies and unfolding over time. There is a need at various points in training to assess progress on the individual competencies as well as performances that require integration across them. The system should be coherent, continuous, comprehensive, feasible, purpose driven, acceptable, and transparent and free from bias.
Assessment event	Comprises a number of assessment items assessed at the same time – e.g. the module MCQ test or OSCE – and which generates assessment information relating to the N-CPRs that contribute to progress decisions
Assessment tool	An assessment tool is the means through which information is gathered and evaluated for the purpose(s) of the assessment event. It comprises the assessment item type(s), as well as the context(s) and condition(s) of use.
Assessment item	e.g. a multiple-choice or short-answer question or OSCE station or other activity that is used, either independently or together with other items, to evaluate whether a student has reached the required standard
N-CPRs	<p>Non-compensatable progression requirements cover all core competencies, learning outcomes, performance*, and regulatory requirements that relates to progression requirements.</p> <p>Students are required to reach (where assessed) the required standard in each and all of the following to progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor-patient consultation • Patient management and healthcare plan • Diagnostic and therapeutic interventions • Cultural safety and competence • Collaborative health care practice • Knowledge base • Professional conduct • Systems of healthcare • Regulatory requirements
Progress decisions	<p>The end-of-year decision on whether a student is satisfactory to progress to the next year of the programme and/or to practise in postgraduate year 1 (PGY1) is made by the student’s Board of Censors, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms information provided by the student’s SPC; • where relevant, information provided by ELM Assessment Sub-Committee/ ALM Examination Sub-Committees; and, • information provided by the Fitness to Practice Committee (FtPC).
Item Mapping Procedure	The classification of the descriptive data (e.g. content, context) of an assessment item that allows for the planning and description of an event in terms of the balance of assessment items, and for the quality review of items.

**Performance* is used here in the colloquial sense of the word.

Standards for the system of assessment in the MB ChB Programme

The standards have been grouped thematically into categories aligned with the principles of good assessment practice and with the development cycle for systems of assessment, which commences with a period of planning prior to implementation, and is followed by an evaluation process that feeds back into future planning.

<p>Planning standards</p> <p>A system of assessment includes a range of events and items, with assessment tools that are matched to the stated rationale of the assessment, and implemented at an appropriate stage of the curriculum.</p>	
<p>1. Clear educational value</p>	
<p>Standard 1.1 <i>Why do it?</i></p>	<p>The rationale of the system of assessment and for each assessment event are clearly documented and available to staff and students.</p>
<p>Standard 1.2 <i>What it counts towards</i></p>	<p>The assessment events that contribute to progression decisions are clearly documented, and this documentation is available to staff and students.</p>
<p>2. Programmatic assessment</p>	
<p>Standard 2.1 <i>Right amount</i></p>	<p>The number of assessment events are sufficient to guide learning and to make progression decisions, and the student assessment workload will be reasonable.</p>
<p>Standard 2.2 <i>What might be assessed</i></p>	<p>The N-CPRs and core competencies that are potentially assessable by each assessment event is documented, and available to staff and students.</p>
<p>Standard 2.3 <i>Sampling plan</i></p>	<p>There is a plan to ensure that the system of assessment and assessment events adequately samples N-CPRs and core competencies for the year and stage of the course.</p>
<p>Standard 2.4 <i>Item mapping</i></p>	<p>The items within an assessment event can be mapped to MB ChB Curriculum Map and MB ChB Item Mapping Procedure.</p>

<p>Implementation standards</p> <p>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 student outcomes.</p>	
<p>3. Fair and transparent processes and decision-making</p>	
<p>Standard 3.1 <i>Standard to be achieved</i></p>	<p>The level of performance set as Standard achieved for each assessment event is determined according to the levels of learning contained within the Curriculum Map.</p>
<p>Standard 3.2 <i>Standard setting</i></p>	<p>Where used to inform progress decisions, the thresholds related to performance in assessment events are criterion-referenced and developed using recognised methodologies for standard setting.</p>
<p>Standard 3.3 <i>Quality assurance processes</i></p>	<p>Quality assurance processes are in place for all aspects of the system of assessment and assessment events, including, where relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3.1. the development of items 3.3.2. construction of assessment events 3.3.3. authenticity of items and events 3.3.4. maintenance of security of assessment items and events 3.3.5. scheduling and duration of assessment events 3.3.6. data gathering and collation 3.3.7. decision-making 3.3.8. validation of outcomes related to stated purpose 3.3.9. dissemination of results
<p>Standard 3.4 <i>Rules published</i></p>	<p>Criteria for each module and course progression decision are documented and available to staff and students.</p>
<p>Standard 3.5 <i>Use of information</i></p>	<p>Students, assessors and staff are informed about how assessment information is intended to be used, and to whom it will be provided.</p>

Standard 3.6 <i>Appeals process</i>	The process for review and appeals of assessment outcomes and progression decisions is documented and available to staff and students.
Standard 3.7 <i>Student support</i>	The process for Alternative Arrangements and Special Consideration is documented and available to staff and students.
Standard 3.8 <i>Decision-making panel</i>	Course-level progress decisions for individual students are made by Boards of Censors drawing on all relevant available information, including that from Student Progress Committee.
Standard 3.9 <i>Decision-making process</i>	The measures employed to guard against perceived conflict of interest and/or bias by decision-makers are documented and available to staff and students.
Standard 3.10 <i>Conditions to Pass</i>	The wording of Conditions to Pass should specify requirements to be fulfilled to meet the standard to pass the module, and reference N-CPRs and professional activity core competencies.
Standard 3.11 <i>Notification</i>	The process of notification to students failing to progress as expected is documented and available to staff and students.
Standard 3.12 <i>Academic misconduct</i>	The procedures and processes where there are academic misconduct concerns arising from assessments are documented and available to staff and students.
Standard 3.13 <i>FtP referrals</i>	The procedures and processes to inform the Fitness to Practise Committee where there are fitness to practice concerns arising from assessments, are documented and available to staff and students.
4. Guiding and promoting learning	
Standard 4.1 <i>Event info</i>	The description of the assessment event, and the feedback accompanying results, guides and promotes student learning.
Standard 4.2 <i>System info</i>	The system of assessment generates information that allows a student to review their progress/plan their future learning.
Standard 4.3 <i>Cohort data</i>	Provide annual reports on whole-cohort assessments to staff to help them evaluate modules/programmes and plan improvements.
Standard 4.4 <i>Individual data to inform teaching and learning practice</i>	Provide assessment performance data to staff regularly/on request for groups of students for whom they have had educational responsibility, in order that they may review the efficacy of their educational support of students and/or plan future education support of students.
Standard 4.5 <i>Individual data to support learning</i>	Provide assessment performance data to staff regularly/on request for individual students for whom they have educational responsibility, for the purpose of planning education support for them.

Evaluation standards	
Regular evaluation of the system of assessment and assessment events, tools, and items is essential to maintain the quality of assessment results and decisions.	
5. Evidence-informed and quality improvement	
Standard 5.1 <i>Evaluation plan</i>	The system of assessment and assessment events, tools, and items are regularly evaluated (at least annually), with major reviews occurring periodically (at least three-yearly). Findings should inform continuing quality improvement.
Standard 5.2 <i>Evaluation methods</i>	A range of appropriate evaluation methods, including, where possible, benchmarking collaboration, is used to review the system of assessment and assessment events, tools, and items
Standard 5.3 <i>Change management</i>	Proposed significant changes to a system of assessment, assessment events or tools, should include a period of consultation with students, assessors, staff and additional stakeholders (including patients, where relevant), as directed by MCC/CSC.
Standard 5.4 <i>Notice of change</i>	Before implementing change, the appropriate period of notice, as determined by MCC/CSC, is given to staff, assessors and/or students.

6. Sustainable resources	
Standard 6.1 <i>Resource</i>	Development, delivery, maintenance, and administration of the system of assessment and assessment events, tools, and items is appropriately resourced and managed.
Standard 6.2 <i>Assessor quality</i>	Staff and assessors are appropriately selected, trained, and supported for their assessment roles, which are clearly defined.
Standard 6.3 <i>Sustainability</i>	The system of assessment and assessment events, tools, and items should be economically and environmentally sustainable.
Standard 6.4 <i>Resilience</i>	The system of assessment and assessment events and tools should be sufficiently flexible to withstand disruption.

Review date: 2025, following review of the Strategy for the MB ChB system of assessment.