

Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) Guidance for Assessors

What is DOPS?

This is a structured checklist for assessing the foundation doctor's interaction with the patient when performing a practical procedure. Although DOPS was developed to assess procedural skills, its primary purpose in the Foundation Programme is to assess the doctor/patient interaction.

The logbook of procedural skills should be used to assess the 15 core procedural skills listed in the Foundation Programme Curriculum. Foundation doctors can use DOPS to assess doctor/patient interactions while undertaking procedures not listed in the logbook.

Who can be a DOPS assessor?

Assessors must be trained in assessment and feedback methodology. You must be able to competently perform the interaction including the procedure yourself. Assessors should be consultants, GPs, doctors in core or higher training (ST3 or above/SpR), or specialty doctors/staff grade or associate specialists. If possible, different assessors should be used for each encounter wherever possible.

How does it work?

The process is led by the foundation doctor. Each DOPS should represent a different procedure and may be specific to the specialty. The observed process typically takes around 20 minutes and immediate feedback around 5 minutes. It may be necessary to allocate more time.

What specific competences does the DOPS assess?

DOPS includes 11 rated question areas and provides free-text space for you to identify strengths and areas for development. These question areas are self explanatory and may vary depending on the procedure. However, positive indicators for three of these question areas are given below: post-procedure management, communication skills and consideration of patient/professionalism. Not all elements need be assessed on each occasion.

Question area	Positive indicators
Post-procedure management	Safely disposes of equipment; documents the procedure, including labelling samples and giving instructions for monitoring; arranges appropriate aftercare/monitoring.
Communication skills	Explores patient's perspective; jargon free; open and honest; empathic; agrees management plan with patient.
Consideration of patient / professionalism	Shows respect, compassion, empathy, establishes trust; attends to patient's needs of comfort; respects confidentiality; behaves in an ethical manner; awareness of legal frameworks; aware of own limitations.

What is the reference standard?

You should assess F1 doctors against the standard expected at satisfactory completion of F1. You should assess F2 doctors against the standard expected at satisfactory completion of the Foundation Programme (F2). The Curriculum provides a detailed description of the relevant competences expected of a doctor completing F1 and F2.

Feedback

In order to maximise the educational impact of using DOPS, you and the foundation doctor need to identify strengths and areas for development. This should be done sensitively and in a suitable environment.

How do I access the form?

Foundation doctors can send you an electronic ticket asking you to assess them or you can log directly onto the foundation doctor's e-portfolio if you are the foundation doctor's supervisor. If necessary, foundation doctors can enter the results of the DOPS on your behalf. This will be flagged as entered by the foundation doctor and you will be sent an e-mail alerting you that this has happened.

How do I complete the form?

- **Training:** you must confirm that you have been trained in assessment methodology and feedback.
- **Clinical setting:** select the most appropriate setting; if none apply select 'other' and specify.
- **Procedure:** use the free text to describe the procedure.
- **Assessor's position:** see above. If none apply select 'other' and specify.
- **Rating the question areas:** you should use the full range of the rating scale with reference to the descriptors for each. It is expected that some ratings will be below "meets expectations for F1/F2 completion" for assessments undertaken early in each year.
- **Free-text:** to maximise the value of the DOPS use the free text to describe anything that was especially good and suggestions for development.
- **Linking the assessment to the foundation doctor's personal development plan (PDP):** you can directly link this DOPS to the foundation doctor's PDP by selecting up to 10 relevant outcomes from the drop down menu based on the Curriculum.
- **Time taken:** as part of the ongoing evaluation of the Foundation Programme it is helpful if you can record how long it took you to observe the interaction and provide feedback.
- **Assessor's details:** this should include your registration number. The foundation doctor's educational supervisor and Foundation Training Programme Director/Tutor will review the assessments. A random sample will be validated, which means that you may be contacted to confirm that you actually assessed the foundation doctor.