

A survey and a video of a mock assessment for improving the first year progression

What did/do you do?

A survey of student expectations and a video of a mock first-year assessment are used to increase student confidence in and awareness of the examination and to train assessors and supervisors in the procedure.

Who is involved?

A team comprised of the PGRS Coordinator, PG Administrator, a senior IGM academic, and two PhD students prepared the questionnaire and the video. The video is intended for viewing by first-year students, prior to their end-of-year assessments, as well as by assessors and supervisors.

How do you do it?

Using SurveyMonkey, the team devised a questionnaire asking students either what they expected their first-year assessments to be like (for first-year students) or whether the examination met their expectations and was or was not helpful (for second- and third-year students). The survey was used to assess whether or not the examination process matched student expectations of it.

The team then prepared a series of PowerPoint slides with voiceovers explaining the first-year assessment process. A mock video was created using a prepared script that showcased a range of assessment questions and potential student responses (including how a student handled answering a question with "I don't know"). The objective is to have the slides and video posted on an intranet system that would allow students to access the material for preparation before their assessments.

Why do you do it?

It had gradually become apparent that, due to changes in the nature of annual progression, the first-year assessment had become an examination. The team therefore wanted to clarify what types of questions/answers were appropriate and to prepare both students and assessors/supervisors for the progression hurdle. The objective was both to even out the student experience by managing expectations and providing shared information on the progression procedure, and to train supervisors/assessors in a way that could be tailored to IGM specifically. The team recognised that, while the FMS Graduate School provides training for assessors and supervisors, it necessarily does not include specific tips and suggestions for the Institute.

Does it work?

Students were reluctant at first and often did not see the purpose in the study portfolio (it helped, then, that a mark was associated with it), but typically, students acknowledge that they found the portfolio useful after a period of time. Study skills teachers have found that the students are now more involved and more responsible for their self-development; they have a greater sense of control over their own improvement and a better sense of how to study. The study portfolio also provides students with a good platform from which to ask for help; for international students in particular, it provides a way to bridge cultural differences surrounding feedback and the process of seeking advice from teachers.

Teaching and Learning Case Study

2011/12

Susan Lindsay,
Institute of Genetic
Medicine

Coherent Curriculum themes:

- Assessment and feedback
- Student engagement

Other keywords:

Video recordings,
postgraduate re-
search