

Board of Examiners (BOE) FAQ

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What is the Board of Examiners (BOE)?

Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

Which cases are presented at the Board of Examiners?

The Board of Examiners reviews student cases concerning a) academic difficulty, or b) professionalism difficulty. The Board of Examiners is not the first place these cases are presented. Please refer to the following policy documents for a step-by-step outline of what happens when a student experiences academic or professionalism difficulties. Please note that the BOE cannot revoke/override a failing grade for individual examinations.

Academic

[Academic Difficulty Procedural Guidelines – Foundations \(Years 1 and 2\)](#)

[Academic Difficulty Procedural Guidelines – Clerkship \(Years 3 and 4\)](#)

Professionalism

[Student Professionalism Guidelines](#)

Will my case be anonymized when presented to the BOE?

Your case will be presented with your name.

The BOE trialed anonymizing each student's case but found that anonymity was detrimental to the students being presented at the BOE. It minimized the context around each case, generated less empathy from assessors, and created more confusion about the details of each case.

Is the BOE confidential?

Yes, the BOE is confidential. All case details are shared only with the members of the Board, and for the sole purpose of providing context on a student's academic/personal situation to facilitate decision-making. BOE members are not permitted to share information with people who are not on the BOE, or feed information forward to residency programs/ program directors. If Board members participate in a residency program's selection processes, they must recuse themselves from the committee. Furthermore, a BOE member may not disclose that they know the student from the BOE without the student's permission.

When does the BOE meet?

The BOE normally meets on the second Wednesday of every month.

How many members are there on BOE, and who are they?

Membership

- Chair: elected by Faculty Council
- Vice-Chair: elected by the members from among the members.
- Vice Dean, MD Program
- Teaching staff elected by Council
- 2 MD Program students (President, past-President of the Medical Society)
- 2 Physician Assistant (PA) Program students

Quorum (the essential Board members and quantity of board members needed to make decisions): Chair (or Vice-Chair) and 50% of the members of the Board of whom one must be a student, except as noted below.

If you'd like more information about who the members of the current board are, please contact Faculty Affairs Officer, Todd Coomber at todd.coomber@utoronto.ca.

MD Program & PA Program representatives (Foundations Directors, Clerkship Directors, PA Program Director & Medical Director) attend the BOE as non-voting members. The Associate Dean, Learner Affairs (OLA) and the Director of Undergraduate Learner Affairs, also attend the BOE as non-voting members. OLA representatives may be asked to speak to the presence and/or impact of any potential extenuating circumstances that should be taken into consideration by the BOE. Any information shared will be in keeping with the Personal Health Information Protection Act ([PHIPA](#)) and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ([FIPPA](#)).

Are students present?

Yes, select students are voting members of the BOE. This includes two MD Program students (President & past-President of the Medical Society), and two student representatives from the Physician Assistant Program (elected annually). They are present to provide the student perspective on the cases raised at the BOE and to provide context when it is needed.

You are provided with the option to exclude student representatives discussing and voting on your case, but this is not recommended, as everything discussed in the meeting is confidential, and the student representatives ensure that decisions are informed and fair from a student's perspective.

Why can't I be present at the BOE meeting?

Students are given an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding their case in the form of a letter. There has not been an additional benefit shown to having students whose cases are being discussed present at the meeting, as this adds extra stress for the student being discussed and may reduce the consistency of decisions made for each case.

How soon will a decision be made?

Best efforts are made to share the BOE's decision with students as soon as possible, but the specific distribution timeline depends on the complexity of the arrangement/next steps. The student will either receive a letter from the BOE by email or will be contacted by the Foundations or Clerkship Director for an update.

Will I know what was discussed about my case at the BOE meeting?

In advance of the meeting, the student will receive a summary, via email, of what the Foundations or Clerkship Directors will present at the BOE.

The BOE decision letter will provide the motion(s) passed by the BOE and a summary of the information on which the decision is based. The full details of the deliberations are confidential and not shared with the student.

What should I include in my letter to the BOE?

Do:

- Tell us about what was happening at the time of these academic difficulties. This will provide us with more context on your personal circumstances and help us interpret the situation
- Address and acknowledge the issue being presented to the BOE
- Tell us what you have done / what you are doing to address the issue
- Be genuine and respectful
- Try to keep the letter to a maximum of two pages

Don't:

- Calculate how close you were to passing, or how getting X% on some exam would have put you above the cutoff
- Include specific questions from a Mastery Exercise or OSCE exam
- Be impolite, rude, or presumptuous
- Include personal health information. This information is solely for you, your doctor, and the Accessibility Services to see

Who can I reach out to for support prior to the Board of Examiners meeting?

- OLA - It's a good idea to meet with the Director, Undergraduate Learner Affairs, within sufficient time prior to your situation being presented at the BOE
- Director, Academic Advising

What is the appeal process if I disagree with the decision made by the Board of Examiners?

Please review [the Guidelines for Procedure – Faculty of Medicine Appeals Committee](#).

What if I failed an exam/course due to a medical or learning disability?

Students who feel that their performance on an assessment will be hindered due to health reasons are encouraged to proactively defer the assessment and/or take an unplanned absence, depending on timing. Students should then contact OLA to discuss the circumstances. OLA may refer our students to the appropriate University of Toronto Accessibility Services. Students can also contact Accessibility Services directly:

- STG: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/types-of-academic-accommodations/>
- UTM/MAM: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/>
- UTSC: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability/>

Students who are diagnosed with a medical or learning disability after an assessment may ask for retroactive consideration of these and thus be allowed to rewrite an assessment and have the previous Board of Examiners decision re-evaluated. Students should register with Accessibility Services at the University of Toronto for appropriate recommendations to be put into place to support their learning.

What impact will this have on my transcript?

Your transcript is sent to CaRMS as part of your application to residency programs. It reflects all years of your medical education to date. Each course is marked as credit/no credit. If you fail a course, the final course grade will appear on your transcript as “NCR” (No Credit).

If you have completed a course after a reassessment, you will receive credit in the course and on your transcript. The original failed attempt will not appear on your transcript.

What impact will this have on my MSPR?

Your MSPR is sent to CaRMS, near the end of October of the year you are applying to CaRMS, as part of your application to residency programs. It ONLY reflects your performance on your core clinical rotations. It currently consists of a chart that summarizes your ward evaluations, indicating where you performed on a scale of “unsatisfactory / below expectations / meets expectations / exceeds expectations / outstanding” in terms of CanMEDS criteria for each of your core rotations.

It does not show individual exam marks in any capacity.

If you failed remediation and had to repeat course(s) in full, descriptions of any repeated courses will appear on the MSPR under the “Academic History” section

How will professionalism remediation show up on my record?

Professionalism remediation does not show up on the MSPR. However, some residency programs may specifically inquire about professionalism remediation as part of their application process.

When registering with provincial colleges (e.g. College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario) before the beginning of residency, you may be asked to disclose that you have completed professionalism remediation in the MD program. The Registrar's office may be asked to provide supporting documentation, which will usually include a letter that indicates successful completion of professionalism remediation.

Is it possible to be dismissed from the MD Program?

Yes, it is possible to be dismissed from the MD Program.

This becomes a consideration if you:

- have not achieved credit in one or more courses on your second attempt (“failed repetition”), or have failed a year on two separate occasions over the course of the program, or have been required to re-register in the same level of the program on two separate occasions over the course of the program (please see [Standards for grading and promotion of MD students – Foundations \(Years 1 and 2\)](#) and [Standards for grading and promotion of MD students – Clerkship \(Years 3 and 4\)](#))
- have not completed all requirements for the MD within eight full academic years (eleven full academic years for MD/PhD students) from first registration, including leaves of absence and withdrawals from the program (please see [Statement on time to completion of program requirements](#))
- have not completed a program of professionalism remediation, or, in exceptional circumstances, in response to a substantiated critical incident report (please see [Student Professionalism Guidelines](#))

Generally, the SPC would make the recommendation to remove you from the program. Next, the BoE would review it and then make a final decision.

