

Policy on Formative Assessment and Feedback

I. PURPOSE

Students benefit from timely feedback about their performance, both as a measure of their achievement and as guidance on how to improve. It is essential that formative assessment and feedback be provided during required courses and clerkships, early enough for students to strengthen their performance or remediate deficiencies before summative assessment.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Course and clerkship directors
- Course and clerkship faculty
- Medical students

III. POLICY

Formative feedback is defined as ongoing, low-stakes guidance given to learners during the learning process so they can adjust and improve before a course is finished. The guidance can be given in many ways, such as assessment results, narrative comments, or verbal feedback.

All required courses and clerkships of at least three contiguous weeks (or 15 course days) must provide students with formative feedback on their performance. Formative feedback must be provided early enough to allow students to improve before the end of the course or clerkship.

In the Foundations phase, formative feedback is provided through regular formative assessments aligned to course objectives, with individual results made available to students to guide their learning, and through feedback from faculty facilitators on clinical and information-seeking skills.

The Professional Development Course is exempted from this requirement.

In the Clerkships and Bridges phases, each required clerkship of four weeks or longer duration must provide a formal mid-clerkship assessment of performance, as set forth in the Policy on Mid-Clerkship Feedback.

Courses and clerkships must maintain written documentation that formative feedback has been provided to each student.

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

- Office of Medical Education

V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Policy on Mid-Clerkship Feedback
- Policy on Timeliness of Assessments in Courses, Clerkships, Electives, and Acting Internships
- Policy on Medical Student Assessment in Courses and Clerkships: Narrative Assessment

VI. REFERENCES

LCME Element 9.7: Formative Assessment and Feedback

VII. APPROVALS

Curriculum Committee approved on October 5, 2026.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine reserves the right to change these policies and procedures as needed.