

HM734: Quality & Safety in Healthcare

Winter 2021 Course Outline

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this course is to equip future health services managers with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to improve quality of care and patient safety.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Quality and safety problems in healthcare continue to routinely result in harm to patients and cost healthcare systems billions of dollars. The objective of this course is to equip future health services managers with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to improve quality of care and patient safety. The course will examine basic improvement concepts, methods, and tools, and show how they have been put into effect in various healthcare organizations. Students will build knowledge of the technical, psychological, social, and political aspects of quality improvement. Emphasis will be placed on examining quality from multiple levels of analysis and multiple perspectives using a 'systems thinking' approach. This course is taught online using the *Avenue to Learn* (A2L) system and with a combination of informational slides, readings, on-line discussions, and assignments.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the fundamental principles and state of the evidence on quality and quality improvement
- Analyze work processes and performance using key quality improvement tools (e.g., process maps, fishbone diagrams, control charts)
- Identify effective strategies for engaging multiple stakeholders in quality improvement (e.g., patients and families, providers, board members)
- Identify effective strategies for fostering a context that supports quality and safety (e.g., governance, leadership, teamwork, culture)
- Explain the legislative frameworks that govern quality and safety in Ontario
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches for improving quality and safety
- Explain the value of systems thinking for analyzing and improving quality and safety

COURSE CONTENT

Course content is divided into five learning modules and thirteen weeks, as outlined below.

Module 1: Fundamentals of Quality Management & Improvement in Health Care

Week 1: Introducing Quality in Health Care

Week 2: Analyzing & Improving Work Processes

Week 3: Exploring Improvement Methodologies & Strategies

Module 2: Quality Measurement & Evaluation

Week 4: Developing Indicators for Quality & Safety

Week 5: Understanding Data Variation and Control Charts

Module 3: Patient Safety and High Reliability Organizations

Week 6: Examining Patient Safety in Canada: Data, Evidence & Legislation

Week 7: Analyzing Patient Safety Incidents

Week 8: Disclosing Patient Safety Incidents

Module 4: Stakeholder Engagement in Quality Improvement

Week 9: Engaging Patients and Families

Week 10: Engaging the Board of Directors

Week 11: Engaging Physicians and Staff

Module 5: A Systems Lens on Quality Improvement

Week 12: Creating a Context for Quality and Safety

Week 13: Systems Thinking and Quality Improvement

Please refer to the “Course Schedule & Assignments” document posted on A2L for a detailed week-by-week description of the readings and discussion questions. Students should become familiar with A2L and complete the first week’s reading as early as possible.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor	Jenna Evans, PhD	jenna.evans@mcmaster.ca
Teaching Assistant	Somayeh Ghazalbash	ghazalbs@mcmaster.ca
Teaching Assistant	Puspita Hossain	hossap1@mcmaster.ca
Program Manager	Michelle Benjamin	benjamin@mcmaster.ca

A general discussion area on A2L allows students to interact with each other and instructor. **This area will be monitored by the instructor so please post general questions about course content and assignments here to allow for inclusive discussion and benefit. Reserve direct emails to the instructor and TAs for more personal matters.**

MODES OF STUDY

This course is delivered in an online format using Avenue to Learn (A2L) as the principle delivery system: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>. Topics are explored through a combination of informational slides, readings, case studies, on-line discussions, and assignments. Students are expected to be adult learners who will independently read course content posted on A2L, analyze information, and share their new knowledge and understanding with their classmates to learn from each other and the instructor. Instead of face-to-face small group discussions, students will interact online. Discussions will occur asynchronously (not in real time) as this enables students from different time zones to participate more easily and to organize their learning activities around work, family and personal demands. Live chat rooms, phone calls, and video-conferencing may be used when needed by students and the instructor.

USE OF A2L: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & CONFIDENTIALITY

Students require access to a computer that meets the MHM program technical requirements and access to the Internet on a regular basis. Learners should also be comfortable using a keyboard and have an active McMaster email account and web browser. The course will be delivered through McMaster's A2L system.

To protect the learning environment, all MHM program participants (e.g., students, teaching assistants, faculty) agree to honour individual and corporate confidentiality. Please regard all information as private, confidential, and/or proprietary and only disclose such information with the prior written consent of the author. Lapses in confidentiality are considered academic misconduct and could result in a change to your status in the MHM program.

TEXTBOOKS & READINGS

All readings for this course are provided on A2L. However, the following texts are suggested to support high quality writing in this and other courses:

1. American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). ISBN: 978-1-4338-3216-1.
2. Graff, Gerald & Birkenstein, C. (2018). "They Say/I Say: The moves that matter in Academic Writing. (4th ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-63167-8.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Components and Weights

Online Discussion (4% each for 5 discussion questions)	20%	Throughout
Process Analysis & Improvement Paper	40%	Due Feb 13
Quality Improvement Amid COVID-19 Paper (group)	30%	Due April 7
Quality Improvement Amid COVID-19 Presentation (group)	10%	Due April 7
	100%	

Please refer to the “Assignment Descriptions” document posted on A2L for a detailed description of the evaluation components above.

Grade Scale

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
F	00-69

The grades of “A” and “A+” are reserved for exceptional levels of achievement by students who, by definition, typically do not represent more than a small minority of the graduate student population or of the students registered in the course.

Penalty for Late Submission

All assignments must be submitted online using A2L by **midnight** EST on the due date. Late assignments will receive a penalty of **percentage points per 24 hours**, or part thereof. We recognize that there may be valid reasons for late assignments. In order for these reasons to be accepted without penalty, the instructor must be notified prior to the due date. Requests for extensions will not be considered within 48 hours of the deadline except under exceptional circumstances.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is the student’s responsibility to understand what constitutes academic integrity. Please refer to the University Senate Academic Integrity Policy. This policy describes the

responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for students and faculty should a case of academic integrity arise. A breach of academic integrity is defined as to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results, or could result, in unearned academic credit or advantage. Please refer to the policy for a list of examples. The policy also provides faculty with procedures to follow in cases of academic dishonesty as well as general guidelines for penalties. All work that students submit must be their own work (original) and include proper citations when work is copied or paraphrased.

Turnitin

A web-based service (Turnitin) to reveal plagiarism may be used. Students are expected to submit their work electronically to the A2L Dropbox. Students who do not wish to have their work assessed through Turnitin must advise their instructor in writing at the beginning of the term. This student will submit their assignment as well as all rough drafts as an appendix to the instructor using a mutually agreed to process. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not wish to have their work assessed through Turnitin. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., online search, etc.).

For further information related to the academic integrity policy or the use of Turnitin, please refer to the Office of Academic Integrity at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

Recycling Assignments

If a student has conducted a project or assignment for another course on a similar topic to the one proposed for this course, they are required to obtain instructor permission in advance of proceeding with the topic. This is to ensure that projects or assignments are sufficiently different from one another. If in doubt, please contact the instructor.

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STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Individuals who may require reasonable accommodation (an individual adaptation or adjustment made to provide a person with a disability with equitable and non-discriminatory

opportunities for participation) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS). In collaboration with SAS, the student creates an accommodation plan. Prior to the beginning of each course, the student will provide the instructor with the SAS approved accommodation letter. Together we will discuss how each accommodation will be provided. You will be required to follow the policies and procedures of McMaster University, Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Health Sciences: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites frequently during the term.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of this course will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any others that may be announced on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies outlined here and on A2L, and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.