

APLS 7e Candidate assessment

Expected levels of performance

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to manage critically unwell, injured and arrested children.

Pre-course

Candidates must complete all the compulsory e-modules and watch the skills videos.

Candidates who do not achieve the pre-course requirements will not be able to progress to the face-to-face course as a provider. They may attend as an observer.

In-course (use in conjunction with the global development indicators)

Grade	Skills and simulations in the role of team leader and follower
Meets course expectations (safe)	Candidate's performance is at the expected level for a provider and is safe.
Below course expectations (not quite there yet)	Candidate has not yet demonstrated the expected level for a provider, and they require further support to reach the expected standard.
Concerns (unsafe)	Red flag score where there are real concerns about a candidate's performance. This should be referred to the course director immediately after the station. The course director should then observe that candidate's performance on the following stations and assess if this is an ongoing concern or whether they have observed an improvement in performance such that the candidate is safe.
Did not attend	Candidate missed this session

Assessment grades: team leaders

As team leader the candidates are expected to achieve all of the specific key treatment points for the simulation that they are leading. In addition, global factors include the following pass/fail criteria are:

- ensures a structured ABCDE approach
- effective team leadership
- putting a plan into place
- escalation where appropriate
- a good SBAR

KTPs are marked in **bold** on the simulations. Additional non-bold key treatment points are for additional teaching and learning but not for assessment.

Grade	Focus on the patient
Meets course expectations (safe)	The patient was safely cared for
Below course expectations (not quite there yet)	Minor issues in the patient's care meant that they wouldn't have improved e.g. ABCDE a bit muddled, delayed treatments such as oxygen, antibiotics etc
Concerns	Global concerns in a number of aspects of the patient's care, team functioning, candidate's knowledge base
Did not attend	Candidate missed this session

Assessment grades: team members

As team members candidates are expected to

- Support the team leader, demonstrate followership.
- Carry out skills within their role.
- Engage in effective closed loop communication.
- Prioritise the care of the child.

Remedial teaching during the course

Skills

If a candidate does not score 'meets' course expectations on any skill, then they should be offered the opportunity for further practice and assessment on appropriate simulations throughout the course. The last opportunity for this is during the final bank of simulations so it is essential that this has been identified and discussed at the faculty meeting immediately preceding the final bank of simulations.

Simulation: Team member

If a candidate does not score 'meets' expectations as a Team member this should be fed back to them immediately after the simulation. This does not contribute towards their overall pass/fail grade but is described as 'assessment for learning'. On the very rare occasion that a candidate repeatedly scores below expectations or concerns as a team member the course director must decide if this is sufficiently serious to warrant reassessment in the final bank of simulations.

Simulation: Team leader

If a candidate does not score 'meets' course expectations as a Team leader on any simulation then you should consider whether this is specific to the type of simulation e.g., illness, or generic. Generic treatment points and skills such as ABCDE assessment and fluid resuscitation can be remediated in a 'different' type of simulation. See examples below:

A candidate forgets to put on oxygen when they are the team leader in a simulation. Although this is their only mistake, they have not achieved the key treatment points and, therefore, in that simulation they are below expectations. You note this on the candidate progress log. In the next simulation, where they are team leader, they put on oxygen and achieve that key treatment point. They have remediated their initial simulation. A separate remedial illness simulation will not be required. The outcome is recorded on their progress log.

ABCDE assessment can be remediated during the reassessment post ROSC in a cardiac arrest simulation.

If the remediation is specific to the 'type' of simulation, then if you have empty candidate places on the course you might be able to remediate within the simulation session. Otherwise, the opportunity for this is during the final bank of simulations so it is essential that this is identified and discussed at the faculty meeting immediately preceding the final bank of simulations.

If a candidate is below expectations on one simulation they can re-do it in the final bank of simulations.

If a candidate is below expectations on more than one simulation they can remediate one of those simulations in the final bank. If the candidate passes this simulation, then the course director, with the faculty, should discuss the candidate in the faculty meeting.

At this meeting the two options are:

1. A global assessment of 'below expectations' where they will need to repeat the full course.
2. A global assessment of 'below expectations' where they must redo the remaining element on a future course within 6 months and, if successful, global assessment of meets course expectations and passes the course. This does not have to be done in the same centre as the initial course.

The decision will be guided by how serious the faculty concerns are about the candidate's safety as an APLS provider.

In addition, if they are 'below' expectations on more than one simulation, then at the course director's discretion you can allow them to lead 2 simulations in the final bank. This should only be arranged if it is felt that the candidate will benefit from it, and it does not negatively impact team leader opportunities for other candidates.

NB: a candidate cannot remediate team leadership of 2 types of simulation, e.g. illness and cardiac, in one single final bank simulation.

Using the final bank of simulations for remediating candidates is about giving the candidate the opportunity to prove they are a safe APLS provider and to reassure the faculty and course director. Where possible course directors should observe remediating candidates to ensure consistency.

End of course outcomes

The outcome is based on:

- Assessed skills
- Demonstrating team leadership in each of the 3 simulation types
- The pass/fail criteria are:
 - ensures a structured ABCDE approach
 - effective team leadership
 - putting a plan into place
 - escalation where appropriate
 - a good SBAR.

As well as the key treatment points that are identified in bold within each simulation.

All scores = 'meets' by the end of the course = global assessment of 'meets' course expectations and passes the course.
'Did Not Attend' on any stations = must attend those stations on another course within 6 months to achieve global assessment of meets course expectations and pass the course. One score remaining of 'below' course expectations after remedial teaching and/or review by two instructors = redo element on a future course within 6 months and, if successful, global assessment of meets course expectations and passes the course. This can be either team leading a simulation or a skill.
Two or more scores remaining of 'below' course expectations after remedial teaching and/or review by two instructors (this can be either team leading a simulation or a skill) = global assessment of below course expectations and repeat full course. Any remaining scores of 'concerns' after remedial teaching and review by the director = global assessment of concern. In this situation the course director and faculty must consider whether the candidate's performance raises concerns about patient safety. These must be submitted immediately using the form contained in the 'Guidance for managing a candidate whose performance raises serious concerns for patient safety' . This situation is likely to be extremely rare and should be distinguished from a candidate's mere failure either to pass or re-certify. It is possible to have some remaining scores of 'concerns' and receive an outcome of 'redo whole course' without invoking the 'managing a candidate whose performance raises serious concerns for patient safety' process.

Re-sits following the course

Where candidates have one score remaining of 'below' course expectations after remedial practice and/or review by two instructors then they can redo these elements on a future course. This should be done to suit the centre and the candidate. Suggestions include:

- to observe/be a team member in the simulation session that they failed (e.g. cardiac) and then to redo as team leader with a 'spare' team of 4 instructors towards the end of this session/after this session.
- to observe/be a team member in the first few final bank of simulations and then redo as team leader one of the final simulations or with a 'spare' team of 4 instructors towards the end of this session (NB: not all candidates have to lead a simulation in the final bank unless they are remediating).

Centres may offer this in between courses if they are able to ensure that there are at least four instructors to provide the same structure and ratios as are available on a course.

Candidates should be encouraged to attend a local centre to practice before resitting their simulation.

Assessment grades: instructor potential

Grade	Candidate scores on stations do not impact directly on instructor potential recommendations.
I	Candidates who show instructor potential should be scored as I – this is in addition to their provider score. Anyone achieving an ‘I’ in the stations will then be eligible to be nominated and reviewed at the final faculty meeting. This is not dependent on scores in other stations.

Criteria	Description of what is required to fulfil the criteria	Hints on where to look for these
Communication Skills	During the course has demonstrated an ability to communicate with fellow candidates and instructors alike.	Questions asked and answered during lectures, participation during skill stations and scenarios. Manner of participation during debriefs
Enthusiasm for course	During the course has demonstrated support for the course approach.	Particularly during lectures, skill stations and scenarios but also in interactions with mentors or faculty.
Credible	Demonstrates a depth of understanding of course knowledge and has the opportunity to frequently apply the course skills.	Present job, level of training and also questions asked and answered and participation during the course.
Team member	During the course has demonstrated an ability to work well within a team.	Particularly during skill stations and scenarios.
Supportive	During the course has been supportive to fellow candidates and to the faculty.	Questions asked and answered by the candidate relative to other candidates. Awareness of their role and the potential impact they have in the group. Participation during debriefs.

Each faculty member will score according to 1 = unacceptable; 2 = average; 3 = outstanding. Any candidate who has scored an “I” on the teaching stations may be considered. For them to be considered, they should be proposed and seconded by a member of the faculty. No discussion is held at this point.

Where candidates who have scored an “I” are not proposed and seconded, please indicate this on the IP Summary Sheet or electronic system.

A vote is held for each of the proposed candidates on each of the 5 criteria outlined above. Each member of faculty should hold up one, two or three fingers.

The most frequent number held up is used as the candidate score for the criteria. Faculty must vote unless they have definitely not seen the candidate.

Each score allocated following this process should be entered onto your IP summary sheet or electronic system. Add up all 5 scores and if the candidate has scored 13 or more (and has NOT scored '1' for any single criteria then they are recommended as an IP. Indicate this on the overall sheet or electronic system.