

Faculty development for postgraduate medical education in Hong Kong

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Competency-based medical education and faculty development

By the late 20th century, traditional teaching methods in postgraduate medical education were considered inadequate for preparing doctors to navigate modern healthcare systems, thereby posing risks to patient safety. This realisation led to a global shift towards competency-based medical education.^{1–3} The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) identifies seven key competencies essential for contemporary medical practitioners, namely, professional expertise, interpersonal communication, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, academia, and health promotion. The achievement of proficiency in these areas requires novel approaches to teaching and learning.

Traditional postgraduate medical education is often centred around two main principles: the transmission of knowledge and the ‘see one, do one, teach one’ model. Although knowledge acquisition is essential, mere memorisation of facts and information does not lead to excellence in medical practice. Effective education requires more than the delivery of information. It involves selecting content aligned with learning objectives, organising and presenting material in ways that reflect how people learn, and fostering motivation to engage with the material.⁴ It had been demonstrated that knowledge acquisition alone does not result in expertise.⁵ Individuals may successfully recall information and perform well on examinations, but they often encounter difficulties when addressing real-life

clinical problems. The application of knowledge is critical, and hands-on clinical experience is invaluable. However, the tasks encountered in postgraduate medicine are more complex and challenging than those in traditional apprenticeships, rendering the ‘see one, do one, teach one’ method insufficient. Teaching methods that provide support and promote a deeper understanding of material are necessary to develop true expertise in medicine.⁶ The importance of such teaching methods underscores the critical need for faculty development—commonly referred to as training for trainers—which involves acquiring new skills and knowledge while undergoing a shift in mindset.

The Faculty Development Workgroup

Faculty development is central to the successful implementation of competency-based medical education. It includes activities undertaken by healthcare professionals to enhance teaching, leadership, research, and scholarly abilities in both individual and group contexts.⁷ This emphasis on faculty development was highlighted in the Position Paper on Postgraduate Medical Education, published in 2023.⁸ The Hong Kong Jockey Club Innovative Learning Centre for Medicine (ILCM), established by HKAM, was created to modernise postgraduate medical education in Hong Kong. Initially focused on simulation-based medical education, the ILCM has since broadened its scope to address all aspects

of postgraduate medical education.⁹ Recognising the importance of faculty development, the ILCM has assumed a leading role in advocating for this concept within the medical community. To advance these efforts, the ILCM formed the Faculty Development Workgroup (the ‘Workgroup’), which includes representatives from all 15 Colleges under HKAM, to collaborate on faculty development initiatives.

To ensure that faculty development in postgraduate medical education is competency-based, the Workgroup conducted a literature review to identify existing frameworks and identified seven relevant models.¹⁰⁻¹⁶ After careful deliberation, the frameworks proposed by Hesketh et al¹² and the Academy of Medical Educators¹⁶ were deemed the most comprehensive and appropriate for adaptation to the local context in Hong Kong.

The Faculty Development Framework of the Academy

Steinert⁷ defines faculty as all individuals involved in teaching and educating learners across the educational continuum (eg, undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and continuing professional development), leadership and management within universities, hospitals, and the community, as well as research and scholarship in the health professions (eg, communication sciences, dentistry, nursing, and rehabilitation sciences). Based on this definition, the Workgroup delineated four categories of faculty within the framework: trainers, examiners, supervisors of training, and collegial leads in medical education within each College of HKAM. The initial phase of development focused on creating the Framework for Faculty Development of Trainers, which outlines

the key competencies required for trainers. This framework facilitates the identification of individual learning needs, supports effective delivery of course content, and guides the evaluation of outcomes of the faculty development programme.¹⁷

The Workgroup adopted the three-circle model to classify learning outcomes proposed by Simpson et al.¹⁸ This model categorises competencies into core tasks, approaches to tasks, and professional identity, ensuring that trainers perform their roles effectively while approaching these roles with appropriate attitudes and professionalism (Fig).¹⁸

Workshops and beyond for faculty development

The Framework for Faculty Development of Trainers¹⁷ was approved earlier this year by the Education Committee and the Council of HKAM (Fig). In the future, the ILCM will design and implement training workshops guided by the following principles¹⁹:

- Evidence-informed educational design
- Relevant content
- Experiential learning with opportunities for practice and application
- Opportunities for feedback and reflection
- Intentional community building

Moreover, a recent systematic review has highlighted key principles for effective faculty development that extend beyond workshops and individual teaching effectiveness. These principles include strengthening participants’ identities as educators, promoting recognition of educational excellence and leadership development, and fostering communities of practice to support ongoing learning and skill refinement.²⁰ This comprehensive approach reflects the learning process for clinical skills,

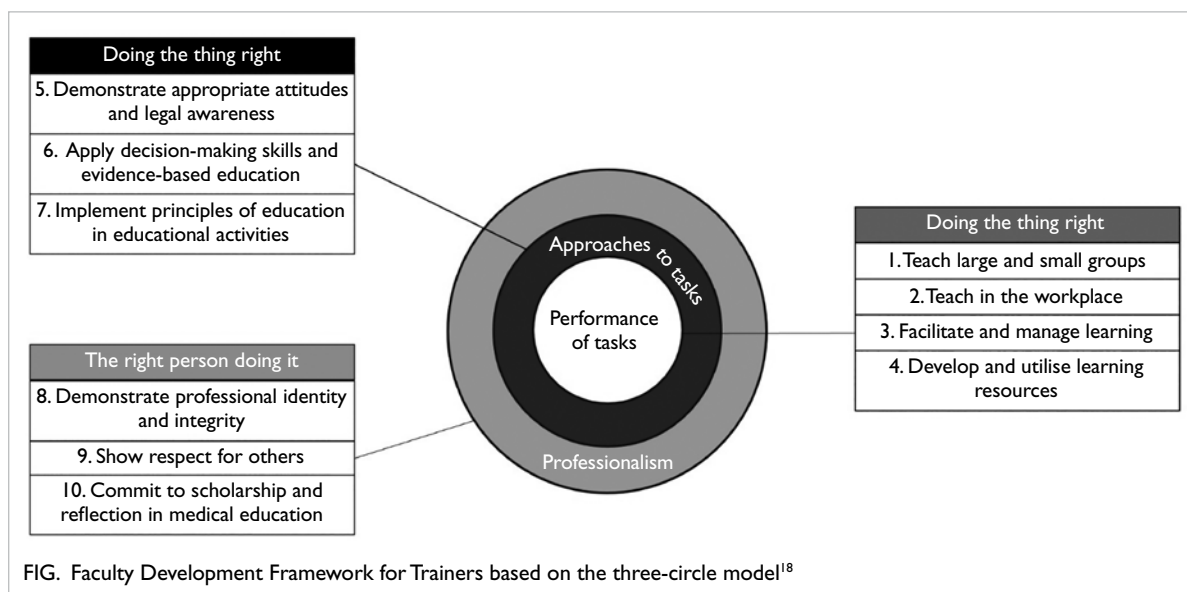


FIG. Faculty Development Framework for Trainers based on the three-circle model¹⁸

which requires practice, feedback, and continuous development in the workplace. Therefore, effective faculty development will require sustained support from HKAM and collaboration with stakeholders across all Colleges to ensure that faculty continue to advance their skills after completing workshops.

Conclusion

Faculty development is essential for the advancement of postgraduate medical education in Hong Kong. By equipping trainers with the appropriate competencies and skills, the framework ensures that doctors in training receive high-quality education and mentorship, ultimately enhancing patient care and outcomes within the healthcare system.⁶

Author contributions

All authors have contributed equally to the concept, development and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors had full access to the data, contributed to the study, approved the final version for publication, and take responsibility for its accuracy and integrity.

Conflicts of interest

All authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

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