



MD Program  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# Workplace Based Assessments (WBAs) in Clerkship: Coming Soon →

## December 2022

Welcome to the second edition of WBAs in Clerkship: Coming Soon, the newsletter which keeps you up to date on the introduction of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) to Temerty Faculty of Medicine undergraduate medical education.

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### What is a WBA?

WBA is, quite simply, an assessment of a common and observable clinical skill or task performed by a learner in the work environment. The Association of Faculties of Medicine in Canada (AFMC) has defined 12 such tasks for undergraduate students during their clerkship, referred to as EPAs. These EPAs are common to all specialties (completing a history and physical exam, developing a differential diagnosis, for example) and a consistent WBA tool used within and across courses to capture feedback on the EPAs provides the opportunity for a developmental assessment of skills acquisition during clerkship.

The MD Program is proceeding with the WBA pilot for 2T4 clerkship students from March to August 2023 with a plan for full implementation planned for the 2T5 clerkship students from September 2023.

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### Is there any difference between WBAs for residents and medical students?

If you are a faculty member, you may have completed EPA forms on Elentra for your residents. Elentra will still be the platform utilised for WBA completion in the MD Program. There are 2 major differences: 1. The tool used for the MD Program looks different, the assessment scale has been adapted to a 4-point rating scale and there are no milestone ratings for students. 2. The goal is to use WBA as a framework for a brief coaching

conversation and to document that conversation. The most important component of the tool is the required narrative portion that follows the rating scale. The MD program is not using the WBA tool and outcomes on EPAs for progress decisions (there are no stages of training in the undergraduate program); it is an assessment for learning, not of learning.



Please also refer to the [Faculty Development WBA webpage](#) for further information and resources or scan the QR code.

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## Assessment Tool

In the November 2022 newsletter, we let you know about the “Key Observable Behaviours” associated with each EPA that will help guide assessors in providing feedback and coaching to students. Below you can see the WBA tool in its entirety with the rating scale and narrative portions included. This particular tool is for EPA 1 - Obtain a history and perform a physical examination adapted to the patient’s clinical situation.

### Key Observable Behaviours

Conduct a patient-centred interview, gathering all relevant biomedical and psychosocial information

Communicate using a patient-centred approach that facilitates patient trust and autonomy and is characterized by respect and compassion

Use clear and concise language; avoid or adequately explain medical jargon

Seek and synthesize relevant information from other sources, including the patient's family, with the patient's consent

Optimize the physical environment for patient comfort, dignity, privacy, engagement, and safety

Performs and demonstrates physical exam skills tailored to the clinical case

<div style="background-color: #1a3d54; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span style="font-size: 20px; font-weight: bold;">1</span> </div> <p><b>Competent</b> Requires minimal to no supervision - "I provided minimal to no guidance for this task"</p>	<p>*Strengths (please provide 2-3 examples)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div>
<div style="background-color: #4a7c9c; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span style="font-size: 20px; font-weight: bold;">2</span> </div> <p><b>Support</b> Requires some supervision- "I had to guide them through the task"</p>	<p>*Areas for Improvement (please provide 2-3 examples)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; height: 40px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div>
<div style="background-color: #7090a0; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span style="font-size: 20px; font-weight: bold;">3</span> </div> <p><b>Direction</b> Requires some intervention- "I had to do/re-do parts of the task"</p>	<p>*Action Plan for Improvement</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; height: 40px;"></div>
<div style="background-color: #a0c0d0; color: white; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <span style="font-size: 20px; font-weight: bold;">4</span> </div> <p><b>Intervention</b> Requires considerable intervention- "I had to do/re-do the complete task"</p>	

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question 1:** Why is this initiative called a pilot?

**Answer 1:** The WBA tool is being piloted from March to August 2023 in order to enable students and assessors to familiarize themselves with using EPAs for coaching and feedback. Robust evaluation will take place during the pilot and help to inform the full implementation of the tool from September 2023 and beyond. Providing feedback during the pilot period is important as it will help inform how EPAs will be used by the program in the future.

**Question 2:** As an assessor, what benchmark should I use when completing a WBA assessment on a student?

**Answer 2:** Competency in the 12 undergraduate EPAs is anticipated by the completion of medical school (year 4). The benchmark for assessment is that of the graduating medical student. Clinical skills acquisition is developmental and as a result, we expect the full range of the rating scale will be utilised over the course of clerkship. Students are aware of this as well. The Key Observable Behaviours listed on each EPA form are meant to help guide assessors when completing the overall rating and providing narrative comments.

**Question 3:** How will WBAs benefit students?

**Answer 3:** Students will receive feedback using a consistent WBA tool evaluating the key clinical tasks (EPAs) defined by the AFMC across clerkship courses. They will be better able to recognize their clinical strengths and learning gaps. The assessments will be part of their learning portfolio reviewed with their Portfolio Scholar during progress meetings semi-annually with the opportunity to discuss additional learning supports as needed.

**Question 4:** Why am I receiving multiple copies of EPA newsletters?

**Answer 4:** One of the concerns raised by faculty to the MD Program in the lead up to the planned pilot last year was a lack of awareness of the initiative in spite of best efforts to communicate and provide faculty development. To address this, the Program compiled an email list of faculty members who recently completed student assessments on MedSIS in order to reach out directly to teachers and supervisors. We have also asked site directors and academy directors to forward the newsletter to their teaching faculty, so you may receive the communication via several pathways. In the absence of a means to confirm inactive or blocked email addresses, the Program has been utilizing a feature within the newsletter software to determine whether the newsletter has been opened. This software is not 100% accurate and we apologise if you were contacted after having read the newsletter. This feature has been disabled.

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### **What's coming up in the next newsletter?**

Details on the pilot phase of the WBA implementation and what it means for faculty and students.

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**Wishing you happiness and good health this holiday season**

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If you have any questions, please get in touch at [md.oae@utoronto.ca](mailto:md.oae@utoronto.ca)