

Principles of Assessment.

Table 2. Principles of Assessment.

Goals of assessment

- Provide direction and motivation for future learning, including knowledge, skills, and professionalism
- Protect the public by upholding high professional standards and screening out trainees and physicians who are incompetent
- Meet public expectations of self-regulation
- Choose among applicants for advanced training

What to assess

- Habits of mind and behavior
- Acquisition and application of knowledge and skills
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Clinical reasoning and judgment in uncertain situations
- Teamwork
- Practice-based learning and improvement
- Systems-based practice

How to assess

- Use multiple methods and a variety of environments and contexts to capture different aspects of performance
- Organize assessments into repeated, ongoing, contextual, and developmental programs
- Balance the use of complex, ambiguous real-life situations requiring reasoning and judgment with structured, simplified, and focused assessments of knowledge, skills, and behavior
- Include directly observed behavior
- Use experts to test expert judgment
- Use pass–fail standards that reflect appropriate developmental levels
- Provide timely feedback and mentoring

Cautions

- Be aware of the unintended effects of testing
- Avoid punishing expert physicians who use shortcuts
- Do not assume that quantitative data are more reliable, valid, or useful than qualitative data