



MD Curriculum Renewal – A summary of courses

The more than 20 existing first and second year courses have excellent learning processes and assessments. By consolidating them into larger courses, similar to what has been implemented in other medical school CBME curricula, students are better able to learn medicine in the context of what is seen in acute and chronic care. It will also prepare them to balance medical knowledge while addressing social determinants, assessing evidence for decision making, “Choosing Wisely”, and advocating for and advising on prevention and wellness.

The new curriculum courses will include:

Foundations of Medicine

A course taking place from September to end of December in will support and assess learner competence on key topics in the foundational and specific clinical sciences necessary for critical thinking, problem-solving, and clinical decision-making. A key goal is outlined in the first week – “How to think like a physician”.

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

Body system 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, Lab and Pathology Diagnostics and Choosing Wisely; basic Pharmacology and therapeutics; Physiology; Ethics; Diversity and ethnic challenges; Health Systems; Quality Management; Biochemistry; Genetics (including genomics, 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, labs and independent learning. This course will serve as a secure grounding for learning in other parallel and subsequent Program courses. Students will be introduced to the grounding for EPAs in demonstrating the tasks of a physician.

Principles of Medicine I and II

Each course, (January 2 to mid-June of year 1 for Principles of Medicine I and September 2 to end January for Principles II), will support student development of competence in the key principles of body system or medical discipline based learning drawn from existing courses in the present curriculum with first and second year.

Integration of content objectives will occur across the course using a case-based and application model of active learning at the end of course, and with parallel (*PCCM*) and subsequent courses (Transition to Clerkship and Clerkship). Curricular competencies learned and assessed in these courses extend beyond medical expert to include all curricular competencies.

Course goals are to integrate foundational and clinical sciences with learning related to social determinants of health and social accountability, while establishing competence to enter clinical bedside learning. Case-based learning will serve as an environment for key integration and competency assessment. Students will see their growth as a clinician in their maturation of effectiveness in the Entrustable Professional Activities.

Experiential Learning

A core strategy of Western University's strategic plan is to expand student access to and assessment in learning that derives from involvement in future work place projects. This course will oversee student achievement in the new Longitudinal Clinical Experience and established team based projects such as Service Learning and the Patient Safety/ Quality Improvement project.

Because understanding and researching evidence and contributing to the expanded community of learning in health care will be a key competency in our student's future, this course will also contain a module of original research developed with a mentor and delivered in teams of two or three students maximum.

Patient Centred Clinical Methods

This existing course will retain the models of simulation standardized-based patient learning for students to develop competence in the key objective of a sensitive and complete patient centred clinical assessment during a health care visit. Changes will be in allocating body system clinical assessments with learning in Principles of Medicine I and II. Additional new learning will be focused on innovations in clinical assessment and a deeper understanding and demonstrated competency in working with patients of diverse cultures and values.

Professionalism Career and Wellness

An important area of medical education is supporting the development of professional identity in students. This requires more than lectures, and is better understood in small group and seminar/team-based learning approaches. This course will introduce and reinforce key approaches to topics such as: professional regulation/ethics/boundaries; personal finance; career success tools; leadership and working in teams; reflection and professional improvement and personal wellness. This course will span all four years.