Assessment Procedural Document

Purpose
This document complements the Progress and Promotion process outlined in the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations. Learners should familiarize themselves with the content of both documents and understand the expectations of assessment at each level of training. In case of a conflict between the two documents, the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations take precedence.

This document is reviewed regularly to reflect these changes and keep learners abreast of what is happening for their specific year of graduation. Learners should review the unit syllabi so they understand how each unit, elective or clinical educational experience will be assessed.

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4. **APPENDICES**

Appendix a – Guidelines for writing In-Person Exams

Appendix b – Guidelines for writing Remotely Proctored Exams

1. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Wherever a Policy or Regulation is referred to in this document, it can be accessed through the following link: [Policy site](#)

1.1. DEFINITIONS/GENERAL

Examination Grades: The Exam Review Committee reviews all examination results and presents them to the Progress Committee for approval. The grades are released within 15 working days from the end of the unit examination or the end of the rotation, whichever is later.

Feedback: Following each end-of-unit examination and before the release of the results of the examination, the Student Unit Representative will have an opportunity to meet with the Unit Head/Clerkship Director to provide feedback on the examination. This meeting may occur in person, virtually, by phone or through email correspondence.

Feedback following Direct Observation: This involves oral and/or written feedback provided by someone observing you doing something. This might be taking a history, doing a physical examination, presenting cases on rounds, or performing a skill.

Formative assessments (F): These assessments are intended to provide learners with feedback that will allow them to make changes and improve before the final assessment. Results on formative assessments do not go on the student transcript.

Mastery assessments (M): These are the final assessments of the anatomy/histology learning objectives. Failing to meet the standard to pass will require a repeat of the assessment until the standard is met. Failure on a Mastery assessment does not count toward the total number of failures allowed in an academic year.

Progress Tests: Progress tests are designed to test learners' cumulative knowledge and comprehension, with a greater focus on application in a multiple-choice, single best answer question format. Progress tests allow learners to track their knowledge growth over time, and they provide feedback on progress toward the program outcomes. Progress tests are blueprinted similarly to the final Comprehensive Clerkship Examination, covering all seven disciplines within Clerkship. A range of questions will be used in testing, some of which are intended to be more challenging and which we know not all learners will get correct. As learners progress through the third year of the program and have opportunities to apply their knowledge in Clerkship experiences, we expect growth in the learners' trajectory. These examinations are intended for learning and progress monitoring, and there are no consequences associated with failing a formative progress test.

Summative assessments (S): These are the final assessments of the unit, rotation or elective. These pass/fail results determine if you have passed a unit.

1.2. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS

As outlined in section 2 of the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations and in the Professionalism Policy, learners must meet professionalism standards for the undergraduate program to be promoted from one year to the next and to graduate from the undergraduate medical program.

CASE-BASED LEARNING TUTORIALS

1.2.1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance at tutorials and other group learning activities, such as team-based learning sessions or PIER sessions, is mandatory. If there are any absences, anticipated or unanticipated, learners must notify the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) office and their tutor(s) as per the Progress, Assessment, and Appeal Regulations.

1.2.2. TUTORIAL ASSESSMENT

Tutors assess learners on their comprehension, integration and application of knowledge, professionalism, participation, facilitation of others' learning and preparation for tutorials. Learners receive a formative assessment halfway through each unit and a summative assessment at the end of the unit. Given the length of the units, there are two formative assessments in Professional Competencies 1 and 2.

1.2.3. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

The end-of-unit tutorial summative assessment forms will normally be completed by tutors within 10 working days after the completion of a unit. Ideally, the tutor should meet with each learner in his/her group to review their assessments.

Learners must pass, review, and sign their tutorial assessments to successfully complete a unit. Learners who fail their tutorial assessments or for whom tutors have identified concerns in the narrative part of the assessment must meet with their campus-specific Associate Dean, UGME, DMNB, or CBMC, as appropriate, and undergo remediation work as outlined in the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations.

1.3. EXAMINATION RULES

1.3.1. GENERAL

Learners in the undergraduate medical curriculum must abide by the rules of academic integrity for Dalhousie University. Cheating, disobeying administrative staff during an examination, or any other unprofessional behaviour related to examinations will be addressed in accordance with Dalhousie University's academic integrity process and the Associate Dean.

1.3.2. CONDUCT

The following apply to all examinations in the undergraduate curriculum:
- All belongings (phones or equivalent, backpacks, hats, etc.) are to be left at the front of the room or in personal lockers.

- All cell phones and smart watches, or their equivalent, must be either off completely or in 'airplane mode' and placed at the front of the room for the duration of the examination.
- Learners must bring their Dalhousie Student ID to the examination.
- If scrap paper is provided during an examination, it must be returned to the invigilator at the end of the examination.
- Learners must follow all the invigilator's instructions and not begin the exam before they are instructed.
- When instructed to stop the examination, learners must comply immediately.
- For specific details on required conduct for in-person and remotely proctored examinations please consult the following documents in the appendix of this document: Guidelines for Writing In-Person Exams and Guidelines for Writing Remotely Proctored Exams.

1.3.3. DEFERRAL OF EXAMINATIONS

A learner who is experiencing personal or health problems that may interfere with academic performance should, as early as possible and **before** the end-of-unit examination, identify these problems to the Assistant Dean or Director of Student Affairs. If an illness is involved, documentation by a physician may be required. Deferrals based on illness or personal difficulties require the support of the Student Affairs Office. Learners must submit an Examination Deferral Request Form, which can be found on UGME's Policy page. Further instructions on how to complete and submit this form are detailed within the form itself. Note that any contact with the Student Affairs Office is confidential; therefore, contact with that office is not considered to be official notification.

If exam deferrals are part of an accommodation plan that is approved by the Student Accessibility Centre, a meeting with Student Affairs is still required to discuss the deferral request. Medical documentation of an acute exacerbation of a chronic illness may still be required for the deferral to be supported.

The request must be submitted before the commencement of the end-of-unit assessment. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the campus-specific Associate Dean UGME, DMNB, or CBMC may allow a deferral at any time before the examination. The Progress Committee will be informed of all deferrals granted to learners.

All deferred examinations will be written within a defined period at the end of the academic year, as posted by UGME at the beginning of the academic year.
In determining the deferred examination format, the Unit Head or Clerkship Director will, in consultation with the Committee on the Assessment of Student Performance (CASP) and/or the campus-specific Associate Date UGME, DMNB or CBMC:

1. Administer a different exam based on the same objectives; or
2. Use another method to assess the learner.

A learner who fails a deferred examination will be required to complete a supplemental assessment at the end of the academic year. Deferral dates will be posted by UGME at the beginning of the academic year, and a specific date/time will be provided to the learner after the results of the deferred exams are known. Normally, each summative examination may be deferred only once. Learners, except those in a repeat year, may defer only one examination in a single academic year. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to deferral of more than one written examination or allowing a learner in a repeat year to defer one summative assessment.

1.3.4. SUPPLEMENTAL EXAMINATIONS

If a learner fails a summative assessment, they must meet with the campus-specific Associate Dean UGME, DMNB or CBMC to review any concerns. They are eligible to take a supplemental examination. A Med 1, 2 or 3 learner may fail only a maximum of two summative examinations in an academic year (including written and OSCE). If a learner fails more than this, they are in repeat status as outlined in the Progress Regulations.

Successful completion of the supplemental examination will allow the learner to be promoted to the next year. A learner who fails the supplemental examination is eligible to apply to repeat the year as outlined in the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations.

1.3.5. APPEALING EXAMINATION PROCESS

Should a minimum of 67% of learners who wrote a particular examination believe the examination process (not content) was unfair, a written submission may be made to the Examination Review Committee within five working days of the writing of the examination. All learners supporting the submission must sign the written submission. The Examination Review Committee will review the submission and will make recommendations to the Progress Committee. The subsequent decision of the Progress Committee is final.

1.3.6. ACCOMMODATIONS

Learners requiring accommodations for certain needs, as outlined in Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy, must arrange this with the Student Accommodations Centre in advance of sitting an examination. It is the learner's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the accommodations policy and requirements. The Student Affairs office is available to support learners as they navigate the policy and requirements.

1.4. REMEDIATION

The campus-specific Associate Dean UGME, DMNB, or CBMC can identify learners at risk for poor performance who will be required to complete remediation. Section 3.1 of the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations sets out examples of circumstances where remediation will be required. Section 3.2 outlines how the remediation plan will be developed.

1.5. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Learners on any leave of absence must be reviewed by the Progress Committee prior to re-entering the undergraduate medical program. If the campus-specific Associate Dean UGME, DMNB, or CBMC deems it necessary, learners must come before the Progress Committee in person. They must provide documentation of their readiness to return and the supports they have in place.

1.5.1. LEAVE AND TIME OFF FAQ

For questions about leaves and time off, please consult: [Leave and Time Off FAQ](#)

1.6. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS

1.7.1 NOTIFICATION

The Undergraduate Associate Dean or Designate will determine if an exam requires rescheduling, which may occur before or after the official exam start time. Notifications of examination cancellations will be communicated via DalMedix. The campus-specific Associate Deans or Designate will make the final decision on rescheduling, considering factors such as the length of the interruption, its severity, and how many learners have completed the exam. This decision will be made in consultation with campus-specific managers, the Assessment Specialist, Med IT, and Invigilators. Once a rescheduling decision is made, campus-specific managers will inform relevant staff, including Coordinators, Med IT, and the Assessment Specialist, via email. Class representatives may also share rescheduling information through their communication channels. Coordinators will notify affected learners via DalMedix within two business days, and when rescheduling details are confirmed, they will be posted in One45 and shared through DalMedix. Coordinators or managers will document the changes in One45 and DalMedix. Additionally, Coordinators will email learners writing at the Accommodation Centre and inform the Centre of the new exam schedule. During exams, communication between campuses is managed through MS Teams channels.

1.7.2 PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULING BEFORE THE START OF AN EXAMINATION

If a pre-planned closure occurs on a written or lab exam day at one campus, exams must be rescheduled for all campuses. However, if an OSCE exam is rescheduled at one campus, exams may proceed at the other campuses. Coordinators at the affected campus(es) will reschedule exams as soon as possible, taking into account room availability, invigilators, conflicts with

other events, and learner availability.

1.7.3 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINATION INTERRUPTIONS

In the event of an unplanned examination interruption, the lead invigilator, in coordination with MedIT and the campus-specific manager, will manage the immediate response. The on-duty manager will promptly inform the campus-specific Associate Dean or designate of the disruption, prioritizing safety over timeliness. Invigilators at the affected campus will instruct learners to temporarily cease writing and hide their laptop screens, while learners at unaffected campuses may continue their exams. Learners are expected to adhere to in-person or remote exam guidelines throughout the disruption.

Learners will be reassured that they will not be penalized for lost time during the disruption. Invigilators will document key details, including the nature and timing of the interruption and the number of learners who have completed the exam, and they will assist in communication with the learners. These details will be reported to the Managers and the Assessment Specialist promptly. Invigilation staff will also inform learners about the rescheduling policy and the next steps to follow.

1.7.4 PROCEDURES FOR TEMPORARY INTERRUPTIONS

In the event of a temporary interruption lasting less than 30 minutes, efforts will be made to resolve the issue and resume the exam promptly. Invigilators will ensure that all learners have the same amount of time to complete the exam, with the duration of the interruption added to the remaining exam time.

1.7.5 PROCEDURES FOR INTERRUPTIONS EXCEEDING 30 MINUTES

If an interruption exceeds 30 minutes and resuming the exam is not feasible, the campus-specific Associate Dean or Designate will determine if the exam should be discontinued and rescheduled. For written and laboratory exams, affected learners must submit their results to the ExamSoft portal (green screen) before leaving the exam room. Learners can either accept their existing results or choose to retake the entire exam. Those opting for a retake will have their initial results deleted, and a new exam will be issued for the rescheduled date. Invigilators will document individual learner decisions within two business days. For written and lab exams, an internet connection is required to upload results to the ExamSoft portal, and technical support will assist any learner unable to upload their results. During OSCE exams, learners may leave the room and complete unfinished stations at a later time.

In the event of a major emergency that endangers learner safety, immediate action will be taken, following the Dalhousie Crisis Master Plan. If evacuation is necessary, learners will be instructed to leave their computers and belongings at their workstations and exit the room. Exams disrupted by a significant emergency will be rescheduled in accordance with the relevant policy.

1.7.6 POST EXAM PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS

i. Notifications

The unit-specific coordinator will reschedule exams as soon as possible, considering factors such as learner, invigilator, and facility availability. The unit-specific coordinator is responsible for communicating with learners regarding rescheduled exams.

ii. Scoring & Reporting

When an interruption prevents learners from completing their examination as a complete cohort (all learners), the Associate Deans can decide whether to permit scoring and grade release. In these cases, grading can proceed as long as 90% of the sample data is collected. In circumstances where the outstanding examination results exceed ten percent of the cohort sample, the grading and scoring of results must be delayed until all learners can complete the exam.

iii. Student Well-Being & Concerns

Any learner experiencing stress and frustration due to unplanned disruptions will receive additional support from Student Affairs. Student concerns about the disruption may be communicated to Student Affairs via [insert contact details] or the campus-specific Associate Deans.

2. YEAR-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

2.1. SKILLED CLINICIAN OSCE EXAMINATIONS

Skilled Clinician is a longitudinal unit extending over four years that provides learners with the skills of professionalism, communication, history taking, and physical examinations. Learners are assessed by their tutors and peers and are included in an end-of-year OSCE examination. All four OSCE examinations are summative. The pass mark is determined using a standard setting method called borderline linear regression. For more information, please see the BLR document on the Brightspace Assessment page.

2.2. MED 1 AND 2

2.2.1. MED 1 AND 2 SUMMATIVE END-OF-UNIT EXAMINATIONS

The end-of-unit summative examinations test knowledge, comprehension, and application. As learners progress through the four years, knowledge application increases. Questions with a range of difficulty will be used, some of which are intended to be more challenging and which we know not all learners will get correct.

Learners will receive feedback on their performance in several ways. End-of-unit marks will be presented in an individualized report that depicts one's performance on the entire examination, the components (raw score and class average), and one's standardized scores. The latter depicts the scores with a mean of 80 and a standard deviation of 8. Additionally, for the computer-based multiple-choice examinations using ExamSoft, learners will receive the titles and blueprint categories of the questions they answered incorrectly. **Success on a written end-of-unit exam is determined by the achievement of a standardized score of 65 and a 50 percent raw score or higher.** If a learner's performance is below this standard and they are eligible, the learner must write a

supplemental examination. If the learner fails this, they are in repeat status as outlined in the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations.

2.3. MED 3

2.3.1. PROGRESS TESTS

Learners in Med 3 write quarterly multiple-choice, single best answer progress tests designed to test cumulative knowledge and comprehension, with a greater focus on application. Progress tests allow learners to track their knowledge growth over time, and they provide feedback on progress toward the program outcomes. Progress tests are blueprinted similarly to the final Comprehensive Clerkship Examination. A range of questions will be used in testing, some of which are intended to be more challenging and which we know not all learners will get correct. As learners progress through the third year of the program and have opportunities to apply their knowledge in Clerkship experiences, we expect growth in the learners' trajectory.

Learners will receive feedback on their performance in several ways. End-of-unit marks will be presented in an individualized report that depicts the performance on the entire examination, the components (raw score and class average), and one's standardized scores. The latter depicts the scores with a mean of 80 and a standard deviation of 8. Additionally, for the computer-based multiple-choice examinations using ExamSoft, learners will receive the titles of the questions they answered incorrectly. These examinations are intended for learning and progress monitoring, and there are no consequences associated with failing a formative progress test.

2.3.2 COMPREHENSIVE CLERKSHIP EXAMINATION

The Comprehensive Clerkship Examination is the final written summative examination in Clerkship. Learners must pass it to graduate. **Success on the examination will be determined by achievement of a standardized score of 65 and a raw passing score of 50 percent or higher.** The Progress Committee will review the results, and remediation for unsuccessful learners will be determined based on identified strengths and weaknesses.

2.3.3 ITERS IN MED 3

Throughout the Med 3 year, learners receive formative and summative in-training evaluation reports (ITERs) for each clinical educational experience. In addition to the summative written examination, learners must pass the summative ITER for each clinical educational experience. If remediation is required, the learners must successfully complete the remediation to pass the clinical educational experience. If the learner is not successful in completing the remediation, they will be deemed to have failed the clinical educational experience and must meet with the Progress Committee about further assistance and promotion.

2.4. Med 4

2.4.1. ELECTIVES

Learners in the Med 4 year participate in a variety of electives reflecting their chosen area(s) of interest. Learners are responsible for ensuring their preceptors have access to an In-Training Evaluation Report (ITER) for completion at the end of every elective. When they start their rotations, they should arrange a meeting with their preceptor to

review their assessment before leaving the rotation. If the preceptor has any difficulty accessing One45, they can complete a paper ITER. Learners must pass all ITERs to graduate. Any issues identified in knowledge, professionalism or skills must be successfully remediated to graduate as outlined in the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations.

CONTACTS

If there are any questions about the content of this document, please contact the appropriate person from the list below:

Associate Dean, UGME
Dr. Ian Epstein
iepstein@dal.ca

Associate Dean, DMNB
Dr. Julie Copeland
Julie.copeland@dal.ca

Associate Dean, CBMC
Dr. Arlene-Kelly Wiggins
Arlene.Kelly-Wiggins@dal.ca

Chair, Progress Committee
Dr. Sylvie Ouellette
Dr.sylvie.ouellette@horizonnb.ca

Chair, Committee on the Assessment of Student Performance
Dr. Keith W. Wilson
kwwilson@dal.ca

Assessment Specialist, UGME
Natalie Lutwick, PhD
Natalie.Lutwick@dal.ca

Manager, Academic Progress, UGME
Kelly Barnes
progress@dal.ca

Operations Manager,
DMNB Kim Wilms
KWilms@dal.ca

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Writing Exams in-person

To keep noise to a minimum, please <u>limit</u> what you bring into the exam room and do not leave bags or personal items at the front of the room.

Be prepared for your exam, bring materials you will need, such as:

- A fully charged laptop meeting minimum system requirements (ipads are not permitted). As system requirements change you will be notified by coordinators.
- If you need a laptop, please notify MedIT to request use of a laptop for the examination (1 week notice is required).
- Take a mock exam in the days leading up to the exam and after you have updated your computer's system requirements (if this is necessary, you will be notified by your coordinators).
- A photo identification. Driver's license or equivalent (i.e. Dalhousie student card)
- Fluids – water is permitted; it's important to hydrate.
- Food is not permitted unless an accommodation is in place.
- Earplugs and noise-cancelling headphones are permitted (please notify the lead invigilator that you will be using earplugs when you provide your identification at entry)
- Headphones and earbuds are not permitted.
- Remove smartwatches and other wearable technology.
- Dress appropriately. If you wear a hooded sweatshirt, please keep the hood down.
- Scrap paper will be provided and must be returned to the invigilators at the end of the examination.
- Ensure your cellphone is set to silent.

Make sure you know what behaviours are expected and permitted:
- Talking out loud is not permitted at any time during the examination.
- Washroom breaks are permitted, but please keep them to a minimum.
- Bathroom breaks are not permitted for the first 30 minutes of the exam and during the final 30 minutes of the exam.
- If you need to use the washroom, please ensure to hide your laptop screen under the Exam Controls feature > hide >in the Exampify toolkit.
- For further information, refer to the examination instructions provided by the lead Invigilator or available in the Examplify tool kit.
- When in doubt, ask your Coordinator or the lead invigilator.

Do not commit an academic offence:
- Do not consult with classmates or any others on the exam.
- Do not share answers.
- Do not copy or distribute the questions after the exam is finished – this includes taking screenshots.

Prior to and during the exam, be sure to:
- Close and save any open documents and close down any running programs.
- Disable antivirus software, if applicable.
- Keep your Examplify program open and operating until you receive the notice that you have successfully uploaded all of your exam files (green screen)
- Check your work for mistakes, once you submit your exam to the portal, you cannot go back.
- You may set an internal alarm in the Examplify toolkit to remind you when you are nearing the end of the exam time. Invigilators will track the time at intervals during the exam period.
- Keep your screen open at all times during the exam. Please do not close your computer screen at any time during the examination. If you need to leave your laptop unattended for any reason, please hide your screen under exam controls > hide.

Guidelines for Taking Remote Exams in Examplify

Moving to remote examinations can be a challenge for many learners. We encourage you to prepare for your remote exams as if you were writing in-person. Please review the following guidelines to assist you during the exam period.

Choose a space that limits/removes all interruptions and distractions:
- Inform your family, children, roommates, when you will be writing and your need to concentrate. You will need noise to be kept to a minimum.
- Put your phone on silent. Remove it from your writing location but keep it accessible in case you need to contact technical or invigilator support.
- Choose a well-lit room, away from windows or other bright light sources. Too much or too little light can cause issues with your exam recording.
- If you can lock your room this will help prevent unwanted interruptions while you are writing your exam.

Be prepared for your exam, bring materials you will need, such as:
- Computer and power cord
- Access to reliable internet and power
- Fluids – water is permitted it's important to hydrate. Food is not permitted unless medically necessary.
- Ear plugs and noise cancelling headphones are permitted. Please demonstrate these to the camera when you see your first exam question.
- Headphones and ear buds are not permitted
- Remove smartwatches, and other wearable technology
- Dress appropriately; if wearing a hooded sweatshirt please keep the hood down ●COVID Masks are not permitted, the artificial intelligence that powers the monitoring system needs to be able to see your entire face.
- Please ensure that you are not connected to any external (duel) monitors. Your computer should have access to only 1 screen monitor.
- If using MS Surface Pro, disable rear-facing cameras.
- Make sure you know what resources, tools and behaviours are and are not expected and permitted:
- Talking out loud is not permitted at any time during the examination.
- Just a reminder that there will be no scrap paper allowed for remotely proctored exams; please use the notes and calculator tools available in the Examplify program.
- Washroom breaks are permitted, but please keep to a minimum. There will be no bathroom breaks permitted for the first 30 minutes of the exam or in the final 30 minutes of the exam.
- Refer to your examination instructions provided by the lead Invigilator or available in the Examplify tool kit for further information
- When in doubt, ask your Coordinators

Do not commit an academic offence:
- Do not consult with classmates or any others on the exam
- Do not share answers
- Do not copy or distribute the questions after the exam is finished – this includes taking screen shots

Be sure to:
- Keep your Examplify program open and operating until you receive the notice that you have successfully uploaded all of your exam files.
- Check your work for mistakes. Once you submit your exam to the portal, you cannot go back.
- Set an internal alarm in the Examplify toolkit to remind you when you are nearing the end of the exam time. Learners are expected to monitor their own time throughout the examination.
- Keep your screen open at all times during the exam. Please do not close your computer screen at any time during the examination.
- Remain in view of your video camera at all times (bathroom exception). If you are having difficulty with your video monitoring, contact Technical Support.
- Click "submit" and keep a record of the submission.
- Keep your phone on after the exam for 2 hours, in the event you need to be contacted by Invigilator or Technical Support Specialist.
- If you have technological problems, document and report any issues immediately and inform technical support at the numbers provided to you.