

Tips for completing EPAs in CBME Curriculums

Starting a block, week, or call shift with a new preceptor

- When you first start working with a new preceptor, let them know that you need to complete EPAs as part of residency training.
- Inform your preceptor early on that you want to focus on a few specific EPAs (e.g. managing unstable patients, Goals of Care discussions, procedures). This will help preceptors to look out for such opportunities in the future.

Right before a clinical encounter

- Before you enter into a clinical encounter, ask the preceptor if they would be willing to observe you for a specific EPA. Letting preceptors know beforehand will help them provide directed, high quality feedback.

Filling out the form

- You can fill in the EPA form yourself (including the “what went well” and “what needs improvement” sections) before or while discussing the EPA with your preceptor. This will help you reflect on your own performance, as well as save time when completing the EPA.

Save for later

- Every effort should be made to complete EPAs in the moment to get the most timely and valuable feedback, instead of saving EPAs for later.
- If you have to save an EPA for later, always make the effort to discuss the encounter and get feedback verbally.

Other

- Carry some kind of EPA resource, such as an EPA handbook, with you that you can refer to quickly during your clinical work. This should remove the burden of having to remember the individual contexts for each EPA.
- Keep a tally of the EPAs you completed. This will help you keep track of EPAs that still need to be completed.
- You can also keep track of your EPAs on DASH.med. You can filter your EPA results by context (by score (e.g. “I didn’t need to be there”), specific symptom presentation such as chest pain, or by location of encounter such as the ED or ward) by clicking on the name of the EPA (e.g. FD1), and then clicking on the corresponding item that you wish to filter by. For example, click on the name of the EPA, then click “I didn’t need to be there”, then scroll back up the page to see the contexts you’ve completed at that score.
- Ask other residents, fellows, and staff about their strategies for getting EPAs.
- If you had a clinical encounter that you want to log as an EPA, ask the preceptor as close in time to the clinical encounter as possible, ideally within 24 hours. It is difficult to remember all of the details beyond this time.
- Be proactive and ask for EPAs as often as you can, especially if you feel that there was room for improvement. The main purpose of EPAs is to provide residents with timely, specific, high quality feedback.
- When a preceptor gives you feedback without completing an EPA, ask your preceptor if they would be willing to document said feedback by quickly by completing an EPA form right at the moment.