

## **Medical School Performance Evaluation Policy**

The Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE), also known as the “Dean’s Letter” is a narrative compilation of the medical student’s academic performance. It is provided as one component of the student’s application to residency programs and/or other post-graduate programs. The earliest date that the MSPE may be released is defined by the application portals and is usually the last Wednesday in September of the student’s final year in medical school.

Sections include:

- Identifying Information
- Noteworthy Characteristics  
(Service and Leadership, Research and Scholarship, Honors and Awards)
- Academic History
- Professionalism Performance
- Academic Progress, Foundational Sciences
- Academic Progress, Clinical Clerkships (in chronological order)
- Academic Progress, Area of Concentration (AOC) for MD students, or
- Academic Progress, MD-PhD Research for Tri-Institutional MD-PhD students
- Summary Paragraph

The MSPE is written in a collaborative manner between the student and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and/or his/her designees. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs is not involved in the writing or compilation of the MSPE since this individual’s office is responsible for assisting students with confidential medical and personal issues. If a student has concerns about issues such as confidential or sensitive information being reflected in the MSPE, the student may make a request to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs for an alternate MSPE writer. The MSPE writing process begins in the spring semester prior to the student’s final year of medical school and ordinarily the request should take place during this time frame. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs then informs the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs that an alternate writer is needed. The alternate writer is then assigned by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and will have access to the student’s full academic record.

The Identifying Information section includes the student’s legal name, graduating class year, birthplace, academic honors in college and prior to medical school, and information about gap years.

The Noteworthy Characteristics section includes a bulleted list of noteworthy characteristics and achievements under the following headings: Service and Leadership, Research and Scholarship, and Honors and Awards (if applicable), including selection to the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society or the Gold Humanism Honor Society. The Academic History section includes date of matriculation to medical school, date of expected graduation from medical school, and dates of research extensions, LOAs, gaps or breaks, including dual degree, repetition of any course or clerkship or receipt of any adverse action by the medical school or other relevant institution. Failed courses are represented on the student transcript and in the pertinent Academic Progress section of the MSPE.

The Professionalism Performance section includes WCMC's definition of professionalism and what is assessed in students. Egregious breaches of standards of conduct and/or recurring lapses in professionalism (including three (3) or more formally issued Professionalism Reports) will be reported based on an assessment by the MSPE Committee (see below).

The Academic Progress, Foundational Sciences section includes narrative information related to overall, rather than course-specific performance. If a foundational science course was failed and required repetition, that information is included.

The Academic Progress, Clinical Clerkships section includes the grading system used for specific clerkships, and the final course grade as well as a narrative of overall performance for each of the core clinical clerkships taken through June of Year 3. Clerkships are listed in chronological order taken, including any repeated courses.

The Academic Progress, Area of Concentration (AOC) section includes a description of the Area of Concentration, the title of the Scholarly Project, the name of the mentor(s), and performance to date, if available. Tri-Institutional MD-PhD students are exempt from the AOC requirement.

The Academic Progress, MD-PhD Research section pertains to Tri-Institutional MD-PhD students. This section includes the name of the institution from which the PhD degree has been conferred, the laboratory in which the student worked, and a description of the student's research accomplishments, including publications, presentations and awards. Narrative information regarding overall performance from the student's thesis mentor and/or other mentors is included.

The Summary Paragraph is an overall assessment of the student's performance while in medical school. During the COVID pandemic in 2020-21, any descriptors such as "outstanding," "excellent," "very good," and "good" that were used in prior MSPEs were no longer included given the use of Satisfactory/Fail grading for the majority of the clerkships. We have continued the policy of not including a descriptor in the final summary paragraph.

#### MSPE Committee Members

Voting members include the Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs, the Associate Dean of Admissions, the Assistant Dean of the Clinical Curriculum, the Assistant Dean of the Foundational Curriculum, the Assistant Dean for Access, Belonging and Student-Centered Success, and the Director of the Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Program. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Associate Dean of Student Affairs are *ex-officio*, non-voting members. The MSPE Committee reviews and approves any alterations to the Professional Performance paragraph.

Students will have the opportunity to review the final draft of the MSPE for accuracy prior to its release for residency applications. The Office of Academic Affairs notifies students to review the draft. Requests for content change in the course narrative must be directed to the respective course director. Any other requests for change should be directed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. If there is further concern by the student, the student may discuss this with the Senior Associate Dean for Education, or his/her designee, who will adjudicate the final decision about content. Changes, if approved, will be reflected in the MSPE.