



## Paramedic Psychomotor Competency Portfolio

In 2009, paramedic education programs around the United States joined in a coordinated project to document psychomotor competency through a body of evidence. This body of evidence was known as a portfolio, rather than single skills attempts or a single summative exam. The group was convened by the National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) which was exploring a method to better demonstrate consistent skill proficiency than with a single skill exam. The concept in that initial group, and subsequently with additional programs, included 1) setting a minimum number of practice attempts for students in the laboratory setting, 2) having a preceptor evaluate those same skills in the hospital setting on real patients, and 3) field preceptor evaluation of the skills.

The laboratory component of the portfolio package includes 24 formative evaluation instruments that have many details to assist in learning the details of the skill. Peers are used to assist in the development of skill proficiency, allowing for more practice time in lab. Once proficient as evaluated by an instructor in the discrete skills such as Comprehensive Adult Physical Assessment, Intravenous Therapy, or Nasotracheal Intubation Adult, students move into a scenario phase where they begin to demonstrate competency in those same skills integrated within the context of a simulated patient situation. This is where the more complex responsibilities of patient assessment and management, along with the ability to correctly execute the individual skills, are learned. Scenario lab instruments include Team Leader and Team Member and students are evaluated by peers and instructors.

The next progression of the portfolio package is demonstration of skills in the clinical setting on real patients and evaluated by a preceptor. The skills include clinical evaluation instruments for skills such as medication administration, blood glucose and 12 lead ECG acquisition that include an "Impression/Differential diagnosis" section and a "Treatment plan" section to facilitate discussion of these areas and development of judgment. Students must interact with the patients and perform skills.

The final component of the portfolio package is the field internship setting with actual patients, and with preceptor supervision and feedback. Preceptors who are trained in methods of evaluation and the specific internship tool are utilized to guide student practice and evaluate the student in all domains.

Often, student performance declines slightly at the beginning of each new phase of portfolio documentation. The goal of the portfolio package, however, is to document the development of

proficiency over time, so variations in performance level are expected. When programs can demonstrate a completed portfolio which documents multiple iterations of each skill and patient management situation, by multiple evaluators including peer and faculty evaluators, over a sustained period of time, a final summative examination may not be necessary for program completion.

The National Registry of EMTs continues to evaluate and support this project and is currently working to utilize the identified characteristics of team membership and leadership to evaluate students in these roles. It is likely that in the next couple of years the NREMT will replace the 12 station practical with this portfolio program.

Program directors of Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) accredited paramedic programs or programs holding a Letter of Review (LoR) from the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) can access these tools from the NREMT website. Additionally, information on the use of the Paramedic Psychomotor Competency Portfolio (PPCP) is taught in the Evaluation of Student Competency Workshops sponsored by NAEMSE and CoAEMSP. CoAEMSP supports this method as best practice for developing and demonstrating skills development and progression as required by CAAHEP Standards. Classes will be held at the NAEMSE Symposium, and programs wishing to participate in the next pilot phase of the program should contact Lisa Weldon and Rob Wagoner at [parapilot2013@nremt.org](mailto:parapilot2013@nremt.org).