

FOCUS ON: Evaluation and Outcome Assessment

*In order to prepare providers for the changes in accreditation/certification requirements related to Mainpro+ we have been providing a series of communication pieces to help familiarize providers with the Quality Criteria requirements. The fifth and final issue in this series is **Quality Criterion 5, Evaluation and Outcome Assessment**. To view other articles in this series please click [here](#).*

Why is program and participant evaluation important?

Aside from being a required component for Mainpro+ certification there are many reasons to incorporate evaluation into the practice of program development. Evaluation is an important tool in the practice of continuous quality improvement in continuing professional development (CPD). A well thought out program evaluation process encourages accountability and allows educators to gain information about their program which will serve to foster ongoing program development¹. It is equally important that learners have an opportunity to both evaluate that their individual learning needs were met and to evaluate whether or not they have experienced a change in competence, knowledge, or skill as a result of the activity.

Developing an evaluation plan

Research suggests that when developing evaluation and assessment strategies for CPD, planners should incorporate the evaluation strategy into the educational planning and needs assessment process. As Moore says, "start with the end in mind". Meaning, consider what the intended outcomes of the CPD activity will be. What is the performance or competency gap meant to be filled by the activity? How will you measure this achievement in learners? How will learners self-evaluate this achievement? Answering these questions will help you to approach the instructional design of your program from an outcomes perspective².



What are outcomes?

CPD programs are primarily about creating change. This change can be in behaviour, attitudes, skills, and competence. Outcomes are the measures of these changes as a result of the educational activity. The outcomes of a program may include a demonstration of knowledge on the part of the learner (through formal testing), demonstration of skills in a practice or practice-like setting, or proof of specific changes in the health status of participants patients³. Program organizers can decide to measure outcomes at the level of individuals, groups, organizations, or even systems.

Moving beyond satisfaction

In the past, assessment of CPD programs has focused on two domains: participation (the number of people who participate in the educational intervention) and satisfaction (whether or not the educational intervention meets the participants' expectations). However, we now know that change that occurs as a result of an educational intervention—in particular, change within the domains of performance, patient health, and community health—is a more valuable measure of program success. Change as a direct result of an educational intervention can be very difficult to assess as there might be confounding and/or uncontrolled variables at play. However, a great deal of work in the area of outcomes assessment has yielded a framework that allows for the assessment of change beyond declarative or procedural knowledge⁴.

Evaluation Framework	
Measurement	Examples
Competence	Observations of performance in the educational setting, commitment-to-change-report
Performance	Review of patient charts, observation in a simulated clinical setting, self-report of performance
Patient Health	Changes in health status of patients as recorded in charts or as self-reported by patients
Community Health	Data gleaned via epidemiology reports/studies or via self-reports by communities



Commitment to Change

Commitment to change (CTC) agreements or statements are an effective way to help participants evaluate what they have gained from an educational activity and to focus how that new knowledge or skill may be used in practice⁵. CTC allows participants to identify the changes they will make in practice based on the new knowledge and skills obtained in the CPD activity. Further levels of evaluation can be achieved by following up with participants at timed intervals post-program and asking them to reflect on whether they have accomplished the goals set out in the CTC agreements. CTC agreements can serve as both reminder systems and further program evaluation components.

Evaluation and Mainpro+

Evaluation is a mandatory component of for Mainpro+ certified programs. Evaluation allows for the ongoing improvement of CPD programs and provides valuable feedback to program planners and faculty. In order to receive Mainpro+ certification, a program must allow participants to evaluate the program in a meaningful and confidential manner. Further, the College requires that certain evaluation *questions* be incorporated into the evaluation process for *all* Mainpro+ certified programs. The following are mandatory evaluation questions:

1. This program enhanced my knowledge

Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

2. Please indicate which CanMEDS-FM Roles you felt were addressed during this educational activity.

- Family Medicine Expert
- Communicator
- Collaborator
- Manager
- Health Advocate
- Scholar
- Professional

3. Did you perceive any degree of commercial bias in any part of the program?

- Yes No

If the program is delivered in the province of Quebec the following mandatory questions must be included in the evaluation process:

1. Did you perceive any degree of bias in any part of the presentation?

- Yes No

2. Did the activity respect the Ethical Code of CME Providers (http://www.cemcq.qc.ca/fr/index_code.cfm)?

- Yes No

Quality Criterion 5: Evaluation and Outcome Assessment

Programs seeking Mainpro+ certification must meet the following requirements in regards to interactivity and engagement in program design and delivery.

Credits per Hour	Certification Requirements for Criterion
1 credit per hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Measures are included to assess self-reported learning or change in what participants know or know how to do as a result of the CPD program
2 credits per hour	Must meet 1 credit per hour requirements and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Program includes an objective measurement of change in knowledge.Program provides opportunity for participants to evaluate change in CanMEDS-FM competencies (as identified in the learning objectives).
3 credits per hour	Must meet 1 and 2 credit per hour requirements and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Objective measurement of change in competence and/or clinical performance and/or patient outcomes for all learners.Opportunity to evaluate change in all CanMEDS-FM competencies identified in the learning objectives.

References & Further Reading

1. Frye A, Hemmer P. Program evaluation models and related theories: AMEE Guide No. 67. *Med Teach*. 2012;34(5):e288-e299. doi:10.3109/0142159x.2012.668637.
2. Moore D, Green J, Gallis H. Achieving desired results and improved outcomes: Integrating planning and assessment throughout learning activities. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*. 2009;29(1):1-15. doi:10.1002/chp.20001.
3. Frye A, Hemmer P. Program evaluation models and related theories: AMEE Guide No. 67. *Med Teach*. 2012;34(5):e288-e299. doi:10.3109/0142159x.2012.668637.
4. Lambert N. Ban happy sheets! — Understanding and using evaluation. *Nurse Education Today*. 2012;32(1):1-4. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2011.05.020.
5. Lockyer J, Ward R, Toews J. Twelve tips for effective short course design. *Med Teach*. 2005;27(5):392-395. doi:10.1080/01421590500086888.

Questions or comments? Email [Jessica Black](mailto:jessica.black@cpd.ca), CPD Accreditation Manager, College of Family Physicians of Canada