Remote Assessment Policy

Office of Accountability:	Associate Dean, MD Program
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	MD Program, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Approver:	MD Curriculum & Program Committee (MDCPC)
Scope:	Compliance with this policy extends to all members of the MD Program community.

Overview

During the pandemic, both learners and the MD Program experienced the benefits and drawbacks of learners writing assessments remotely. As public health restrictions have lifted, the MD Program has moved back to requiring all assessments be written in person.This policy provides the rationale for requiring in-person assessments, identifies principles that will be applied when remote assessments are requested and balances flexibility and wellbeing for learners, logistical and practical issues, and validity in testing.

Rationale for In-Person Assessments

Effective 2023-2024, all written assessments will be in-person unless a student has been granted permission to write it remotely. While there are benefits to remote assessments in specific situations, virtual assessments can lead to questions about academic misconduct, exam bank security and validity. As well, logistical and technological challenges can negatively impact student wellbeing and result in disruptions for both students and the MD Program.

Principles for granting permission for remote assessments

Because each student's situation is different, the MD Program will make the decision to grant a remote assessment on a case-by-case basis, using the following principles:

1) The weighting/stakes of the assessment. For example, a high-stakes final assessment that is a large part of the course assessment would be much less likely to receive approval for remote writing as compared to a low-stakes assessment (e.g. TBL IRAT), which constitutes a small component of the course.
2) Timing of the assessment. Is the assessment scheduled after the formal end of scheduled in-person activities (e.g. make-up assessments, deferred assessments)

3) The availability of a remote proctoring centre where the student will be located
4) Financial implications of in-person writing
5) Consideration of unique student situations (as advocated by the Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, and/or Associate Dean, Advocacy & Wellbeing)
6) Other considerations related to accommodations and other human rights issues

Process for granting permission for remote assessments

Inability to write an in-person assessment that falls under the Absence Policy
Whether due to an expected absence (e.g. conference) or unexpected absence (e.g. illness, family emergency), as soon as a student is aware they will miss an assessment, the student will submit an absence request and contact the MD Program's Assessment Specialist who may
  a) set up a remote assessment for a low stakes assessment, or
  b) schedule an alternate in-person writing for higher stakes assessments up to two days before or ideally within one week after the scheduled assessment time depending on the reason for absence. When possible, make-up assessments will be scheduled on Thursdays during Self-Directed Learning time.

Inability to write an in-person assessment that is not covered under the absence policy
When a student is scheduled to write an assessment during a time they had not planned on being in Edmonton (or at their assigned learning site), they will contact the Assistant Dean, Assessment to discuss their situation. The student may be granted permission to write remotely or may be asked to write in Edmonton based on the principles outlined above. If the student has a personal matter which they would rather not discuss with the Assistant Dean, Assessment, they can reach out to the Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, or Associate Dean, Advocacy & Wellbeing to discuss their situation. This individual will then communicate with the assessment team their recommendation for or against a remote assessment respecting the student's preference for what information can be shared.

Remote assessment process
As with any assessment, students are governed by the University of Alberta's Code of Student Behaviour. However as an additional measure during the remote assessment, the student will be presented with a prompt to remind them about what constitutes cheating and then acknowledging that they will not behave in any way that might constitute cheating before proceeding with the assessment.

Other considerations
Cost of remote proctoring centres

Remote proctoring centres may come with an expense. Students will be expected to assume these costs; however, in the case of financial hardship, alternative ways to cover the expense may be considered.

Impact of remediation required before make-up assessments
Timing of make-up assessments are usually set well in advance. A student may write the make-up assessment earlier than the scheduled time if:

a) Less remediation time is required as determined by the course coordinator, and/or

b) The student can write the assessment in-person at an earlier time rather than remotely

Clerkship specific issues
For required learning experiences that require out of town placements (e.g. PNME, rural Family Medicine, Integrated Clinical Clerkship, and Grand Prairie placements), a course/clerkship coordinator may choose to schedule remote assessments for all learners. This decision will be made in consultation with the Assistant Dean, Assessment and based on logistical considerations, the impact on learning, and validity in testing.

Virtual Practical Assessments (e.g. Objective Structured Clinical Examinations - OSCEs)
Some clerkships may need to continue scheduling resource-intensive assessments (e.g. OSCEs) virtually. In those cases, the clerkship coordinator will consult with the Assistant Dean, Assessment to ensure requisite skills (e.g. physical exam) are tested appropriately in other ways, such as workplace based assessments.

<u>Approval History</u>

Approver	Status	Date
MD Curriculum & Program Committee (MDCPC)	Approved	22 June 2023