

Executive Summary
Report to the CUSOM Curriculum Reform Steering Committee
Assessment, Competencies, and Outcomes Committee
June 2018

Committee Charge

The Assessment, Competencies and Outcomes committee was charged with determining an appropriate framework and approach to assessment within the new curriculum for the CUSOM. Based on literature review and review of best practices around the country, we were able to identify several guiding principles for assessment that should be incorporated into the new curriculum.

Guiding Principles for Assessment

- Assessment should be driven by a clear definition of the outcomes and an agreed-upon framework that we expect from CUSOM graduates (outcomes-based education).
- Grading should be criterion-based, using a competency-based framework as opposed to our current, normative grading.
- The overall assessment plan must be centrally coordinated and regularly reviewed.
- An electronic portfolio with a student dashboard is needed to support adequate documentation of all student assessment data points.
- The principle of “assessment for learning” as opposed to “assessment of learning” should drive assessment in the new curriculum. This means that there should be timely access to feedback and evidence of performance to promote reflection and self-directed learning as well as frequent low-stakes assessments to gather evidence and continue to drive and support learning.
- Multiple assessment methods should be used longitudinally to generate multiple data points about each student.
- Student assessment data should inform program evaluation.
- A competency committee should be used for making high-stakes decisions such as whether a student progresses to the next phase or is ready to graduate. There should be clear hard-stops and correlated remediation opportunities.
- Coaches will be necessary to support student reflection and learning planning.
- Faculty, residents, and students who assess students should receive training and feedback on their assessments.
- There should be an increased emphasis on direct observation of student clinical performance.
- There should be an emphasis on longitudinal relationships between the assessor and student.

Outcomes Framework

Student outcomes should be determined by a large group of stakeholders. While the committee did not fully agree on a specific outcomes’ framework, but there was consensus that we should include the Core EPA’s for entering residency as part of any outcomes framework we adopt. Most importantly, any program outcomes should be measurable, manageable, feasible, and defensible.

Next Steps

- A retreat to specifically discuss and define the outcomes expected of CUSOM graduates. This includes both refining the framework and determining the specific outcomes expected. Attendees should include a broad representation of stakeholders.
- This committee should coordinate with all other curriculum reform committees, but in particular, the Longitudinal Curriculum and Basic Science committees - specifically in relation to coaching, longitudinal relationships as a context for assessment, and changes to curriculum.
- There are numerous ways to assess learners in medical education, and our program of assessment should include many of them. We must think carefully about what the best assessment methods are for each particular outcome.

Suggested Pilots

- Increased frequency of assessment across all blocks and clerkships with feedback provided on all items
- Use of open-ended items in addition to multiple choice questions in basic science coursework
- Regular, low or no-stakes oral exams delivered either individually or in moderately-sized groups
- Use of trained assessors as an adjuvant to observations and evaluations completed by preceptors