

## **How Do We Assess Adaptability? A Qualitative Analysis of Global Health Resident Assessment Using Portfolios**

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**Background:** The Global Health Enhanced Skills program at the University of Calgary was designed to be adaptive and flexible, to meet individualized objectives of the resident learners. Since many learning objectives within Global Health are more subjective professional skills – such as cultural competence, advocacy, and incorporation of systems-thinking – reflective writing and critical thinking needed to be formally assessed. A portfolio assessment process was chosen for this purpose, so that it might be valid yet iterative. Given that this process was not a common tool in the Canadian context, there was a need to evaluate its efficacy.

**Methods:** A qualitative study using focus groups (18 Evaluation Coordinators for Canadian Family Medicine Post-Graduate Training and 16 Canadian Global Health Faculty), interviews (15), and a survey was conducted to assess the value of this assessment tool. Comments were coded thematically so that the tool could be further refined. Dialogue and responses were coded into a variety of themes that had a minimum of ten related comments. Within these themes, stakeholders from external institutions, resident learners, and local faculty made suggestions on how the portfolio could be enhanced.

**Results:** Notable topics included concrete curriculum-related suggestions around competencies and program goals, specific assessment tools, and learning experiences. There was also a focus on both preceptor (teacher) and resident (learner) needs within the portfolio assessment process, including how the interactions and expectations could enhance the experience for both. Many of these suggestions and discussion points were useful to further develop learning objectives, core teaching opportunities, reflection, and improvement of the portfolio. The core competencies were reworded, the portfolio assessment process became more robust and resident-friendly, and a mentorship program was established.

**Conclusion:** Examination of an assessment tool during early stages of program development allowed for engagement of the global health learning community, and for further improvement of the portfolio assessment process for future residents.