

Grading Clinical Students: Competency Rubric and Written Comments

UTCVM MASTER TEACHER PROGRAM

OCTOBER 2016

Master Teacher Program Values



Grading in the Clinical Setting

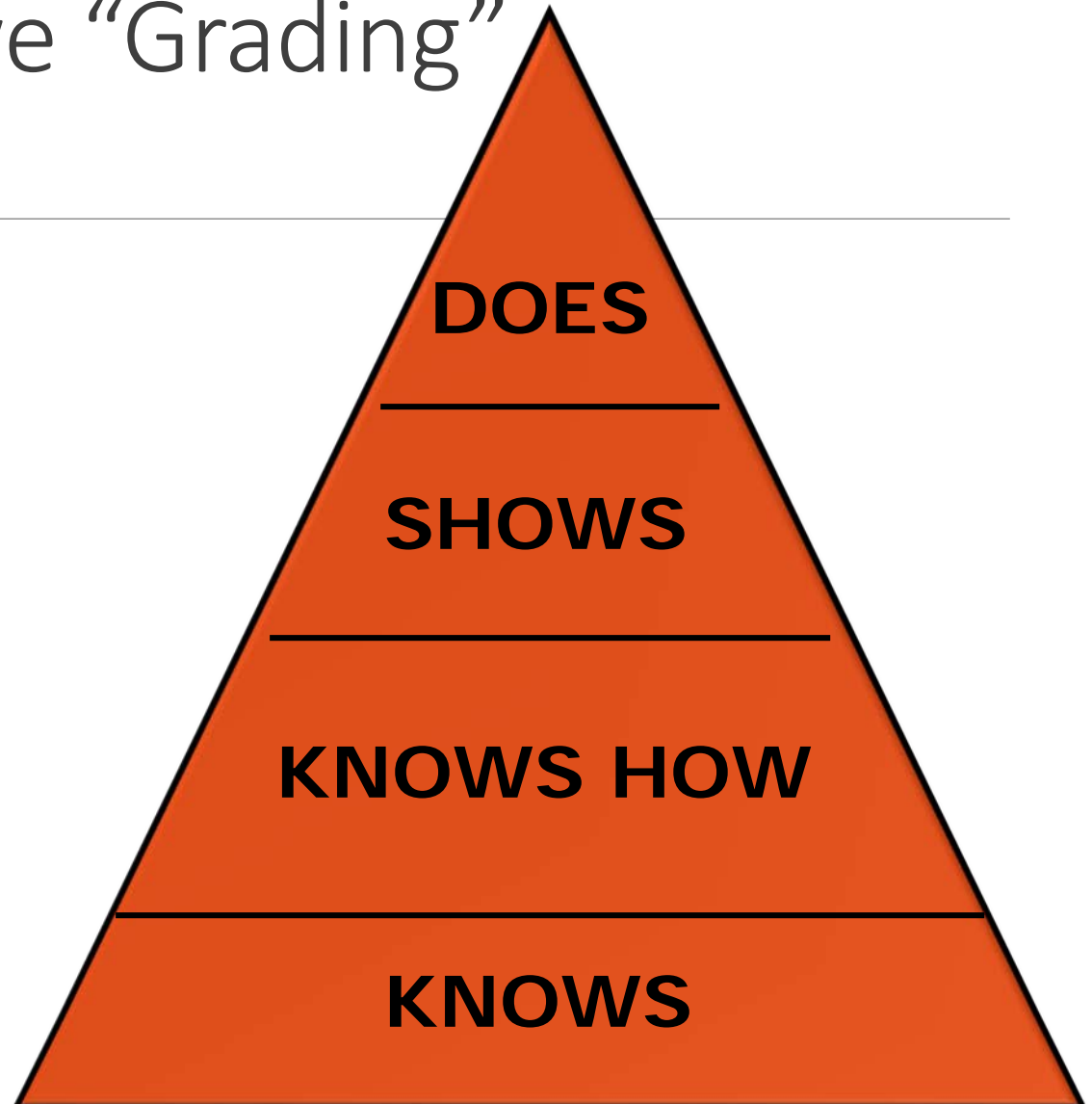
Objectives for Participants

- Review the background and uses of clinical grades
- Gain optimal usefulness from the competency grading rubric
- Gain tips for improving narrative feedback to students and house officers
- Get tips to save time in completing clinic grades

Feedback versus Evaluation

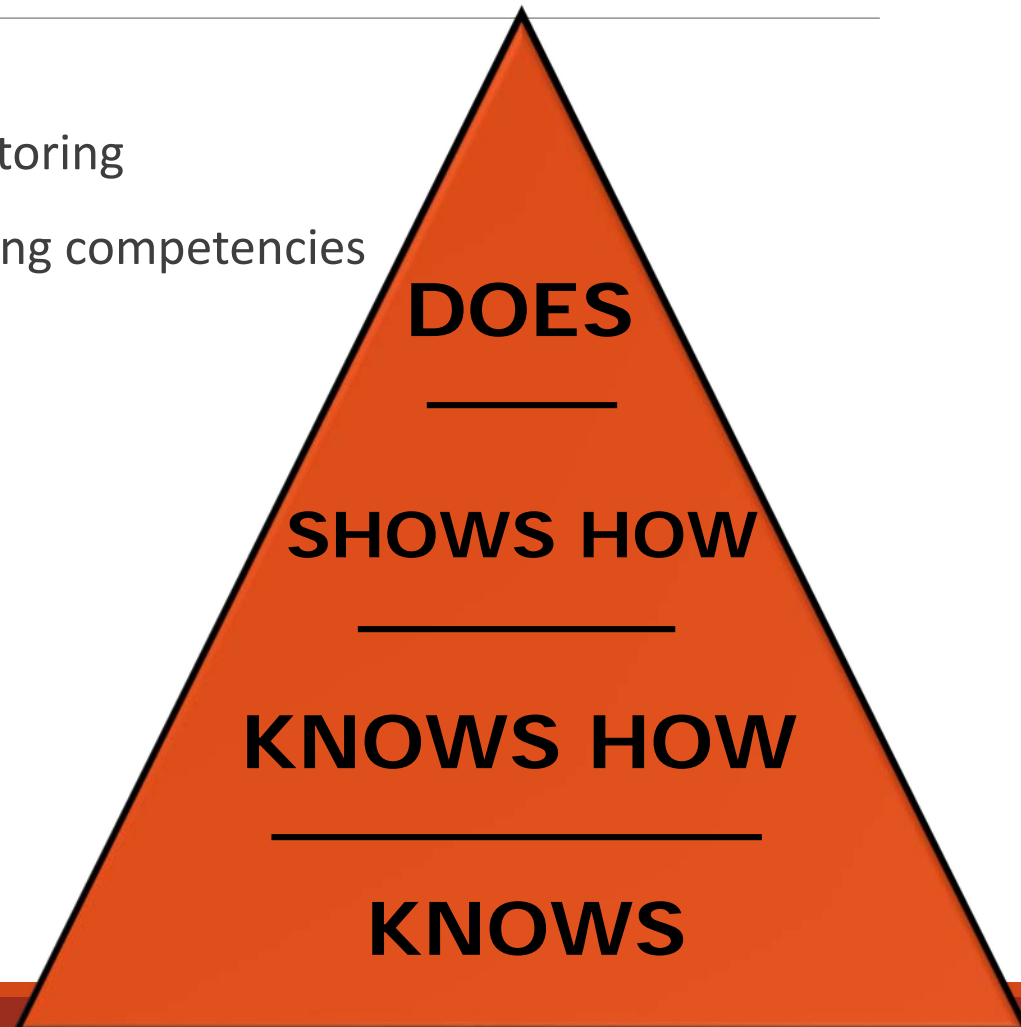
- Feedback can be continuous, ongoing, designed to be immediate and to provide coaching and direction and guidance
- Evaluation (or grades) obviously is a type of feedback but is designed both to assess performance over a period of time and offer suggestions for improvement

What are we “Grading” in Clinics?



“Competency”-Based Assessment

- Focused on outcomes
- Focused on ability to “do” doctoring
- Usually within set of overarching competencies



Desired Outcomes/Objectives

```
graph TD; A[Desired Outcomes/Objectives] --> B[What does it look like?]; B --> C[How will we measure it?]; C --> D[What does an "A" look like? a "B"? etc.]; D --> E[Clear and Transparent Grading Decisions];
```

What does it look like?

How will we
measure it?

What does an "A" look
like? a "B"? etc.

Clear and Transparent
Grading Decisions

The Power of Competency Assessments

- Provide clear expectations for learning and clear focus for instruction
- Provide better feedback to students on performance
- Improve consistency of expectations and feedback
- Ease grading process for instructors
- Provide programmatic data regarding student performance outcomes

What we must provide AVMA regarding competency assessment:

- **Learning objectives** for each of the nine listed competencies
 - Summary of the analysis of evidence-based data collected for each of the nine listed competencies used to assure that graduates are prepared for entry level practice
-

UTCVM background:

- **2008:** Faculty Task Force identified objectives within AVMA competency domains
- **2009:** Assessment Committee developed rubric for clinical grading based on those 9 competencies and embedded objectives; pilot tested rubric
- **2010:** Included as part of One45 grading process for most rotations
- **2011 forward:** Some sections have created modified rubrics to best suit their needs

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a format that provides specific expectations into acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance

Example **Competency 1: Comprehensive patient diagnosis: *Diagnostic planning skills***

Exemplary	Good	Competent	Needs Remediation
○ Consistently identifies all problems, most likely differential diagnoses and appropriate initial diagnostic steps	○ Identifies major problems, appropriate differential diagnoses and initial plans	○ Creates initial problem list and plan but sometimes has difficulty identifying problems or differentials	○ Typically unable to identify major problems, differential diagnose, or initial diagnostic steps

Benefits of competency-based programs and rubrics

“You know that thing you do... that way you are...”



Benefits of competency-based programs

“A pleasure to work with....”



And..

“Keep reading”



Rubrics

- Provide specific language in descriptions of expectations
- Provide consistency for students and instructors
- Provide aggregate program results



How are the Completed Rubrics Used?

- For individual student improvement, portfolios
- For performance warning “flags”
- Data for AVMA COE reports
- Data to inform rotation and curricular improvement




How Can I Best Use the Rubric?

	Exemplary Performance	Good Performance	Satisfactory Performance	Unacceptable Performance
Overall Professionalism				
19. Overall professionalism	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates high level of maturity, is always prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate</p> <p><i>M – extra help with Mrs Jones</i></p>	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates good level of maturity, is usually prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates acceptable levels of maturity, preparedness and dependability; generally interacts respectfully with others or has minor areas for improvement in professional behavior (must comment)</p> <p><i>IL – late monday</i></p>	<p>○</p> <p>Does not display appropriate professionalism; is unenthusiastic about learning and participation; demonstrates gaps in professional behavior identified based on UTCVM guidelines (must comment)</p>

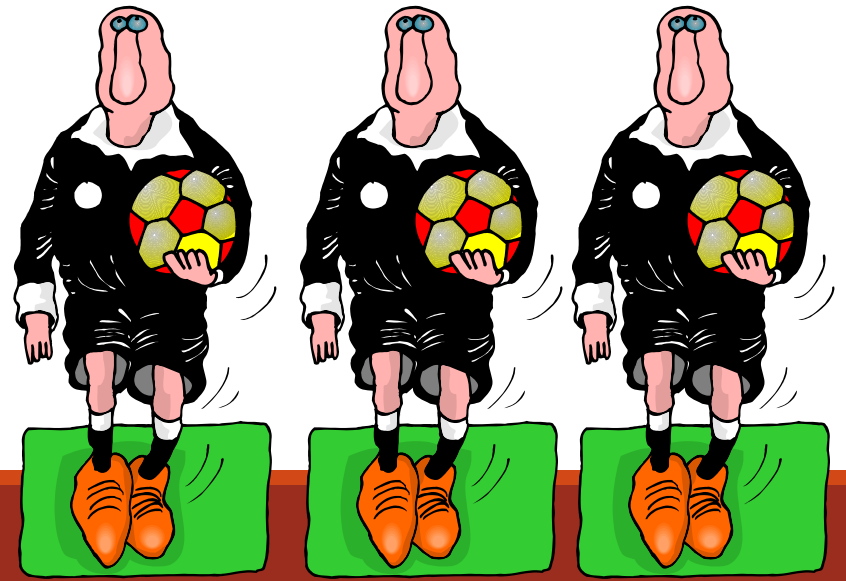
How Can I Best Use the Rubric?

Student Self-Assessment

	Exemplary Performance	Good Performance	Satisfactory Performance	Unacceptable Performance
Overall Professionalism				
19. Overall professionalism	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates high level of maturity, is always prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate</p>		<p>○</p> <p>monstrates acceptable levels maturity, preparedness and pendability; generally interacts spectfully with others or has nor areas for improvement in fessional behavior (must nment)</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Does not display appropriate professionalism; is unenthusiastic about learning and participation; demonstrates gaps in professional behavior identified based on UTCVM guidelines (must comment)</p>

Multiple Graders?

- Share a Word file or collect notes
- Use a tiered One45 page
- Create a regular time that works to exchange observations
 - Right after rounds
 - Right after receiving
 - Friday afternoon or Saturday morning



Examples

Using the Behavioral Rubric

	Exemplary Performance	Good Performance	Satisfactory Performance	Unacceptable Performance
19. Overall professionalism	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates high level of maturity, is always prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates good level of maturity, is usually prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Demonstrates acceptable levels of maturity, preparedness and dependability; generally interacts respectfully with others or has minor areas for improvement in professional behavior (must comment)</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Does not display appropriate professionalism; is unenthusiastic about learning and participation; demonstrates gaps in professional behavior identified based on UTCVM guidelines (must comment)</p>

Examples

Using the Behavior Rubric

	Exemplary Performance	Good Performance	Satisfactory Performance	Unacceptable Performance
19. Overall professionalism	Demonstrates high level of maturity, is always prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate	Demonstrates good level of maturity, is usually prepared & dependable, interacts respectfully with clinician, staff, classmates & clients; appears eager to learn and participate	Demonstrates acceptable levels of maturity, preparedness and dependability; generally interacts respectfully with others or has minor areas for improvement in professional behavior (must comment)	Does not display appropriate professionalism; is unenthusiastic about learning and participation; demonstrates gaps in professional behavior identified based on UTCVM guidelines (must comment)

"Sometimes your body language in rounds makes it appear that you are disinterested or impatient... making more eye contact and engaging in the discussion will help."

Improving Narrative Comments

Written comments

“A Pleasure to Work With- An analysis of written comments on student evaluations” – Lye et al, *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 2000

- Content analysis of 1017 student comments on 227 evaluations
- Mean number of comments = 4/eval
- Learner and personal characteristics, not clinical skills
- Comments nonspecific, not specific enough to lead to change in performance

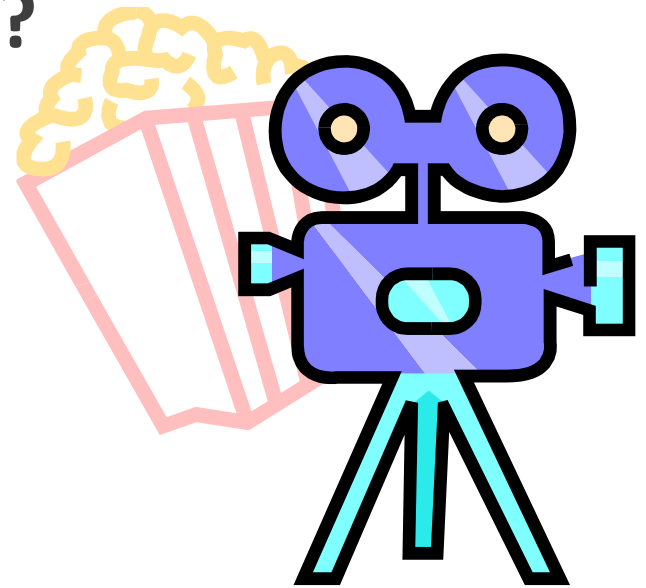
What do we know about feedback?

Giving Effective Feedback

- Make it relevant
- Make it descriptive & non-judgmental
- Describe specific observable behavior & its consequence
- Place in a context of respect
- Balance with the positive (start & end)
- Suggest alternative behaviors, realistic change

Making it Descriptive...

- What made it “solid”?
- What made it “good”?
- What made it “excellent”?
- What does it look like?



Making it Useful...

- What should he/she “keep doing”?
- What should he/she do “different”?

Let's try a couple of comments given to students

1. Wonderful job, thanks!

How about using these instead:

Strong knowledge base mixed with great clinical common sense. Calm demeanor for clients means excellent client compliance. Quietly contemplative, thinks things through carefully before acting.

Always here early and offering to help the team

Obviously read new resources each day and reported what you learned to the team

Comment 2

Experience & confidence will help

You are sometimes hard on yourself and doubt your confidence. For a while, practice assuming that you are right instead of assuming you are wrong and see what happens

The more prepared you are, the more confident you will be in your plans. Try reviewing differential diagnoses for each of the patients on the schedule the night before and make notes on your patients that are organized just like a case presentation

Comment 3

“Keep reading”

For every case that passes under your care you need to very actively examine, read and research about the disease, the treatments and the prognosis. You will only learn if you push yourself and take initiative to study and understand.

For instance, when learning about mast cell tumors, you need to move beyond basic texts and review some primary literature.

I would also strongly encourage you to practice teaching basic concepts. It's a great way to teach yourself.



4. More comments.....

Will improve with experience

Excellent patient care

Great participation

Be more confident

Good start

Basic knowledge is solid

Knowledge is strong

Nice job with Fluffy and Mrs. Jones

Any examples that you
can think of...

Grading: Time time time time



Timely Feedback and Grades

- Specific memory is fresh
- Provides earliest opportunity for improvement or correction of deficiencies
- Minimizes opportunities for misunderstanding, anguish, emotional impact
 - “But I thought I was doing ok!”
 - “I’m doing so poorly I might as well quit”

Timely Feedback and Grades

- Allows early comparison with self-assessment
- Produces better graduates!

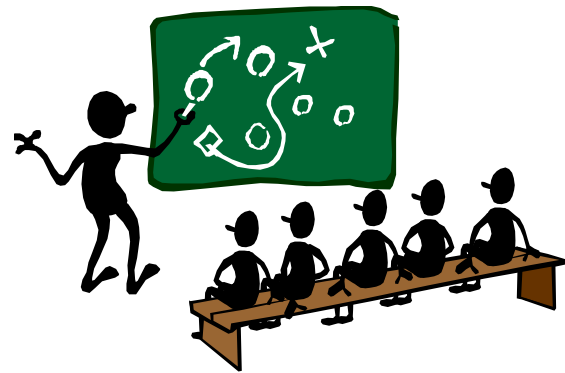


Timely Feedback

It's just so much easier!!



But I don't have time!!!



“We miss more by not looking than by not knowing”

Watch students

- Running Word file

Go ahead and jot it down

- **Observe critically**
- **Make specific notes**
- **Keep copies or create a working file**



Patient card



Record reviews

- **SOAPS – make a copy of your notes**
- **Student case log**
- **Review documents in CPRS during grading**
 - **SOAPS**
 - **Discharges**
 - **Client Communications**
- **Continuous or at end of rotation**

Let others help!

House officers

- Record observations continuously

Technicians

- Rubric or comments



Let Others Help

- Review and discuss your written comments with a colleague for a while
- The habits you create will save time in the future



Summary: Three Simple Rules for Improving Clinical Grading

- **Pay attention!**
- **Write it down!**
- **Do them now!**

Bonus!

Your letter of recommendation is already written!

Just copy and paste from the comfort of your computer screen



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Huju0xwNFKU>

Examples
examples
examples

Very motivated and hardworking. Fun to work with and gets along well with everyone.

Great knowledge and reliability. You can work independently but seek advice when needed. Keep it up

You were always ready to suggest tests and treatment changes. This is the initiative and proactivity we are looking for!

Lots of fun to be on clinics with because you always come in smiling and enthusiastic, rating your mood a “10”. Keep it up!

You are sometimes hard on yourself and doubt your confidence. For a while, practice assuming that you are right instead of assuming you are wrong and see what happens

Good job on complicated cases. Overall approach is good. Keep trying to read/review more on each case if possible and ask for references.

Try to keep patience and focus with clients and cases— I know it's hard to do all the time but if you slow down and take a moment to collect yourself everyone will be calmer.

Stress

I know there are times that the stress level gets to us all. I hope that you are developing methods for coping with the stress level – outside interests that you enjoy

I know this was a difficult rotation, we need to be aware of our comments/body language/ etc and their effect on and perception by students. I am just as guilty and have to remind myself to stop and apologize.

What about this intern?

Great engagement in rounds! You were always willing to speak up but respectful of others. And your humor really helped when we were tired.

Work on your efficiency – get things done early such as paperwork

Jump in on cases – you know lots of stuff, so take the initiative to offer what you know

Obviously very enthusiastic and showed interest, participated actively in discussions, Interacted well with the group

Good knowledge base; thoughtful on cases/ demonstrates a caring approach to clients and patients

Nice job with Fluffy; you listened carefully when Mrs. Jones was so upset

Nice job with Fluffy; you checked on her treatments regularly and gave her extra walks. Thanks for noticing the day she developed mild peripheral edema.

You write excellent discharge instructions with good focus on teaching and informing the client while speaking in layman's terms

Your knowledge base is outstanding; at this point in your education you can shift to searching for a more sophisticated understanding of pathophysiology as you work with cases

Will need to get more efficient and manage time more closely, especially transitioning to private practice which requires a brisk pace

Keep practicing your technical skills; take every opportunity to place catheters and carry a syringe and catheter home to practice handling them

Need to be open to learning even on a rotation that you are not very interested in. You often disappeared. Also, you need to make sure you review the case with the clinician up frequently during the day

You need to start discharges, SOAPs and orders for the next day earlier—whenever you have a moment to spare you can do this

Keep an open mind when it comes to case management. You will be exposed to many different philosophies/opinions over the next year and should take advantage of the diversity

Need to read more about issues in treatment, using current literature via PubMed, not just VIN

Feedback regarding attitudes

Your statements at times is condescending to students, house officers, support staff and faculty. An example is the frequency with which you say “whatever” or “I know that already.” This will need to change

You appear defensive at times when criticized. This is manifested by your body language – sighing and rolling your eyes. This criticism will never stop, but what will happen is that you will be comfortable with accepting criticism.

You will learn more by paying attention and asking questions during rounds. Make eye contact with the group and take notes on concepts that come up and that will help you stay awake.

For residents

You sometimes have a tendency to come across as arrogant and smart-alecky. In my opinion, this is what sometimes gets you in trouble.

Knowledge and clinical skills are good, but sometimes you left the 4th years in your dust

Whether intended or not, sometimes your comments or statements to students are hard. On occasion soften your response