

Academic SOAPS and the DC exercise = Practice & Feedback (2017 DC2)

NOTE: We make it very clear to students that the Academic SOAP format is NOT the medical records format they will be using routinely in practice. It is designed to foster learning, critical thinking, and (when needed) an analytical approach.

The goals for 2nd year students writing Academic SOAPS during DC include:

- Learning and/or reviewing the basic mechanisms (pathophysiology) for clinical problems.
- Application and integration: practice and feedback in connecting their new knowledge of pathophysiology to a specific case (their DC case). What's most likely in THIS case and why?
- Helping facilitators identify student knowledge gaps and misconceptions.
- Preparing the students to meet expectations and excel during their 4th year rotations in the VTH.
- Learning to clearly communicate their knowledge and clinical reasoning skills, especially as it relates to their DC case. SOAPS are an important way that students are assessed in 4th year in the VTH.
- Clearly communicating a diagnostic, treatment and communication plan to colleagues and staff.

DC Facilitators: It's up to you to decide what expectations you will set for the number of problems each student will SOAP, identifying the problems you want SOAPed, and clearly communicating your expectations. Different facilitators use different strategies and it can depend a lot on the case – e.g. some cases have 20+ clinical problems while another may have only 4-5.

If you choose, you can have all students SOAP all problems or designate overlap wherein 2 or 3 students SOAP at least some of the same key problems. The permutations are infinite. If multiple students SOAP the same problem, you can instruct the clinic to just choose ONE of those SOAPS to put in the medical record they submit. Ideally, however, you should try to provide feedback on every student's SOAP - but that is often difficult or impossible given the busy DC schedule.

HOWEVER, please remember that writing a SOAP often requires a LOT of time and effort for a 2nd year student. The goal is NOT to have students up to midnight or 2 AM writing SOAPS, so please try to think ahead. Depending on the specific problem and/or case, most students can only manage writing SOAPS for 2-3 problems without putting in more evening hours than is probably appropriate. Please keep this in mind and remember also where they are in their training. We've had some problems in recent years wherein students are up in the wee hours of the morning trying to write SOAPS and they are then exhausted the rest of the week.

High yield versus low yield problems: A high yield problem is a problem that has high diagnostic significance and is worthy of further consideration and/or diagnostic investigation. For the purposes of DC, a high yield may also be a problem in which writing a SOAP is likely to lead to significant learning. "High yield" does NOT necessarily mean there are a limited number of potential causes.

For example, students often identify vomiting as low yield problem because there are so many potential causes, which (importantly) may be either GI or non-GI in origin. However, vomiting may be a KEY FEATURE of the disease and therefore a problem worthy of carefully analyzing via a written SOAP. The problem may be high yield (i.e. "worthy" of a SOAP) for diagnostic and/or learning reasons. FYI: common low yield problems can include anorexia, inappetence, lethargy, depression, dehydration, etc. There is usually little to be gained from writing (or reading) a SOAP on low yield problems like these, as they often just tell us the animal is ill.