MD Program
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Guidelines for teacher and course evaluations

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Overview
The MD Program relies on various sources of information to provide feedback on the quality of the program as a whole, on individual components including courses, and on individual teachers. This feedback enables evidence-based, continuous quality improvement of the program and student experience. It is also a core element of a faculty member's teaching dossier, which is used for promotion and related purposes. One of the chief sources of such feedback is data obtained from students via teacher and course evaluations.

Curriculum leaders should work with student course representatives to ensure that the importance of timely evaluation completion is well understood. Course directors should communicate their evaluation expectations to students at the beginning of the course and at subsequent points as necessary.

Included below are principles and expectations regarding student completion of teacher and course evaluations followed by standards for the timely release and use of teacher evaluation scores and feedback.

Principles
1. One of the most powerful and effective tools used to assess the quality and effectiveness of the MD Program curriculum and its teachers is constructive student feedback.

2. Students in the MD Program are in training to enter a profession that relies to a considerable extent on collegial critique for self-improvement. Giving effective feedback and responding to feedback are competencies essential for effective self-regulation.

3. The MD Program endeavours to educate medical students in a manner that fosters the development of competencies essential for effective self-regulation.

4. Students are essential partners in the education program and should contribute to the planning and implementation of a reasonable, required program of course and teacher evaluation.

5. The time required to complete evaluations of teachers and courses should be minimized by ensuring:
    a. That the process of completion of forms be as easy as possible, including:
        i. That the forms be concise and only include essential information.
        ii. That whenever possible, dedicated time be set aside during school hours for students to complete evaluations.
        iii. That the forms be available for completion on a variety of technological platforms.
    b. That the number of students required to complete the forms be determined with regard to statistical principles.
    c. That requests and/or reminders to complete any forms be limited to no more than once per week.

Expectations
1. In light of the preceding principles, students will be required to complete a minimum number of requested assessments as established by each course at the beginning of the course and at subsequent points as necessary. The minimum number of clinical teacher assessments will be no less than three. In

courses where there is substantial contact with residents a minimum of one resident assessment will be required. All end of course evaluations must be completed. The number of additional required assessments (e.g. weekly evaluation, lecturer, tutor, anatomy lab demonstrator, seminar leader, etc.) will be set to not exceed 80% of forms available for completion.

2. Students are expected to complete assessments forms upon receipt of the request and will receive reminders no more frequently than weekly. Assessment forms must be submitted prior to a cut-off of 30 days from the time of receipt of the original request. The cut-off date is intended to ensure that feedback data remains valid, is not unduly influenced by recall bias, and is available in a timely manner to facilitate quality improvement activities.

3. Completion of required evaluation forms will be monitored by the central MD Program administration. The number of additional forms required will be displayed to students automatically by MedSIS. Students who have not completed the required number of assessments will not have electronic access to evaluations completed on MedSIS pertaining to their own performance until they have submitted the required evaluations in that course. Midterm feedback forms will be exempt from this restriction on access. If a student does not meet this requirement they may still view their own evaluations by scheduling a meeting with the course director at which time they should be prepared to discuss why they have not completed their evaluations as requested.

4. If students encounter a technical difficulty that hinders the completion of an evaluation form, it is their responsibility to bring this problem to the attention of the course administrator, course director, or technical staff in a timely manner.

Standards for the timely release of teacher evaluation scores and feedback

The MD Program places great value on the commitment of the many teachers who contribute to the education of our students. In recognition of their efforts, student assessment of teacher effectiveness scores and other formal feedback will be made available to teachers within three months of the end of the course (in Foundations) and within three months of the end of the academic year (in Clerkship). The MD Program will facilitate the provision of each teacher's student assessment of teacher effectiveness scores to the relevant University Department Chair(s).

Teacher evaluation data will, however, only be released when three evaluations have been received for a given teacher in order to protect the anonymity of the students who provided the feedback.

Courses that run for a prolonged period of time (particularly the entire length of the academic year) and courses with multiple rotations are encouraged to share interim or informal feedback earlier when this can be done without compromising student anonymity.

Failure to meet the three-month deadline will be brought to the attention of the Foundations Director or Clerkship Director as appropriate, and if necessary the Vice Dean, MD Program and/or the relevant Department Chair.

Standards for the use of teacher evaluation scores and feedback

Student assessment of teacher effectiveness scores and other evaluation feedback about individual teachers must not be disclosed to those outside of the MD Program, nor to individuals within the MD Program, who do not have the authority to access that data. The only exceptions are when the disclosure is required by official MD Program business, by University policy, or by law.

Letters of reference or external award nominations written by MD Program leaders for teachers must not

contain student assessment of teacher effectiveness scores or student comments retrieved from evaluation forms without the specific consent of the teacher.

Individuals aware of inappropriate disclosure of teacher evaluation information outside of the MD Program should inform the Vice Dean, MD Program as soon as possible.