

Rationale for Revisions to ITER, July 14, 2011

The UGME Evaluation Committee would like to propose a change to the Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR) or "Dean's Letter" for the Curriculum Committee's consideration. The MSPR is a summary of student performance over the four years of the MD program used by Program Directors during the CaRMS (Canadian Residency Match Service) as part of their selection of students for residency positions.

Current Dean's Letter: The current Dalhousie Dean's letter consists of three sections. The first section is a standardized summary of the pre-clerkship curriculum and is the same for all students with the exception of the IMU and IMG students. For these a description of the transfer requirements into the program at the clerkship level is provided. The second section is a standardized summary of the clerkship curriculum for all students in addition to the "strengths" comments taken verbatim from the core clerkship In-Training Evaluation Reports (ITERS). The third section is reserved for individual comments related to a student's academic or personal difficulties which may have led to delayed graduation or remedial work. This section is only completed for those students where it is warranted.

Proposed changes: The Evaluation Committee proposes a revision of the letter to present a more balanced account of the student's performance and progress. This would involve including comments from both the "strengths" and "concerns" sections of the core clerkship ITER. This would require a change to the ITER whereby the sections which would be included on the MSPR would be clearly indicated (attached). Faculty development would also be provided around the area of constructive, appropriate comments to be included.

Rationale: The traditional purpose of the Dean's letter had been to serve more as a recommendation than as a record of performance. Many Program Directors have complained that they find the Dean's letter from Dalhousie and from other schools unreliable and not a true reflection of a student's performance. Associate Deans from across the country use various formats and have agreed in principle that a more uniform and balanced approach would be appropriate; however a standardized format has not been agreed upon. The Evaluation Committee has discussed this matter over the past year, and believes that a more balanced approach to the MSPR would benefit both students and residency programs.

Implementation: The Evaluation Committee would like to implement this new format in September 2011 as the Class of 2013 enters their core clerkship. This would require informing students at the beginning of the clerkship in August 2011.

Sincerely,
Dr. Karen Mann, Chair UGME Evaluation Committee
Noreen Gaudet, UGME Student Academic Administrator