Conflict of Interest in Student Assessment Policy

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<tr>
<th>Office of Accountability:</th>
<th>MD Program, Faculty of Medicine &amp; Dentistry (FoMD)</th>
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<td>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</td>
<td>MD Program, Faculty of Medicine &amp; Dentistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approver:</td>
<td>MD Curriculum &amp; Program Committee (MDCPC)</td>
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<td>Scope:</td>
<td>These procedures apply to instances where undergraduate students registered in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program at the University of Alberta, irrespective of the geographically distributed site to which they are currently assigned, as well as faculty and staff identify instances of perceived or real conflict of interest in assessment.</td>
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Overview

This policy addresses standard 11.1 (Academic Advising) of the Committee on Accreditation of Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS), which states

A medical school has an effective system of academic advising in place for medical students that integrates the efforts of faculty members, directors of required learning experiences, and student affairs staff with its counseling and tutorial services and ensures that medical students can obtain academic counseling from individuals who have no role in making assessment or advancement decisions about them.

11.1 f The medical school ensures that medical students can obtain academic counseling from individuals who have no role in making assessment or advancement decisions about them.

Oversight

The Associate Dean, MD Program is responsible for the oversight and implementation of the Conflict of Interest in Student Assessment policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that medical students can obtain academic counseling from individuals who have no role in making assessment or advancement decisions about them.

POLICY

Proactive Disclosure

The MD Program, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, will inform preceptors of the Procedure for Conflict of Interest During Student Assessment on an annual basis.
Preceptors are expected to review the student lists provided to them by the MD Program Office well in advance of assessing medical students in courses, modules, or rotations. Preceptors should proactively disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest (e.g. personal, monetary, etc.) pertaining to medical student assessments to the course administrator.

Medical students are expected to review individual course outlines well in advance of being assessed by a preceptor in a course, module, or rotation. Medical students should proactively disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest pertaining to academic assessment to the course administrator.

For forms of assessment in which there may be potential for subjectivity in the assessment, the course administrator will arrange for an alternative assessment to be made to the best of our ability. For objective forms of assessment (example: multiple choice questions) the assessment shall proceed as planned.

**Reactive Disclosure**
Preceptors who identify a perceived or actual conflict of interest (e.g. personal, monetary, etc.) while assessing a medical student must cease the assessment immediately and inform the course or clerkship coordinator.

Medical students who identify a perceived or actual conflict of interest while being assessed must discretely inform the preceptor who in turn shall cease the assessment. Both parties must inform the course or clerkship administrator of the occurrence.

For forms of assessment in which there may be a potential for subjectivity in the assessment, the course / clerkship coordinator shall arrange for an alternative assessment to be made. For objective forms of assessment (example: multiple choice questions) the assessment shall proceed as planned.

**Post Assessment Disclosure**
Medical students who identify a perceived or actual conflict of interest after having been assessed in a course, module, or rotation will be assigned the grade submitted by the preceptor. The only recourse available to a medical student dissatisfied with their assigned grade are the regulations described in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry’s Academic Appeals policy.

**DEFINITIONS**

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<th>Defined Term:</th>
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<td>The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS), working with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in the United States, ensures that</td>
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Canadian medical faculties’ MD programs meet the quality expected when producing tomorrow’s doctors. Medical schools demonstrating compliance are afforded accreditation, a necessary condition for a program’s graduates to be licensed as physicians.

**Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest is a situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgement and objectivity. An apparent conflict of interest is one in which it is reasonable to think that the professional’s judgement is likely to be compromised. A potential conflict of interest may develop into an actual conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by personal interest. A conflict of interest implies only the potential for bias and not a likelihood.

Examples of conflict of interest include:

- Accepting gifts, benefits or favours from students, instructors, faculty or preceptors.
- Supervising or evaluating a student who is a member of the immediate family or with whom there exists or has recently existed an intimate or personal relationship.
- Participating in decisions, interviews or assessment of candidates for admission to the MD Program where one or more candidates is a member of his or her immediate family, or a person with whom there exists or has recently existed a friendship, intimate, personal or financial relationship.
- Directing a course, year or term where one or more students is a member of the immediate family.
- Supervision or evaluation of a student by a member of the Learner Advocacy & Wellness (LAW) Office where there exists or has recently existed a counselling/advising relationship.

Adapted from Queen’s University Undergraduate Medical Education Standard Operating Procedures Concerning Conflicts of Interest for Undergraduate Medical Education Faculty and Students (August 12, 2016)

**LAW**

Learner Advocacy & Wellness office

The Office of Learner Advocacy & Wellness (LAW) in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta looks after issues pertaining to the health and well-being of learners. The office also advocates on their behalf.

**MD Program**

Medical Doctor Program

The MD Program in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta oversees the four-year program leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD).
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<th>APPROVER</th>
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<tr>
<td>MD Curriculum &amp; Program Committee</td>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>19 April 2018</td>
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