

MEDICAL STUDENT SUPERVISION POLICY

Purpose & Scope

This policy applies to individuals who supervise medical students across all required and elective clinical activities at all training sites. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for medical student learning and growth in the clinical setting, to ensure that the school adheres to expectations that protect patients and ensure student safety, and to describe the mandatory training, teaching, and assessment skills required to be a medical student supervisor.

Appropriate supervision ensures that medical students are provided with opportunities to learn that are progressive and commensurate with the student's level of training and in accordance with the supervisor's level of training and specialization.

Supervisors in the Clinical Setting

A Supervisor has the capacity to allow a learner to receive progressive responsibility for patient care. A Supervisor must either hold a faculty appointment and clinical privileges or be supervised in their teaching and assessment role by an individual who has a faculty appointment and clinical privileges. Examples of possible supervisors include:

- Attending Physician within Vanderbilt University School of Medicine's (VUSM) training sites both inpatient and ambulatory
- Resident Physician, Intern, or Fellow in a Graduate Medical Education (GME) program within VUSM
- Allied health professionals, such as Nurses, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Social Workers, etc. where appropriate to the clinical activity

Levels of Supervision – Direct vs. Indirect

1. Direct Supervision: The medical student performs a task with the Supervisor physically present in the same location as the student; able to provide direct instructions and feedback to the student in real time; able to take over patient care duties if and when necessary. A resident physician or another health professional acting within their scope of practice may provide direct supervision under the indirect supervision of an attending physician.
2. Indirect Supervision - The Supervisor may not be physically present with the student; however, they are on-duty, immediately available, and can be called to the physical location of the student if and when necessary. The Supervisor verifies in person all relevant components of the history and physical exam that are obtained independently by students and verifies and communicates in person to the patient the assessment and plan.
3. The limitations for the requirements of proximity and timing of supervision, as well as the specific tasks that a student may perform without direct supervision depends on various factors, including:
 - the level of training of the student;
 - previous experience and skill of the student within the scope of the clinical activity and setting;
 - the familiarity of the supervisor with the student's skills;
 - the acuity of the situation and the degree of risk to the patient.

How VUSM Monitors Clinical Supervision

Any medical student with concerns about the adequacy and availability of supervision they are receiving is encouraged to address their concerns as soon as possible. Medical students are instructed to contact their Course or Clerkship Director regarding any immediate concerns with supervision. Additionally, reports can be made via anonymous feedback through RISE or the Office of Medical Student Affairs.