

Policy on Supervision of Medical Students in Clinical Learning Environments

OBJECTIVE

To ensure patient and student safety through adequate supervision of, and appropriate delegation of responsibility to medical students in clinical learning environments.

LCME ELEMENT – 9.3 Clinical Supervision of Medical Students

A medical school ensures that medical students in clinical learning situations involving patient care are appropriately supervised at all times in order to ensure patient and student safety, that the level of responsibility delegated to the student is appropriate to his or her level of training, and that the activities supervised are within the scope of practice of the supervising health professional.

DEFINITIONS

- Supervising Physician - An attending physician with a UMKC-SOM faculty appointment; a resident or fellow physician training in a graduate medical education program at, or affiliated with, the School of Medicine.
- Healthcare Provider - Including but not limited to: anesthesia assistants, dieticians, emergency medical technicians, medical sonographers, medical technologists, nurse practitioners, nurses, occupational therapists, paramedics, pharmacologists, physical therapists, physician assistants, psychologists, radiographers, respiratory therapists, social workers, speech language pathologists, and surgical technicians.
- Supervision Levels
 1. Direct Supervision - the supervising physician is physically present with the medical student and patient.
 2. Indirect Supervision With Direct Supervision Immediately Available - the supervising physician is physically within the hospital or other site of patient care, and is immediately available to provide direct supervision.
- For hospital-based practice institutions, it is the institution's responsibility to ensure that all physicians and healthcare providers are appropriately credentialed and privileged by the hospital, institution, or agency and capable of medical student supervision within the scope of their practice.
- For private practice settings in which healthcare providers are present, it is the responsibility of the supervising physician to ensure that healthcare providers are appropriately credentialed and privileged and capable of medical student supervision within the scope of their practice.

SCOPE & APPLICABILITY

- This policy applies to required courses where students interact with patients, and all required clerkships taught as part of the undergraduate medical education program.
- Course/clerkship directors are responsible for orienting students, supervising physicians, and healthcare providers who supervise medical students to the provisions of this policy; setting and communicating course/clerkship-specific expectations regarding appropriate levels of supervision; and ensuring that supervising physicians and healthcare providers adhere to the provisions of this policy.

POLICY

- Medical students are not licensed and cannot provide unsupervised patient care. Clinical decisions and orders are never created or enacted by medical students without a supervising physician’s input and approval. A supervising physician has the medical and legal responsibility for patient care at all times.
- A supervising physician is required to supervise medical students in clinical learning environments at a supervision level of “indirect supervision with direct supervision immediately available” or higher.
- The supervising physician will determine the appropriate level of supervision by taking into account the clinical site policies; complexity of the situation or procedure; risk for adverse events; and the medical student’s level of training, demonstrated competence, maturity, and responsibility.
- The course/clerkship director will determine the patient encounters and procedures for which medical student supervision may be provided by fellows, residents, and/or appropriately credentialed healthcare providers.
- Individuals who have experienced or witnessed a lapse in medical student supervision must report the incident to the course/clerkship director. Students may also anonymously report lapses in medical student supervision in the course evaluation.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

- Course/clerkship directors must submit a report, which documents how they ensure that supervising physicians and healthcare providers adhere to the provisions of this policy, annually to the Council on Curriculum.
- The Office of Assessment and Quality Improvement will submit a report, which documents the concerns regarding supervision raised by medical students in course evaluations, annually to the Council on Curriculum.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Responsible for policy: Council on Curriculum

Responsible for tracking compliance: Office of Assessment and Quality Improvement

Date policy passed: 1/9/2017

Date most recent policy update: 8/14/2017

Date of next review: 2020