

Understanding Learner Levels in the MD Undergraduate Program: Years 1 & 2

This document supports clinical preceptors by summarizing medical student competencies at each stage of training. This document was created in collaboration with the MD Undergraduate Program (MDUP) curricular leads, and is informed by MDUP policies, curriculum, and exit competencies.

At a Glance - What Can & Can't a Year 1 or 2 Medical Student Do?

Year 1 & 2 students can:

- Take a general history (they are working towards focused history taking skills)
- Use tools such as FIFE (Feelings, Ideas, Functioning, Expectations) and acronyms such as OPQRST (Onset, Provocation/Palliation, Quality/Quantity, Region/Radiation, Severity, Timing)

They are learning skills in (see table on page 2):

- Foundational history taking & condensing the patient's account and concerns in a logical, factual, and chronological order
- Listening, non-verbal communication and empathy



Students in all years cannot:

1. Sign prescriptions independently.
2. Sign birth and death certificates, or other medico-legal documents.
3. Discharge a patient from hospital, emergency department, or clinic.
4. Enter orders in the medical record.

Note: Students can add to the medical record, but all additions must be reviewed by their supervising preceptor within 24 hours of patient admission to ensure that hospital admission history, physical examinations, and documentation are entered and countersigned.

Learn more:
[Policy 031A](#)



Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence

The Faculty of Medicine provides guidance on acceptable and prohibited uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for clinical documentation.

Per [clinical documentation guidelines](#), students cannot use AI tools to:

1. Enter patient-identifiable information.
2. Draft, edit, summarize, or rewrite patient histories, admission/case notes, consults, proposed management plans, daily notes, assessments, or discharge summaries.
3. Generate clinical reasoning activities, such as differential diagnoses, investigations, or treatment recommendations, without guidance from their preceptor.
4. Ambiently scribe for documentation in Years 1-3, and only in exceptional circumstances for Year 4, per [broader AI-use guidelines](#).

Learn more:
[Guideline](#)



This is a general overview of the areas covered in the Clinical Skills curriculum in each term of the first two years. *Note: There may be some slight timing variations between sites.*

Year 1	
Term 1 • Vital Signs, Head & Neck • Cardiovascular Physical Exams • Respiratory Physical Exams • Abdominal Physical Exams • Introduction to Point of Care Ultrasound* • Introduction to Trauma-informed Care • Communication Skills, Empathy • Use of Interpreters • Gender & Inclusivity • Intersectionality, Bias & Discrimination • Narrative Medicine • Virtual Care	Term 2 • Cardiovascular • ENT, Head and Neck • Ophthalmology • Gastrointestinal • Abdominal Ultrasound* • Musculoskeletal (spine & neurological) • Neurosciences (cranial nerves, motor, sensory, reflexes, coordination, gait, mental status) • Respiratory
Year 2	
Term 1 • Breast/Chest, Pelvic, Male GU and Rectal Examinations • Intravascular Volume Assessment and AAA Screening Ultrasound* • Clinical Skills Integration • Integument • Musculoskeletal (knee, foot, ankle) • Neurology • Pediatrics • Psychiatry	Term 2 • Cardiac Ultrasound* • Clinical Skills Integration • Geriatrics • Musculoskeletal • Sensitive Interviewing male & female sexual dysfunction, intimate partner violence, suicidal risk

Tables adapted from the [UBC MD Undergraduate Program Exit Competencies](#).
**Ultrasound sessions provide a general overview, not a mastery of the technique.*

For more information on teaching Year 1 and 2 medical students, review:

- [Introduction to Clinical Teaching and Assessment for New Faculty](#)
- [Expectations of Medical Students in Supervised Clinical Settings Policy \(031A\)](#)
- [Expectations for Supporting Students in Clinical Settings Policy \(031B\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Dress Code in Clinical Experiences](#)



Find more teaching resources at facdev.med.ubc.ca
Or contact us at fac.dev@ubc.ca