

The PAth: Developing an “Acting Intern” Advancement Pathway for Physician Assistant Students on the Pediatric Wards

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BACKGROUND

- At our institution, physician assistant students (PAS) has limited opportunity to practice higher level clinical skills, such as care plan execution & writing billable notes, during their inpatient pediatric rotation
- 41.6% of PAS graduates nationally first work in a hospital setting, where these skills are integral job responsibilities
- To address this gap in the PAS clinical education, we created the Acting Intern (AI) Advancement Pathway (Figure 1) to offer select students clinical responsibilities commensurate with that of a graduating medical student

OBJECTIVE

To describe our first year of experience with the novel AI Advancement Pathway and evaluate its feasibility as assessed by impact on the PAS' clinical supervisors

METHODS

- AI Advancement Pathway was offered to PAS transitioning into clinical rotations in 2022-2023
- Supervising residents, fellows, & attendings were notified of PAS on pathway
- Supervisors completed a web-based survey asking about feasibility of supervising pathway PAS & the value of the pathway
- Descriptive statistics used for analysis

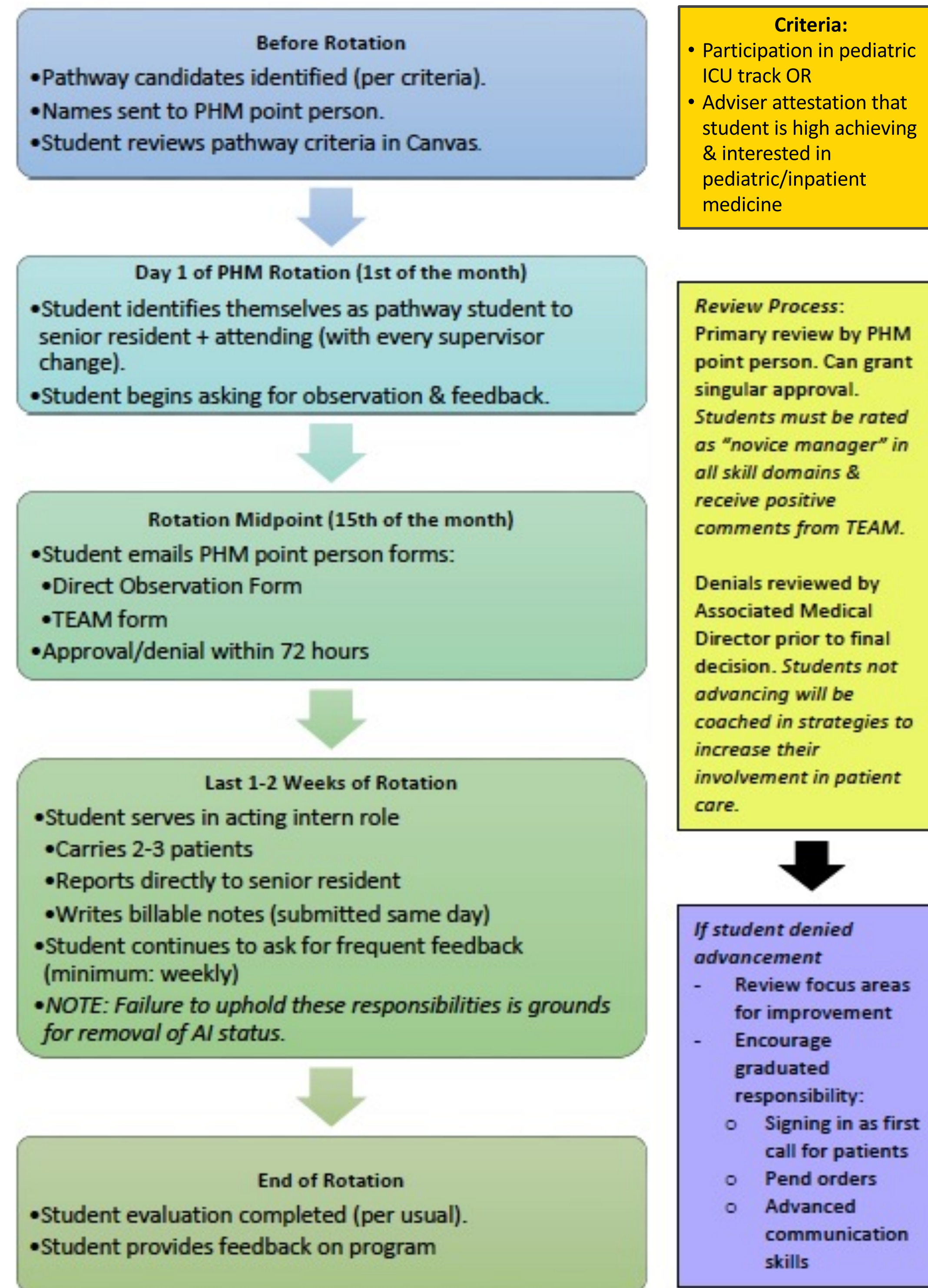


Figure 1: AI Advancement Pathway Requirements & Timeline
Skill domains evaluated via RIME framework include medical knowledge, assessment, management, multidisciplinary communications, calling consults & note writing.

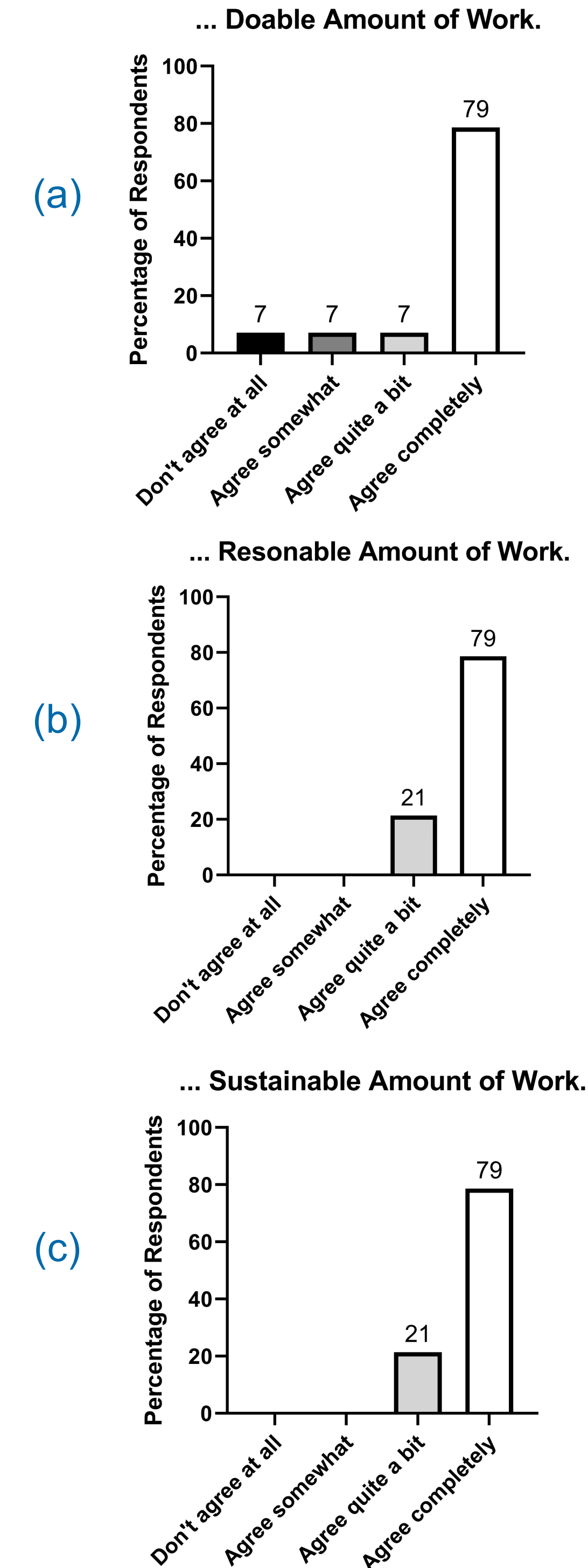


Figure 2: Feasibility of supervision survey results.
Respondents rated on a 4-point scale whether “supervising a PAS with AI status was... (a) doable, (b) reasonable, and (c) sustainable.

RESULTS

- Four PAS participated in the pathway & worked with 23 supervisors in 2022. 1 student was unsuccessful.
- 20 supervisors completed the survey, an 87% response rate. Respondents included:
 - 4 senior residents (for full month)
 - 1 fellow (for 1 week)
 - 15 attendings (for 1 week)
- All senior residents reported completing direct observations required for advancement to AI status
- Feasibility of supervising pathway students was rated highly (Figure 2)
- 95% agreed completely or quite a bit that it is important to offer PAS advanced clinical care responsibilities as an AI

CONCLUSIONS

- AI Advancement Pathway is a promising means of enhancing the inpatient pediatric education for PAS
- While the pathway requires additional efforts of supervisors, they found the pathway feasible and important
- Data is limited by small sample size, which we will address by continuing data collection next academic year
- Next steps include optimizing the pathway based on feedback & studying the experience & impact of the pathway on its participating students