



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

c/o Secretariat of healthcare Professional Boards (SPB)

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BY EMAIL ONLY

Chairman, Medical Board and/or Medical Director, Healthcare Institutions

ADVISORY FOR SMC-APPROVED SUPERVISORS

1. The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) wishes to inform supervisors of its Supervisory Framework advisory (**Annex 1**) which has been developed to better support SMC-approved supervisors in appraising doctors who are on conditional or temporary registration.

2. Supervisory assessment reports (ARs) play a critical role in determining whether a conditionally or temporarily registered doctor is progressing satisfactorily and remains fit to continue practising. It is therefore essential that these ARs accurately reflect the doctor's performance across all assessed areas, and that the overall grading is consistent with the individual area ratings. SMC is issuing this advisory to ensure all supervisors apply a uniform standard.

3. Supervisors are reminded that **an AR cannot be considered satisfactory if any single area of assessment has been graded 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory', regardless of performance in other areas. Where this occurs, the supervisor is expected to reflect this in the overall clinical competence question in the AR by rating the doctor as either 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory' overall. For example, if a doctor receives a 'borderline' grade in Professionalism but a 'satisfactory' grade in Medical Knowledge and all other domains, the Overall Clinical Competence rating must nonetheless be graded as 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

4. Supervisors should bear in mind that grading a doctor as 'satisfactory' overall while one or more individual areas are rated 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory' would be inconsistent and may not provide SMC an accurate picture of the doctor's progress. Accurate and consistent reporting is essential for SMC to make well-informed decisions about a doctor's registration status, and ultimately to safeguard patient safety and public trust in the medical profession.

5. All institutions and organisations receiving this advisory are requested to share it promptly with their SMC-approved supervisors and Heads of Department (HODs).

6. Should you require any clarifications regarding the advisory, please email to SMC via SMC_Supervisory@spb.gov.sg.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Madeline Tan".

MS MADELINE TAN
HEAD (SUPERVISED PRACTICE DIVISION)
SECRETARIAT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL BOARDS
for REGISTRAR, SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

Cc:

Director, Healthcare Manpower, MOHH

Chief HRO and Directors HR of MOHH, Clusters, Hospitals and Institutions

Singapore Medical Council's Supervisory Framework

Advisory for SMC-approved Supervisors

Purpose of Assessment

- SMC scrutinises every supervisory Assessment Report (AR) and Multi-rater Report (MR) submitted for professional competency of a conditionally or temporarily registered doctor to ensure that patient safety is upheld.
- SMC's assessment pertains solely to professional competency and does not extend to specialist or family medicine training, which falls under the residency training and assessment system.

General Observations

- Most doctors under supervision perform satisfactorily, though SMC has encountered instances where the doctor's performance has fallen short of the expected standard.
- While most supervisors are objective and fair, some tend to be more lenient or more stringent than their peers. Supervisors are encouraged to calibrate their assessments against the expected standard for the level of supervision concerned.
- Where there has been limited or no direct contact between the supervisor and the supervisee, the AR must clearly state that the assessment is based on feedback gathered from other clinical supervisors rather than direct observation.
- SMC has observed instances where below-par performance of the doctor was not clearly communicated to the supervisee during the posting period, leading to supervisees being surprised or distressed upon receiving a Letter of Advice from SMC. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to communicate performance concerns promptly and directly, rather than leaving adverse feedback solely to the end-of-posting report.

Expectations of Supervisors

- Supervisors are expected to engage regularly with their supervisees throughout their posting, set clear expectations from the outset, and conduct interim check-ins to monitor progress.
- Any concerns should be raised early so that the supervisee has a genuine opportunity to address and improve on them.
- Beyond assessment, supervisors are also expected to actively support the professional development of their supervisees.

Performance That is Not Satisfactory

- A borderline rating is not a satisfactory rating.
- Supervisors must provide clear and specific descriptions whenever a borderline or unsatisfactory grade is given, so that the report is well-documented and defensible in the event of an appeal by the supervisee. SMC has observed that some borderline ratings are submitted without adequate written descriptions explaining the basis for the grade.
- If any single area of assessment in the assessment report is graded 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory', SMC will not regard the report as satisfactory overall. In such cases, the supervisor must grade the doctor's overall clinical competence question as either 'borderline' or 'unsatisfactory' to ensure consistency between the individual area ratings and the overall assessment.

Having More Than One Supervisor

- Where a supervisee is practising within a single department and has been supervised by the same supervisor over an extended period, institutions are strongly advised to appoint another supervisor.
- This is particularly important for doctors whose performance has been below par, as assessments from more than one supervisor help to address any allegations of bias.
- SMC will request the appointment of another supervisor if it is observed that the same supervisor has been solely responsible for supervising a particular supervisee for a year or more.

Timely Submission and Remediation

- Where the supervisee's performance is assessed as not satisfactory, the AR should be submitted to SMC as early as possible to allow for timely remediation of the doctor by the department or institution.
- SMC has observed cases where borderline or unsatisfactory ARs were submitted late, resulting in remediation measures being delayed and left to supervisors in subsequent departments to manage and follow up on the remediation. This has at times resulted in delays in supervisees receiving the support they needed in a timely manner
- Prompt submission of ARs is therefore essential.

Completion of Assessment Reports

- Ratings submitted in an AR are final and cannot be reversed or amended after submission to SMC.
- Where a supervisee has been working in a department for a reasonable period of time, the supervisor is expected to provide a substantive assessment of the supervisee's performance. Ratings of 'Not Observed' should not be used in such circumstances, as they do not give SMC an adequate basis on which to assess the doctor's progress.
- Supervisors/Institutions are reminded that ARs must not be more than 6 months overdue, and the obligation to submit ARs continues even when the doctor concerned has left the institution. This is critical to ensure that our records remain accurate and complete. SMC wishes to emphasise that non-compliance with these obligations is viewed seriously, and SMC reserves the right to take such instances into account when considering future conditional and temporary registration requests from the institution.