

What Residents Believe Matters in Documentation vs. What Attendings Expect

Use the table below to assess how consistently expectations are defined and reinforced:

DOCUMENTATION AREA	COMMON MISCONCEPTION	ATTENDING PHYSICIAN EXPECTATION
Medical Decision Making (MDM)	Listing diagnoses is sufficient	Clear articulation of why decisions were made
Level of Detail	More documentation is safer	Relevant documentation that supports risk and complexity
Use of Templates	Templates ensure compliance	Templates must be customized to reflect clinical judgement
Assessment vs. Plan	Restating data demonstrates work	Synthesizing data into a clear assessment
Risk Documentation	Risk is implied by diagnosis	Risk must be explicitly stated and supported
Consistency Across Faculty	Expectations vary by attending	Expectations should be consistent across the program

Quick Alignment Check

Use the checklist below to determine where your organization should be focusing documentation education efforts:

- Faculty expectations for documentation are clearly articulated
- Residents receive consistent guidance across attendings
- Feedback focuses on how to improve documentation—not just what's missing
- Documentation corrections decrease as residents advance
- Residents understand the rationale behind documentation feedback