PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

FORMATION CONTINUE EN SANTÉ

CONSORTIUM NATIONAL DE FORMATION EN SANTÉ
Volet Université d'Ottawa

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Targeted competency

The ability to assess a trainee's performance in a constructive, consistent, fair and honest way.

Description

At the end of this workshop, participants will know how to implement a performance assessment process, by following five key steps. They will plan the assessment, collect information on their trainees' performance, interpret this information, and communicate their appreciation to their trainees in order to choose which actions need to be taken to foster their learnings during and after the placement.

Units

Unit 1: The ABCs of performance assessment
- What is performance assessment?
- Performance assessment: *"What For"*?
- Two types of assessments
- A dreaded but mandatory activity!
- The five steps of assessment

Unit 2: Planning a trainee's assessment
- Introduction to planning
- Why is it important to be well prepared?
- Establishing a pedagogical alliance
- Establishing a trusting relationship with your trainee
- Clarifying expectations and determining objectives
- Discussing the learning contract
- Mutually understanding what needs to be assessed
- What about assessment documents?

Unit 3: Collecting information: what and how?
- Introduction to collecting information
- Multiple sources and moments
- Collecting information on the thee levels of knowledge
- Facts and only facts!
- Tools for collecting information
- Is the supervisor the only one to assess his trainee?

Unit 4: Interpreting the information
- Introduction to interpreting information
- Interpreting with the purpose of making a judgement
- Being objective: a challenge in itself!
- Being aware of our own cognitive biases
- Ethics in assessment, it's fairer!

Unit 5: Communicating your appreciation to the trainee: the principles of effective feedback
- Introduction to performance appreciation
- Feedback
- Challenges… and several benefits!
- It's all about perception!
- Formulate your feedback strategically
- Is there an appropriate moment to give feedback?
- A few tips for articulating feedback strategically
- Giving feedback in a problem situation

Unit 6: Decision-making: a key step in the assessment process
- Introduction to decision-making
- Decision-making based on formative and summative assessments
- The challenges of decision-making when assessing a problem trainee

What is performance assessment?

It is a process whereby information is collected about the trainee's learnings, through multiple and diversified sources. An assessment:

- Brings to light a trainee's competencies and how well he masters internal and external resources that can be mobilized
- Leads to a verdict on the trainee's performance, based on valid and legitimate information

(Brousselle et al., as quoted by Contandriopoulos et al., 2017; Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Meier, 2019; Roland, as quoted by Blanchette, 2017; Tardif, 2006)

Two types of assessments

There are several types of performance assessments. Two of these are most frequently used in the context of placements:

- The **formative** assessment, which focuses on the trainee's progress and facilitates the development of his competencies by highlighting his strengths and his challenges
- The **summative** assessment, which sums up the trainee's knowledge, comparing it against criteria determined by the academic institution

(Black & William, as quoted by Wood, 2019; De Vecchi, Leroux, Vial, Scallon, as quoted by Blanchette, 2017; Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Marceau, 2019; Meier, 2019; Peeters, 2017; Wood, 2019)

The five steps of an assessment

Performance assessment is a complex process, often difficult to organize, and supervisors do not always know where to begin. To help you out, we propose a structure in five steps, adapted from literature:

1. Planning
2. Collecting information about the trainee's behaviour
3. Interpreting the information collected
4. Communicating appreciation
5. Decision-making

(Blanchette, 2017; Contandriopoulos et al., 2017; Durand & Chouinard, 2012; Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Loye & Fontaine, 2018; Meier, 2019)
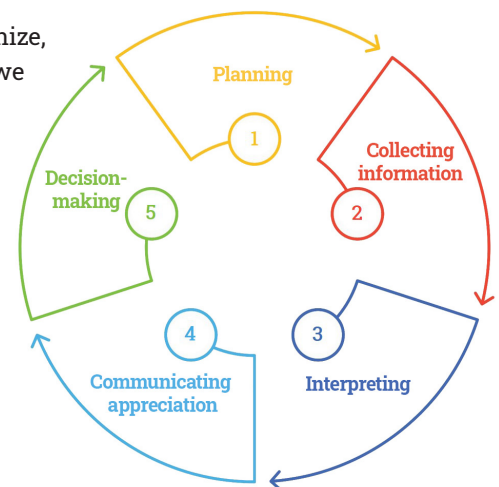
① Planning

The first step in the assessment process is **planning**. It is crucial because it enables you to be prepared for subsequent steps and to acquire an **overview of the whole assessment procedure.** In addition, planning the assessment ensures consistency in the trainee's learnings, while framing what will later be part of the assessment.

(Durand & Chouinard, 2012)

Planning involves various tasks, the main ones being:

- Establishing a pedagogical alliance with your trainee, which will facilitate the assessment process
  - Forge a trusting relationship
  - Address learning objectives and expectations with your trainee and write them down
  - Set meeting dates with your trainee for formal assessments (mid-placement, end-of-placement)
  - Discuss moments reserved for informal assessments

- Carefully reading **academic documents** and the occupational referential for a given profession
  - Determine criteria, indicators and descriptors that will lead to assessing the trainee's competencies

(Bourgeois, 2018; Contandriopoulos et al., 2017; Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Giroux & Girard, 2009; Gopee, 2018; Monney et al., 2019)

② Collecting information

The second step in the assessment process is **collecting information.**

In order to conduct a fair performance assessment, it is essential to define beforehand the various elements that will be evaluated and the means to gather relevant information.

To create the best representation of the trainee's performance and monitor the evolution of his learnings, **you will need to use various methods at different moments to gather information throughout the placement.** In doing so, you will take several "snapshots" of the trainee to get an overall picture of his performance.

(Dijkstra et al., Pugh & Regehr, Schuwirth & van der Vleuten, van der Vleuten & Dannefer, van der Vleuten et al., as quoted by Marceau, 2019; Meier, 2019; St-Onge 2018; Timmerman & Dijkstra, 2017)

What do we mean by "multiple methods"?

Several tools serve to grade a trainee's learnings and measure different aspects of his performance. They must be selected on the basis of the criteria and indicators to be measured for a successful placement.

Following are the most frequently used methods in the context of placements:

- Direct or indirect observation
- Evaluation grids
- Questions in the form of discussions
- Assessment of documentation
- Videoscopy

- Role play
- Clinical vignette
- Concept map
- Logbook
- Assessment portfolio

③ Interpreting information

The third step in the assessment process is related to interpreting **the information** collected during the previous step. It consists in **reviewing all of the information, to conduct an in-depth analysis and make sense of this information**. This exercise will allow you to form a judgement based on concrete facts regarding the trainee's competencies. This judgement reveals the progress in the trainee's learnings and accounts for the quality of his performance. It consists in **forming a conclusion or an opinion about the acquired competencies.**

(Contandriopoulos et al., 2017; Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Legendre, as quoted by Fontaine & Loye, 2017; Le Petit Robert, n.d.)

In order to conduct a fair analysis of the information reviewed, you need to take several aspects into account, including:

- Cognitive biases, which are factors that may skew your assessment, without you being aware of it. The most frequent biases are the halo, hawk-dove and central tendency effects.

- Ethical notions in assessment, including among other dimensions, thoroughness, confidentiality and transparency.

④ Communicating your appreciation

The fourth step in the assessment process is **communicating your appreciation** to the trainee. It allows you to convey the judgement you came to in the previous step.

For communication to be effective, your feedback should:

- Be provided regularly
- Focus on positive elements
- Suggest potential solutions to the trainee's challenges as well as encouragements
- Be based on perceived improvements since the last feedback provided
- Be linked to specific objectives that pose a significant level of challenge, without being too complex
- Be given by a person whom the trainee respects and perceives as an ally, a model and a credible source

(Baird & Mollen, 2019; Bing-You et al., Durand & Chouinard, 2012, Eva et al., as quoted by Garino, 2019; Garino, 2019; Giroux & Girard, O'Brien et al., Schartel, as quoted by Drolet et al., 2019; Hardavella et al., 2017; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, as quoted by Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Meier, 2019; Ridder et al., French et al., as quoted by Myers & Chou, 2016)

⑤ Decision-making

The fifth and last step in the assessment process is **decision-making**. The type of decision taken will depend on the type of assessment on which it is based.

Initially, decision-making deals with **formative assessment**. It takes into account key elements discussed with the trainee as the supervisor gave him feedback. In addition, it allows the supervisor to gauge the congruence of assessment modalities related to the trainee's learning objectives as defined at the **planning step of the assessment**.

The supervisor adapts his support strategies to the trainee's needs and challenges. In some cases, the supervisor will decide to review how he supports the trainee in order to bring him to achieve his competencies.

(Bourgeois, 2018; Fontaine et al., 2020; Legendre, 2005)

At the end of the placement, decision-making is associated with a **summative assessment**. It will also include key elements discussed with the trainee as he received feedback. More specifically, it will:

- Validate the achievement of pedagogical objectives and level of competence against predefined criteria
- Identify future learning needs
- Inform the academic setting that the trainee's placement was a success, a failure or that changes need to be made
- Assign a grade (in the form of a number, letter, rate or mark)

(De Vecchi, Fortin, Vial, as quoted by Blanchette, 2017; Durand & Chouinard, 2012; Marceau, 2019; Meier, 2019; Peeters, 2017; Wood, 2019)

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For the opportunity to access training about performance assessment, register for the workshop at https://www.cnfs.ca/professionnels-de-la-sante/workshops.

You will find more useful information on the importance of assessments and the five steps of the assessment process. Several assessment tools are also made available, such as: methods related to formulating learning objectives, the list of expectations, the learning contract and methods for collecting information.