

Supervisor Guidelines to Foster a Safe Learning Environment

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The guidelines below reflect constructive feedback collected from UBC PHPM residents across all levels and program rotation sites. Six core themes emerged from conversations with residents and the guidelines below illustrate examples of behaviours that support safe learning environments. While some of these best practices may apply to certain rotation sites more than others, the six themes apply to all rotation types and all resident levels.

Specific recommendations for junior residents completing their Intro to Public Health rotation are also provided at the end of this document.

Resident Learning Goals

- Set up a meeting with the resident at the start of the rotation to set learning goals and plan the resident's rotation experiences
 - The resident will suggest competencies that they would like to develop during the rotation based on the competency map
 - Supervisors should use this meeting as an opportunity to learn about the resident (e.g. skills gained from previous rotations, current level of training, interests, competencies that need further development, and resident capabilities/comfort with certain competencies)
 - Create an explicit plan to give the resident progressively more responsibility over the rotation
- Prioritize resident learning over "getting work done" for the organization
- Create opportunities for residents to participate directly in public health physician work, rather than "side projects" that are not aligned with the resident's goals or regular public health physician work
- Clarify that residents are not expected to attend meetings that don't align with their learning goals
- One supervisor should coordinate all projects/assignments from other faculty (including priorities, scope and expectations)

Active Teaching

- Involve other public health physicians (in addition to the primary supervisor) in resident teaching
- When assigning work, define the task and required/helpful resources, articulate the purpose/significance, and accompany with teaching and guidance
 - Be clear on the expected output
- Discuss the decision-making process after a case or consult to develop the resident's understanding of "grey areas" which may change the resultant decision
- Create and share consult banks for residents to practice and discuss with supervisor

Low-Stakes Environment

- Proactively schedule weekly 1:1 meetings with the resident throughout the rotation (it's best if the supervisor or an admin schedules these recurring meetings at the start of the rotation)
 - Provide regular feedback through informal channels such as Skype or Teams chat (more frequently than weekly 1:1 meetings)
- Supervisors should make themselves available to answer questions. Explicitly invite residents to drop by the supervisor's office to ask questions (if not in person, connect regularly via Teams chat, Zoom, or text)
- Provide constructive feedback privately, rather than in a large group (positive feedback can be communicated more broadly to teams)
- Consider the intention when questioning the resident: questions intended to "quiz" the resident are not appropriate for a large group meeting and should be addressed in a 1:1 setting
- Be explicit that "it's ok to fail or make mistakes"

Structured Learning Environment

- Ensure the resident is equipped with workplace materials, including laptop, workstation office (with standing desk if those are available to other staff), required EMRs, note-taking supplies at the start of the rotation
- Try to set up resident workspace in the MHO area to facilitate casual opportunities to "bump into" one another
- Provide the resident with context around meetings in advance, so they can more actively participate
- Delegate responsibilities to the residents and make that clear to others in the organization (e.g. through an email blast; reinforce and redirect if others aren't channeling appropriate questions/work to the resident)

Care for Residents

- Regularly check in on a resident's wellbeing and make an effort to get to know them as a person
- Include residents in social gatherings (consider organizing lunches/social events to facilitate casual interactions between the resident and the public health team)
- State publicly in meetings that the resident perspective is valuable and important
- Make an effort to understand the skills and competencies the resident is bringing to the rotation; remember that residents at the same level will bring different skills and knowledge to the rotation and may require a different teaching approach
- Treat residents as future colleagues

Professionalism

- Demonstrate respect to all team members, setting an example of professionalism
 - Provide constructive criticism to colleagues in a respectful manner
- Be honest about not always knowing the answer and having to ask others for input
- Facilitate introductions between the resident and other team members

- When a resident joins, send an email to all team members with the resident's bio (from [SPPH website](#)) and the resident's responsibilities
- Introduce the resident in meetings if there is anyone in attendance who hasn't yet met the resident in person
- Invite residents to senior leadership meetings, retreats, etc. (as an opportunity to shadow)
- Debrief with the resident privately if they witness something unprofessional or stressful (e.g. a difficult or tense meeting, seeing someone else acting unprofessionally, etc.)

Junior Residents (Intro to Public Health Rotations)

- Provide opportunities for residents to lead meetings (starting in a supportive, low-stakes way)
- Provide low-stakes management opportunities, if available (e.g. managing a small team or overseeing a portion of a portfolio area)
- Provide clarity on whether the resident can ask others for support or delegate tasks (e.g. epi support, other additional team members)
- Provide a list of rotation activities and/or a list of past projects other residents have completed; these examples are useful to junior residents who are still learning about the kind of work that is available to them
- Where applicable, pair a resident with a project manager to lead a project; this gives the resident exposure to operational aspects of their work