

# Canadian Medicine Primer

Visa  
Trainees  
Program  
Guide

**TOUCHSTONE**  
INSTITUTE  
COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS



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# About the Program

## Program Summary

The Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP) aims to facilitate a successful transition to residency training and postgraduate education in Ontario for visa trainees. Courses are designed to provide an orientation to the Canadian health care system and prepare visa trainees to work effectively in Ontario health care environments.

Visa trainees attend simulated patient encounters and facilitated in-class sessions. Large- and small-group simulations provide an opportunity to practise and receive feedback on communication, professionalism, patient management skills and medical expertise.

Visa fellows are guided into a supervisory role, exploring the theory and practice of providing feedback to residents in clinical settings.

## Who can attend this program?

This program is offered to visa trainees to be completed prior to their Pre-Entry Assessment Period (PEAP) at an Ontario university; however, learners are also welcome to attend after PEAP if attendance prior to PEAP is not possible.

## How long is the program?

The program spans two-and-a-half weeks.

## Where are classes held?

Classes are held at Touchstone Institute, located in downtown Toronto, Ontario.

## What is included in this program?

- Customized classroom instruction
- Integrated learning environment with other IMGs matched to residency training in Ontario
- Opportunities for practical application of skills and knowledge in small-group simulations
- Individualized feedback from clinical faculty
- Support for personal learning goals and objectives via one-on-one meetings with academic advisors
- Unlimited access to online learning modules, including videos and lecture slides, during and after the program
- Registration for ACLS training

## Program Structure

The Canadian Medicine Primer comprises three modules:

Module	Attendance	Description	Duration
Primer	Mandatory	Classes customized for visa trainees.	Three days
Core	Mandatory	Blended in-class sessions with family IMGs matched to family medicine and specialty residency training programs in Ontario, plus access to online learning modules.	Two weeks
Family medicine	Optional	Blended in-class sessions with IMGs matched to family medicine residency training, plus access to online learning modules.	

Learners must attend the primer and core modules. The family medicine module is optional. All modules feature lecture sessions that discuss medical care in Canada, as well as large- and small-group interactions that focus on interprofessional dynamics and professional communication.

# Visa Residents

## Program Overview

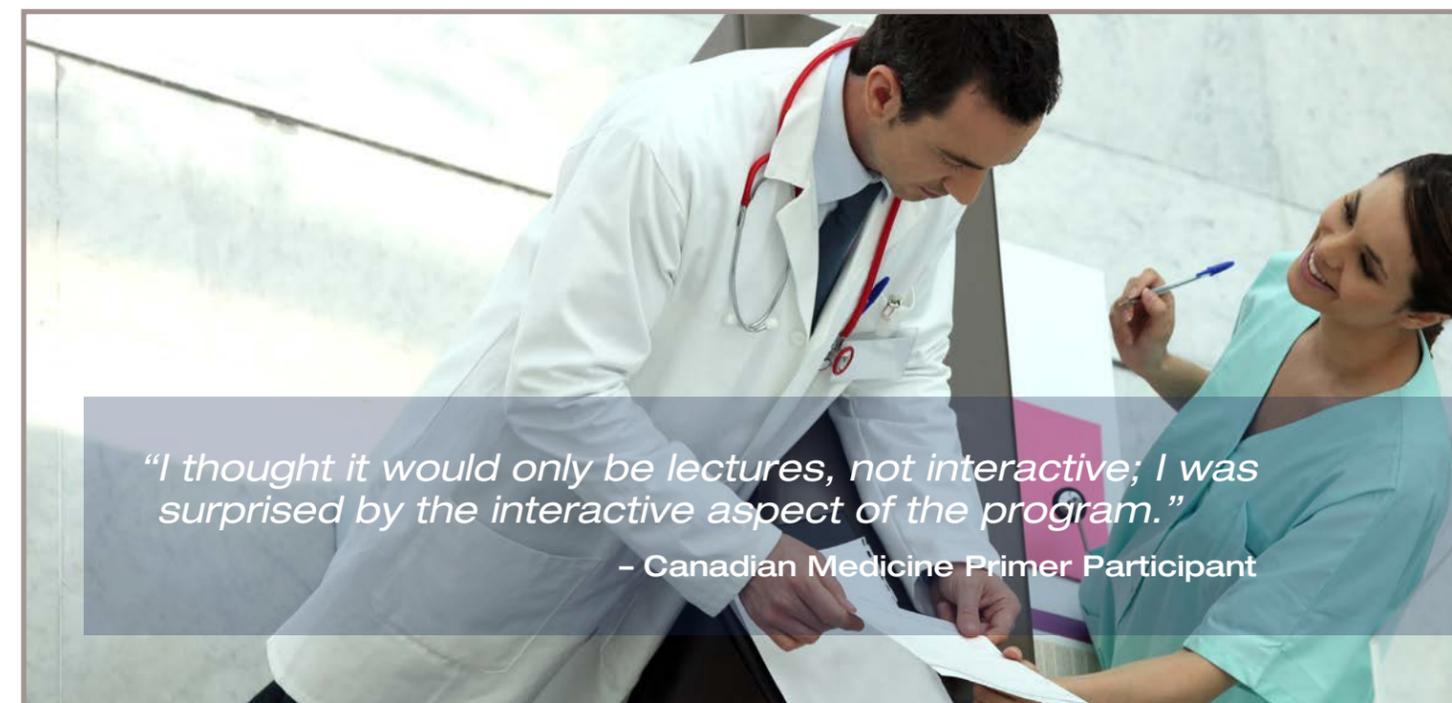
The CMP helps visa residents begin their transition into residency training. The program includes lecture sessions on medical care in Canada and large- and small-group interactions with simulated patients, which focus on interprofessional dynamics and professional communication.

The CMP begins with a three-day customized orientation to the Canadian health care system. Visa residents then join other IMGs matched to residency training in Ontario in our core module. This blended learning environment – which includes fellows, family medicine and other specialty residents – offers participants an opportunity to build relationships with peers and practising physicians.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the program, visa residents will be able to:

1. Describe the Canadian medical care system, including the roles of patients, primary care physicians, specialists and other allied health professionals
2. Define essential medicolegal concepts and related expectations for physicians practising in Canada: negligence, malpractice, standard of care, patient confidentiality and privacy, and record keeping
3. Describe the impact of race, ethnicity and culture on health care, and models for effective cross-cultural communication and negotiation
4. Define and navigate boundaries in patient care by discussing common ethical situations in clinical practice in Canada, including consent and capacity
5. Produce medical records and conduct effective patient interviews
6. Understand publicly funded provincial drug programs and approaches to prescribing in Ontario
7. Master professional language usage and the patient-centred clinical method
8. Have an approach to managing challenging patient encounters
9. Describe common competency frameworks used to guide curriculum and assessment in Canada



*“I thought it would only be lectures, not interactive; I was surprised by the interactive aspect of the program.”*

– Canadian Medicine Primer Participant

## Courses

- Medical Care in Canada
- Medico-Legal Issues in Canada
- Cross-Cultural Competencies
- Patient-Centred Culture
- Underserved Populations
- Ethics and Introduction to Small-Group Simulations
- Navigating Boundaries and Standards of Practice
- Clinical Encounter, Part 1: Focus on Documentation
- Clinical Encounter, Part 2: The Oral Presentation
- Prescribing in Ontario
- Sexual History-Taking
- Ethics
- Challenging Situations, Experiential Learning and Counselling and Management
- Interprofessional Conflict and the Physical Exam
- Breaking Bad News and Medical Error Disclosure
- Vulnerable Populations
- The Consult Note and Follow-Up Note
- Resident-as-Teacher
- CanMEDS/CanMEDS-FM Framework
- Medical Care in Canada
- Worker's Health and WSIB
- Evidence-Based Medicine
- Gender Issues
- Interprofessional Collaboration
- Coroner's Role in Ontario
- Mental Health
- Procedural Skills

### Optional Courses (Family Medicine Module)

- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Prevention and Screening
- Obstetrics in Family Medicine
- Ethical Challenges
- Sensitive Clinical Exam
- Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Primary Care
- Mental Health Psychiatry in Family Medicine
- On-Call Skills
- Periodic Health Exam
- Elder Care, Home Visits and Long-Term Care
- Focused Assessment
- Health Behaviour Change



## Simulations

The CMP program uses simulated patient encounters and facilitated in-class discussions to increase engagement and enhance learning.

- **Large-group simulations** recreate a patient encounter in a classroom setting. Physician instructors debrief the simulated encounter.
- **Small-group simulations** allow trainees to engage in one-on-one patient encounters in a clinical examination room. Physician facilitators provide specific feedback on each encounter. Most classes that use small-group simulations allow visa residents to engage in three or more different clinical scenarios.

## ACLS Training

The CMP includes ACLS training, held over one weekend at the Michener Institute in Toronto. Visa residents will receive a registration form from Touchstone Institute on confirmation of their attendance in the program. It is the responsibility of each visa resident to complete the registration form and send it directly to the Michener Institute before the deadline of their preferred session. If a visa resident's ACLS certification is up to date, they do not need to complete the training.

## Academic Advising

All visa residents are partnered with a physician academic advisor for the duration of the program. An initial advising session is scheduled during the first week of the program. Trainees are encouraged to arrange additional meetings and remain in contact with their advisor throughout the program. Sessions with the advisor provide a forum for learners to:

- Discuss any concerns that may arise during the CMP
- Receive contextualized feedback on performance demonstrated during various assessments
- Establish a faculty point-of-contact during and after participation in the program
- Obtain confidential personal support from individuals who can guide the visa trainee through their transition

## Online Learning Resource

Participation in the CMP provides visa residents with access to an online learning management system (LMS) developed by our team of physician academic consultants. During and after the program, visa residents may access online videos, lecture notes and other reference material through the LMS.

## Information Sessions

As part of the program, representatives from regulatory bodies, agencies, associations and financial institutions host information sessions to provide visa residents with additional resources related to their residency and practice in Ontario. Sessions are held over lunch or after class and are optional for all CMP participants.

## Evaluation

The CMP program provides visa residents with individualized feedback about their skills in relation to what is expected in postgraduate training. Qualitative evaluations reflect the formative goals of the program. Quantitative ratings are given for key skills relating to patient-centred communication and overall clinical skills. All of our evaluations are conducted and developed by physicians and psychometricians to ensure reliability and validity.

### Our goal is to ensure we provide learners with:

- Information on their strengths
- Opportunities to improve on specific areas identified during the CMP
- Resources in order to ensure their readiness for postgraduate training in Ontario

## Small-Group Simulations

Visa residents participate in small-group simulations and receive feedback on their:

- Patient-centred communication skills
- Data collection
- Assessment and/or differential diagnosis
- Management plan
- Ability to integrate health systems and provide community resources, as appropriate

## Online Quizzes

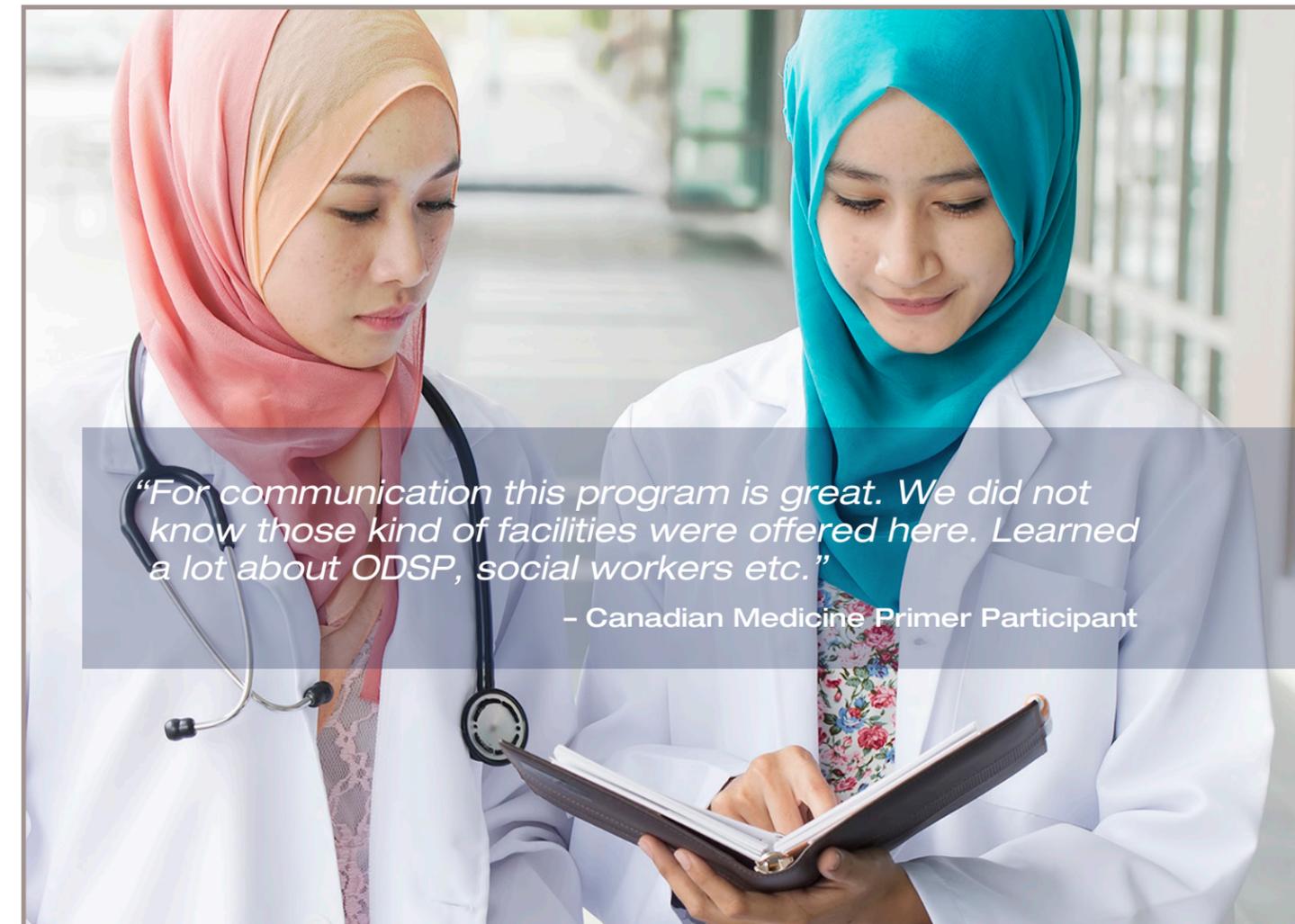
Each week, learners complete online multiple choice quizzes (MCQs). Questions are based on the key concepts from in-class material. The answers are provided immediately after finishing the quiz, allowing for immediate feedback and future review of the material.

Short online written assignments are reviewed by practising physicians, who provide individualized feedback.

## Final Report

To demonstrate completion of the program, a report is provided to program directors and sponsoring agencies. The report comprises the following information:

- MCQ scores
- Online module completion
- Attendance
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback from small-group simulations



*“For communication this program is great. We did not know those kind of facilities were offered here. Learned a lot about ODSP, social workers etc.”*

– Canadian Medicine Primer Participant

# Visa Fellows

## Program Overview

The CMP offers visa fellows an opportunity to learn and explore different methods of providing feedback and to put these principles into practice in simulated clinical scenarios. Visa fellows attend most classes with visa residents and IMGs matched to residency training in Ontario; however, they participate in simulations as supervisors, providing feedback to residents. This role allows them to gain skills and experience as clinical supervisors, an expected role for all clinical fellows in Canada.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the program, visa fellows will be able to:

1. Describe the Canadian medical care system, including the roles of patients, primary care physicians, specialists and other allied health professionals
2. Define essential medicolegal concepts and related expectations for physicians practising in Canada: negligence, malpractice, standard of care, patient confidentiality and privacy, and record keeping
3. Describe the impact of race, ethnicity and culture on health care, and models for effective cross-cultural communication and negotiation
4. Define and navigate boundaries in patient care by discussing common ethical situations in clinical practice in Canada, including consent and capacity
5. Produce medical records and conduct effective patient interviews
6. Understand publicly funded provincial drug programs and approaches to prescribing in Ontario
7. Master professional language usage and the patient-centred clinical method
8. Have an approach in managing challenging patient encounters
9. Describe common competency frameworks used to guide curriculum and assessment in Canada
10. Teach and give feedback to junior learners in different clinical settings

## Courses

- Medical Care in Canada
- Medico-Legal Issues in Canada
- Cross-Cultural Competencies
- Patient-Centred Culture
- Underserved Populations
- Ethics and Introduction to Small-Group Simulations
- Feedback Methods
- Orientation to Feedback Tools
- Understanding ITERS and Evaluations in Fellowship
- Navigating Boundaries and Standards of Practice
- Clinical Encounter, Part 1: Focus on Documentation
- Clinical Encounter, Part 2: The Oral Presentation
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- Challenging Situations, Experiential Learning and Counselling and Management
- Interprofessional Conflict and the Physical Exam
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- Vulnerable Populations
- The Consult Note and Follow-Up Note
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## Simulations

The CMP program uses simulated patient encounters and facilitated in-class discussions to increase engagement and enhance learning.

- **Large-group simulations** recreate a patient encounter in a classroom setting. Physician instructors debrief the simulated encounter.
- **Small-group simulations** allow trainees to engage in one-on-one patient encounters in a clinical examination room. Physician facilitators provide specific feedback on each encounter.

## Feedback Methodology and Practice

In addition to classroom lectures, visa fellows participate in the following dedicated sessions to prepare them for providing feedback:

- **Feedback methods** – Methodologies, tips and techniques for providing effective feedback. Fellows reflect on their own skills and what they can expect in the Canadian context.
- **Evaluation forms within our Pre-Residency Program (PRP)** – Review of evaluation forms and an explanation of the role of simulations used in our (PRP). Visa fellows explore how to provide formative feedback in an educational setting.
- **In-training evaluation reports (ITERS) and feedback tools** – A session on ITERS and feedback tools used in practice. Visa fellows reflect on how they will apply the skills gained from the CMP in their upcoming training.

## Learning through Experience

Throughout the program, visa fellows will have opportunities to practise the principles of effective feedback:

### Observing the Resident

Residents engage in a patient simulation while visa fellows observe from a viewing room and provide a mock-review of their skills. A physician facilitator accompanies the visa fellow in the viewing room and will debrief the encounter with them.



*“This program exceeds my expectations. I will be encouraging all my foreign friends to be a part of this program.”*

– Canadian Medicine Primer Participant

### Observing the Facilitator

From a viewing room, visa fellows observe our physicians as they facilitate small-group simulations with residents. The goal is to identify role models and their characteristics, learn practical teaching techniques, practise purposeful questioning and review the barriers and solutions to effective feedback. Visa fellows are joined in the viewing room by a second physician facilitator who guides the discussion about the observed encounter.

### Providing Feedback to a Resident

Visa fellows and a physician facilitator co-facilitate a debrief session with a resident regarding a simulated patient encounter. The visa fellow is observed by their peers and an additional facilitator from a viewing room and receives feedback regarding their facilitation skills.

## ACLS Training

CMP includes ACLS training, held over one weekend at the Michener Institute in Toronto. Visa fellows will receive a registration form from Touchstone Institute on confirmation of their attendance in CMP. It is the responsibility of each visa fellow to complete the registration form and send it directly to the Michener Institute before the deadline of their preferred session. If a visa fellow's ACLS certification is up to date, they do not need to complete the training.

## Academic Advising

All visa fellows are partnered with a Canadian clinical fellow, who acts as an academic advisor for the duration of the program. An initial advising session is scheduled during the first week of the program. Fellows are encouraged to arrange additional meetings and remain in contact with their advisor throughout the program. Sessions with the advisor provide a forum for fellows to:

- Discuss any concerns that may arise during the CMP
- Receive contextualized feedback on performance demonstrated during various assessments
- Reflect on their professional strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to address them
- Establish a faculty point-of-contact during the program
- Obtain confidential personal support from individuals who can guide the trainee through their transition

## Online Learning Resource

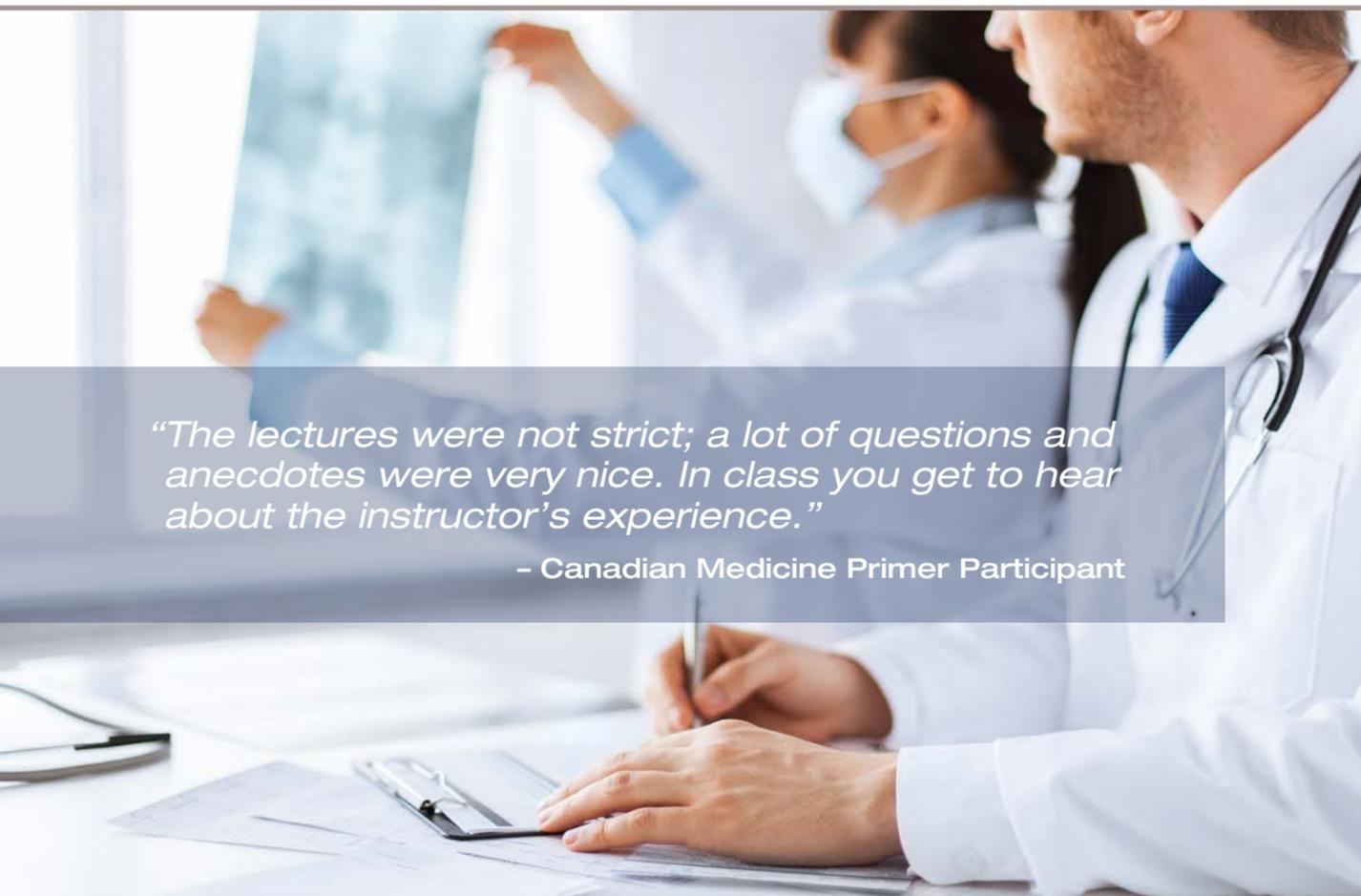
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Participation in the CMP provides visa fellows with access to an online learning management system (LMS) developed by our team of physician academic consultants. During and after the program, visa fellows may access online videos, lecture notes and other reference material through the LMS. Specific modules for visa fellows address the principles of effective feedback.

## Information Sessions

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As part of the program, representatives from regulatory bodies, agencies, associations and financial institutions host information sessions to provide visa fellows with additional resources related to training and practice in Ontario. Sessions are held over lunch or after class and are optional for all CMP participants.



*“The lectures were not strict; a lot of questions and anecdotes were very nice. In class you get to hear about the instructor’s experience.”*

– Canadian Medicine Primer Participant

## Evaluation

The CMP program provides visa fellows with individualized feedback about their skills, with a focus on their readiness to perform a supervisory role in the Ontario health care system. Qualitative evaluations reflect the formative goals of the program. Quantitative ratings are given for key skills relating to patient-centred communication and overall clinical skills. All of our evaluations are conducted and developed by physicians and psychometricians to ensure reliability and validity.

### Our goal is to ensure we provide learners with:

- Information on their strengths
- Opportunities to on specific areas identified during the CMP
- Resources in order to ensure their readiness for postgraduate training in Ontario

## Small-Group Simulations

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Visa fellows are evaluated on their ability to provide effective feedback to residents based on their performance in one-on-one simulated patient encounters.

## Online Quizzes

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Each week, visa fellows complete online multiple choice quizzes (MCQs). Questions are based on the key concepts from in-class material. The answers are provided immediately after finishing the quiz, allowing for immediate feedback and future review of the material.

Short online written assignments are reviewed by practising physicians, who provide individualized feedback.

## Final Report

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To demonstrate completion of participation in the program, a report is provided to program directors and sponsoring agencies. The report comprises the following information:

- MCQ scores
- Online module completion
- Attendance
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback from small-group simulations

## Touchstone Institute

We are a group of highly qualified professionals with expertise in evaluation and curriculum development. Working with national and provincial government regulators, academic partners and subject matter experts, our programs support excellence in Canada's health professions and facilitate entry-to-practice for internationally educated health professionals. We provide objective, standardized competency assessments that recognize the diverse qualifications of candidates and comprehensive, flexible education programs to help them transition to training and practice in Canada.

### Background on the Canadian Medicine Primer

The CMP was launched in 2014 to support visa residents and fellows in their orientation to training in Ontario. The program was developed by Touchstone Institute with the support of Ontario's postgraduate medical deans and in consultation with a group of physicians from different specialties, medical schools and communities throughout Ontario. Physicians develop the in-class materials and facilitate the simulations and feedback – for a truly physician-oriented program.

This dedicated group continues to develop the curriculum, supported by subject matter experts, academic research and CanMEDS competencies. Renewal is a continuous aspect of the program, and each year the CMP evolves to meet the needs of program participants.

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