



AFMC

The Association of Faculties
of Medicine of Canada

The AFMC Resource Group on Professionalism

The AFMC Resource Group on Professionalism promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience on teaching and evaluating professionalism in medical education. Established in 2002, the group has representatives from each Canadian faculty of medicine at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

It has long been recognized that professionalism is fundamental to the practice of medicine and recent opinion indicates that it serves as the basis for medicine's social contract with society. The group is concerned with medical education at all levels in Canada and for several years has worked to ensure that professionalism is understood by the educational community and taught at all levels of medical education. However, professionalism in medical education is being threatened throughout the world for a variety of reasons both internal and external to the medical profession.

The threats to professionalism in Canada are very different from those in the U.K. or the United States; thus it is important that there be a forum within which these issues can be discussed. Subjects covered include the professionalism section of the CANMeds roles framework; how best to teach professionalism; the difficulties reconciling unionization and the principles of professionalism; the relationship between admissions policies and professionalism; the assessment of professionalism; role modelling; and how best to teach self-regulation.

The second major effort of the group has been establishing the professionalism website (accessed through the AFMC website). The site includes French and English versions of the International Charter, definitions drawn from a variety of sources, an annotated bibliography, links to other professionalism websites, teaching materials from various Canadian faculties of medicine, as well as reports of successes and failures in universities.

The group also serves as a resource for AFMC, responding to requests for both information and action and to represent the organization in dealings with other interested parties.

The group holds well-attended annual open workshop meetings. The level of discussion is sophisticated, with a true exchange of information taking place. While the principles of professionalism are universal, how professionalism is expressed varies depending upon national characteristics, varying cultures, and, of course, the health care system.

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