

MD Curriculum Renewal – Course overviews

During the next several months, overviews of the various courses to be included as part of the MD Curriculum Renewal will be shared with faculty, staff and learners.

This month we asked Fabiana Crowley, PhD, Course Chair for Foundations of Medicine to provide us with an overview.

When is this course undertaken and how long is it?

The Foundations of Medicine course is taken in first year from September to December and is 16 weeks in length.

Can you describe the course in more detail? Foundations of Medicine Blue Printing – by Gary Tithecott (adapted)

The course support learner competence in approaching clinical problems and issues that impact patient care as a decision maker working in teams using all key aspects of basic, social, and clinical sciences necessary for critical thinking, problem-solving, and clinical decision-making.

The curriculum will incorporate the social determinants of health, health promotion, life cycle and prevention. This and all subsequent courses will be aligned with issues prominent in Canadian health care, especially those applicable to Southwestern Ontario.

Body systems of Hematology and an introduction to Infectious diseases, Immunology and Microbiology offer clinical application for learning.

This course will instill a firm grounding in what will be themes within courses of: Basics of Anatomy and Cell Biology; Pathology and disease; Laboratory Medicine, Imaging and Choosing Wisely; basic Pharmacology and therapeutics; Physiology; Ethics; Diversity and ethnic challenges; Health Systems; Biochemistry; Genetics (including genomics, SNP's epigenetics) and Evidence Based Care.

Learning and assessment will use a variety of methods including case-based and small group/team-based learning, interactive large group learning and independent learning. The key for this course is to serve as a secure grounding for learning in other parallel and subsequent Program courses.

The themes covered include:

Introduction, use and assessment of the key background competencies that form the basis for delivering evidence based socially accountable patient centred health care in Canada

- Approach to patient care:
 - Acute and Chronic Disease management
- Clinical Decision Making
 - Evidence based decision making

- Life Cycle - Peds to Geriatrics
- Foundational Sciences:
 - ACB; P&P; Biochem, Microbiology
 - Genetics (foundations and early application)
 - Immunology (foundations and early application)
 - Ethics - Care related (Intro)
 - Epidemiology and Public Health (intro)
- Clinical Sciences:
 - Lab Medicine
 - Pathology (foundations and early application)
 - Choosing Wisely (intro)
 - Imaging (foundations and early application)
 - Therapeutics (intro)
 - Blood Disorders and Hematology
 - Infectious Diseases
- Prevention (foundations and early application)
 - Health Promotion (foundations and early application)
 - Behaviour and risks by region/age/social factors
 - Screening
- Social Determinants of Health (Shared with EL)
- Diversity and Ethnicity (foundations and first application)
 - Indigenous Culture and Health (foundations and first application)
- Global Health (intro and first application)
- Interprofessional Care (intro)
- Mental Health - Mood disorders

What role do Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) have in your course?

In this course, we will teach students the background knowledge, abilities and skills to demonstrate stage specific levels of the twelve Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada undergraduate medical education EPAs in their clinical courses such as PCCM, Experiential Learning and Clerkship. The EPAs are being used to teach our students ability to perform tasks of a physician.

What is unique and different about this course?

This course has been designed to be fully integrated and promote a holistic view of a patient and the health system.

We are striving to promote integration of basic, clinical and social sciences within sessions and weeks to enable students

to look past the symptoms and see the entire patient and how individual patient differences may affect diagnosis and management.

This course is based on approaches to symptoms, as opposed to diseases, and is rooted in the MCC objectives and is focused on the tasks of a physician.

What teaching methods will be used?

Lectures, supervised and unsupervised small groups, case-based learning, team-based learning, flipped classrooms, laboratories, patient experiences, panel sessions, independent learning, site visits, and others will be used.

How will students progress through the course?

The course is designed around the philosophy that assessment drives learning. Students will be provided with many formative assessments throughout the course that will provide them with feedback on their performance.

Continual formative assessment and feedback will enable students to navigate through the curriculum to ensure their own success on the summative assessments and the assessments of the 23 Key Program competencies under the seven Role domains.

What have been your roles as course chair?

- Developing the framework upon which the curriculum will be built; designing a course outline that provides students with the foundational knowledge required to progress toward competency in EPAs;
- the seven competency domains, and MCC objectives;
- working with all of the discipline and theme leads to create an integrated course;
- collaborating with the other course chairs to ensure continuity and integration across the entire curriculum;
- recruiting faculty to teach within our course;
- teaching faculty the goals and philosophy behind our new curriculum, and
- managing and overseeing all of the faculty that are working to develop the sessions for the new course.

How many faculty will support the course and what will their roles be?

This course is unique as it is the only course with three leads – two Basic Science and one Faculty in Family Medicine. We have a Windsor Campus lead. We have leaders for each of the weeks (about 16 faculty).

In addition, there are discipline specific leads, theme leads, session leads, small group facilitators, and coaches. They each have specific roles, from coordinating the content of the week to teaching to coaching individual students.

The Program and School has supported a Faculty Program Renewal Lead; Faculty Lead Curriculum; Faculty Lead Assessment; Faculty Lead Quality Improvement and Accreditation,

There will be faculty development for educators.