

Tips for Assessors - Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercise

The Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercise (mini-CEX) is an assessment tool focused on the essential skills required during patient encounters. It takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to conduct and is a **direct observation** of a physician-patient encounter. Not all elements of a patient interaction need be assessed on each occasion; this tool allows the assessor to focus on one or two sentinel habits and/or domains of care at a time.

When to Employ

Unless otherwise notified, during the clinical field assessment (CFA) period the mini-CEX should be employed in a variety of settings (clinic, ER, etc.) and address all [Sentinel Habits](#), as well as all [Domains of Care](#).

What the Tool Evaluates

Medical Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active listening skills including facilitating patient story-telling Effective use of questions/directions to obtain accurate and adequate information Responds appropriately to patient affect and/or non-verbal cues
Physical Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows efficient, logical sequences Informs patient Sensitive to patient comfort and modesty
Consideration for Patient / Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to patient feelings; demonstrates respect, compassion and empathy Establishes trust Attends to patient needs for comfort, modesty, and confidentiality of information
Clinical Judgment / Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selectively orders and/or performs appropriate diagnostic investigation Appropriate prescribing including consideration of risks and benefits
Communication & Counselling Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agrees to a plan with the patient, explains rationale for test/treatment, obtains patient consent, educates/counsels regarding management
Organization & Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritises Timely, succinct
Overall Clinical Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates judgement, synthesis, caring, effectiveness and efficiency

Mini-CEX Rating Scale

The Mini-CEX utilizes a nine (9)-point rating scale:

- 1 → 3 = **unsatisfactory**
- 4 → 6 = **satisfactory***
- 7 → 9 = **superior**

**A rating of 4, while classified as satisfactory, is defined as “marginal” and conveys the need to improve performance through program recommended remediation. Faculty using this assessment tool are expected to develop a common understanding of the criteria for each of these ratings through program wide faculty development activities.*

Two-Step Rating Approach

1. Determine if the performance was satisfactory, unsatisfactory or superior.
2. Determine which of the three possible ratings best reflects the observed trainee-patient encounter within the selected performance category.

Providing Feedback

- Where possible select only one (1) or two (2) points to discuss at a time
- Engage the candidate in identifying discussion points (where possible/appropriate)
- Match each discussion point with a suggestion and a follow-up plan for the candidate

Candidate’s signature on the form indicates he/she has been provided the opportunity to review and discuss the form; it is not necessary that they *agree* with the content or the feedback provided.

Note: Mini-CEXs MUST be co-signed by candidate prior to returning forms to PRA-BC offices.

Reference:

1. John J. Norcini, et. al. 2003. The Mini-CEX: A Method for Assessing Clinical Skills. *Ann Intern Med.* 2003;138:476-481
2. Clinical Assessors Training Program for Practice Ready Assessment in Family Medicine. Training the Trainers. National Assessment Collaboration - Practice Ready Assessment in Family Medicine (NAC-PRA-FM). Pre-Training Reading. Pilot Meeting: February 2-3, 2015. Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.
3. Information Binder for Assessors of International Medical Graduates, Saskatchewan International Physicians Practice Assessment (SIPPA). Division of Continuing Professional Learning, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan. Accessed: Fall 2012 (Revised) <http://saskdocs.ca/work/family-physician---imgs/sippa/>