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INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION

A note about nomenclature:

The MD program has several layers of faculty oversight. For program purposes, the terms chair, director and coordinator have been defined as follows:

Chairs: responsible for a Year or a complex course, across all disciplines and sites (e.g.; Year 1, Year 2, Foundations; Clinical Skills).

Directors: responsible for one discipline across all instructional sites (e.g.; one discipline-specific course; one Foundations module; one clerkship rotation), to ensure comparability of program delivery across sites. Directors usually also coordinate the site at which they are based (which is not necessarily Saskatoon).

Coordinators: responsible for one discipline at one particular site. Coordinators work with and report to their directors, to ensure cross-site comparability of programming.

For the purposes of this Evaluation Framework, the faculty member with the most direct responsibility for the activities of a particular instructor at a particular site will be referred to as the **Most Responsible Planner, or MRP.**

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The College of Medicine has established procedures for evaluating courses, modules, and rotations. However, prior to 2012, individual instructors were not evaluated for program evaluation purposes. To address this, formal, ongoing instructor evaluation procedures for UGME courses to measure student perceptions of teaching effectiveness were established. Results are now used by the Curriculum Committee, its sub-committees, and Year and other committees and working groups as part of curriculum evaluation and improvement.

Accreditation elements require the use of instructor feedback, as articulated in the element below:

8.5. In evaluating program quality, a medical school has formal processes in place to collect and consider medical student evaluations of their required learning experiences, **teachers**, and other relevant aspects of the medical education program.

This information is used by course and program planners as one component of program quality evaluation and improvement. Additionally, individual instructors may benefit personally from a formative feedback process that identifies to them their own strengths and areas for further development. (See considerations and constraints, below.) Finally, Department Heads will also have access to this information for instructors in their department.

APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

OBJECTIVES

Implement a system of instructor evaluation to:

- Provide aggregate, anonymized instructor evaluation results to the Curriculum Committee, Year Committees, Course Chairs/Directors/Coordinators, and Module Directors/Coordinators, to be used in conjunction with standard course evaluation results (as long as at least three instructors taught in the module/course).

- Provide individual instructor evaluation results to each instructor and their respective MRP. This allows each instructor and the associated MRP to see how that instructor was rated. It also ensures that appropriate support and opportunities for development are provided to instructors who may be struggling with their teaching. Instructors and MRPs are provided with a summary report containing aggregate data for all instructors in the course.

Process/Procedures

Administration:

One45 is the system of record for all instructor evaluations. The system provides centralized administration, reporting, support, and a familiar point of access for students.

APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

Frequency of administration:

Preclerkship sessions

Instructor evaluations are completed for all instructors who have taught at least two hours within a course or module. Exceptions may be made on a course by course basis. Instructor evaluations are typically administered once an instructor is done teaching in a specific course, although exceptions may apply. UGME staff responsible for sending evaluations obtain schedules of when instructors complete their teaching in specific courses on a regular basis. Approximately 30% of students are asked to evaluate instructors teaching large group sessions who meet the criteria for evaluation to help reduce evaluation fatigue. All students in a small group are asked to evaluate those who teach in small group settings. Options for students to evaluate instructors they were not specifically sent forms for may be provided.

The course director or someone else in a leadership position may also request that evaluations may be sent for a specific instructor.

Clerkship Rotations

Instructor evaluations are sent to each student upon the completion of each of their rotations to assess the preceptors they spent the most time with during the course of the rotation. This is determined in consultation with the Departments. Options for students to evaluate instructors they were not specifically sent forms for may be provided.

Clerkship - Selected Topics

One third of students are asked to evaluate each Selected Topics session.

APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

Frequency of reporting:

Individual feedback is provided at the end of the course. Reports containing aggregate feedback for all instructors are generated at the end of the module/course. Results for Clerkship rotations are compiled on a yearly basis. Reports containing aggregate feedback for all instructors in a rotation are generated at the same frequency as rotation evaluation reports. Results for Selected Topics are reported annually.

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders are summarized below as are the sequential steps involved in the course and rotation evaluation process (Figures 1 and 2).

Constraints

Please note the following constraints:

- All instructor evaluations are anonymous, so that no student can be identified through their evaluation form.
- Instructor evaluations are not distributed until evaluations have been completed by at least three students for clerkship. This helps maintain student anonymity. For preclerkship, results may be released if fewer than three students have responded, provided the instructor taught at least three students and no identifying information is provided.

Considerations

Please note the following considerations:

- Comments are screened by administrative staff, under the supervision of the Chair of the Program Evaluation Subcommittee, so that egregiously inappropriate comments can be edited or removed altogether. Please see the Procedure for Cleaning Comments on Instructor Evaluations for full details.
- Comments may be collated or otherwise edited to preserve the anonymity of the student evaluators.

FIGURE 1: INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION PROCESS FOR PRECLERKSHIP

FIGURE 2: INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION PROCESS FOR CLERKSHIP

When Issues are Identified

Evaluations of an instructor are flagged if they either have mean scores below 7 for at least three items or have non-specific or unsubstantiated criticisms in the comments section. Flags are further classified as either yellow or red. Evaluations are marked with a yellow flag if they involve low scores or general negative comments. Yellow flags are only sent to the Most Responsible Planner (MRP) who are the faculty most directly responsible for coordinating the teaching of a course/module/rotation. Instructors who receive yellow flags are sent their evaluations as part of the overall release.

Specific guidelines have been developed to help facilitate addressing negative evaluations, which are sent to MRPs along with all instructor evaluation results (see Appendix A).

The MRP is encouraged to contact the UGME office to develop an appropriate response strategy, depending on the nature of the student feedback given, including the identification of relevant faculty development resources available to the instructor. The MRP is not required to meet with the instructor in question, but they are required to complete the MRP response form. The MRP may not consider the evaluation to be of concern, or the issue may have been addressed earlier. In such circumstances the MRP may not meet with the instructor. Instructors may be provided with an instructor response form (see Appendix B-C); the intent is to help them reflect on their evaluation results.

Evaluations that involve allegations of student mistreatment, concerns around patient safety or that suggest seriously unprofessional behaviour are marked with a red flag. Red flags are sent to the Course Chair, Year Chair, Director Faculty and Learning Environment, Associate Dean, UGME, and other appropriate site leads as needed. The Department Head may be included by one of the individuals listed. If the instructor in question is a resident, the relevant Program Director may be included by one of the individuals listed. Instructors with red-flagged evaluations do not receive their results as part of the overall release. Rather, their feedback is withheld temporarily as the MRP may wish to present this information as part of a reflective discussion. Standard messaging to MRPs states that unless otherwise requested, the instructor will receive their results in one week. Results may be withheld longer than one week if the MRP requires additional time to address.

For situations where serious concerns are raised or where a flag involves a more senior faculty and the MRP is not comfortable addressing it, it is expected that either the MRP, or someone else, such as the Director Faculty and Learning Environment, or relevant Department Head will address the situation.

When Issues are Identified

To help protect student anonymity, results are not normally released to instructors until they have been evaluated by at least three students. This is especially important for clerkship where instructors may work with very few students. However, if a more serious issue has been identified for an instructor with fewer than three evaluations, results are released to the MRP (as per usual flagged process), but not the instructor. This is so the MRP is aware of potential issues and discussions may take place between the MRP and others, as needed.

To ensure that flagged evaluations are appropriately addressed, a database is maintained listing instructors with flagged evaluations. This database includes instructor name, course, location, flag colour, reason for flag, previous flagged evaluations, other individuals the flagged results were sent to (i.e., Department Head, MRP, Course Chair, Year Chair, Associate Dean UGME, Director Faculty and Learning Environment) and outcome.

MRPs are required to complete a response form indicating course of action taken (see Appendix D). The response form is sent to the Program Evaluation Assistant, copying leadership included on the flag. UGME staff responsible for instructor evaluations meet with the Associate Dean, UGME and the Director, Faculty and Learning Environment to review the outcomes for flagged evaluations. The Director, Office of Student Affairs and other OSA staff have access to this database.

The Director Faculty and Learning Environment is responsible for notifying appropriate faculty and staff of any teaching changes made as a result of flagged evaluations. The process is detailed in the figure below. The Chair of the Assessment Sub-Committee will also be provided with an aggregate report detailing the number of instructors flagged due to assessment concerns and the actions taken.

Note: a similar process may be used to address issues that arise from narrative feedback provided by instructors. If the feedback given by an instructor is deemed to be inadequate or inappropriate, the MRP may utilize similar supports to develop an appropriate response strategy. Narrative feedback is a separate source of data falling outside the Instructor Evaluation Framework.

FIGURE 3 - PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING FLAGGED INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR MOST RESPONSIBLE PLANNERS (MRP) FOR INTERPRETING AND ACTING ON INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION FEEDBACK

As the Most Responsible Planner for this course/module/rotation you receive copies of the instructor evaluation reports for those who met the criteria for receiving evaluations. It is important that negative feedback be discussed with instructors in a constructive way. It is recommended that you meet with instructors who receive low numerical ratings or concerning comments. You may also wish to meet with instructors who receive positive feedback. Instructors have been provided with guidelines for interpreting feedback and a response form (found here). You may request that instructors complete this form prior to meeting with you. Below are areas to consider when interpreting and acting on instructor evaluation feedback.

1. Items reflecting teaching effectiveness (i.e., Overall, the instructor's teaching was effective, In general, this instructor established a good learning environment) are helpful indicators of overall instructional quality.

2. Written comments may clarify some numerical ratings and can be helpful for teaching improvement.

3. Instructor evaluation reports with fewer than 10 responses may lack the validity and reliability of evaluations completed by a larger number of respondents. Thus, it is important to take into account ratings from multiple years to gain a global picture of student perceptions of an instructor's teaching.

4. When you meet with that instructor, particularly one who has received negative feedback, it will be helpful to discuss the following: a) desired outcome, b) strategies that will be used to achieve the outcome, c) actions to achieve those strategies, d) timeline for implementation, e) sources for assistance/additional resources for teaching development, and f) criteria for recognizing their achievement of that outcome. The Instructor Response Form sent to instructors will help facilitate a discussion.

Please note the following considerations pertaining to negative feedback

1. When an evaluation identifies issues that should be addressed directly with an instructor, you may access educational expertise through the UGME office or consult with the person who is most responsible for your teaching/coordination in this class (i.e., Clinical Skills Chair, Foundations Chair, Year Chair, Rotation Director, Department Head) to develop an appropriate response strategy in addition to what is mentioned above. This person may meet with the instructor instead of or in addition to you.

- If the instructor in question is in a program site where you are not based, you are encouraged to work with/through a lead at that site (i.e., the local Faculty Year Lead).

- If the instructor in question is a resident, the discussion will include the resident's Program Director. All negative resident evaluations need to be given to the Program Director by the MRP.

2. UGME office staff will simultaneously give highly concerning evaluations to the MRP and someone in a higher position (i.e., Year Chair; Director, Faculty and Learning Environment; Associate Dean, UGME) to address the feedback. The MRP and this individual will work together to develop a plan to address the concerns. Highly concerning evaluations are those that allege student mistreatment, raise safety concerns for students or patients, or report serious unprofessional behavior. It should be noted that this would be only to discuss issues that arise in evaluations, not critical events that may be identified though alternative means outside of One45 (i.e., Curriculum Feedback Tool, Office of Student Affairs).

3. If negative evaluations for an instructor are noted across multiple courses/modules in the same year or multiple years, then the relevant Year Chairs and Director, Faculty and Learning Environment will be notified.

APPENDIX B: GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION FEEDBACK

Overview:

- Numerical results identify strengths and weaknesses
- Comments provide details and areas for reflection.
- Feedback form attached for self-reflection and consultation with the person most responsible for your teaching in this course (Most Responsible Planner).

Provided below are areas to consider when reviewing your teaching feedback:

1. Items reflecting teaching effectiveness (i.e., Overall, the instructor's teaching was effective, In general, this instructor established a good learning environment) are helpful indicators of overall instructional quality.
2. Written comments may clarify some numerical ratings and can be helpful for teaching improvement.
3. Instructor evaluation reports with fewer than 10 responses may lack the validity and reliability of evaluations completed by a larger number of respondents. Thus, it is important to take into account ratings from multiple courses and multiple years to gain a global picture of student perceptions of your teaching. You are also encouraged to obtain peer evaluations of your teaching.
4. Appropriate consultation in reviewing instructor evaluation results helps to improve teaching effectiveness. You are encouraged to discuss your feedback with the person most responsible for your teaching in this course (i.e., the course or module director). Completing the form on the following page may help facilitate your discussion in this area. This person may also request that you complete the instructor response form. Your Department Head will also have access to your teaching evaluations.

Please note that the time spent reviewing teaching evaluations, reflecting on your results and getting peer feedback may count towards Section 3 (assessment) through Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credits with the Royal College. Please see the Royal College website for more information. The time spent reviewing and reflecting on evaluations may also be added to Mainpro Credits earned for teaching (1 M2 credit per hour). Please see the CFCP website for more information.

The following site provides helpful information for interpreting negative feedback.

APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE FORM

Undergraduate Medical Education Program

Instructor Response Form

Course:

Course Director:

Module Director:

Reporting Period:

After consideration of the feedback provided through the Instructor Evaluation Report, I offer the following comments in response to the information received:

Practices I plan to continue:

Practices I plan to do differently:

What I learned about students' perceptions of the areas I taught:

What I learned about my teaching:

Any learning needs for myself that I've identified through this process:

My teaching plan going forward:

General comments: (e.g. Evaluation process, results, reflections)

APPENDIX D: MOST RESPONSIBLE PLANNER RESPONSE FORM

MRP Response Form for Flagged Instructor Evaluations

Course/Rotation:

Most Responsible Planner:

Instructor:

Reporting Period:

After reviewing the evaluation for this instructor, I have taken the following action (please select all that apply):

☐ Evaluation not of concern/no action needed

☐ Evaluation was sent to instructor with prompt to self-reflect or reach out to MRP

☐ Met with instructor and a plan to address the students' concerns was developed

☐ Brought to the attention of someone in a leadership position (i.e., Year Chair, Assistant/Associate Dean, Department Head)

Comments:

☐ Faculty member not to be involved in teaching this course/module

Comments:

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Comments: