

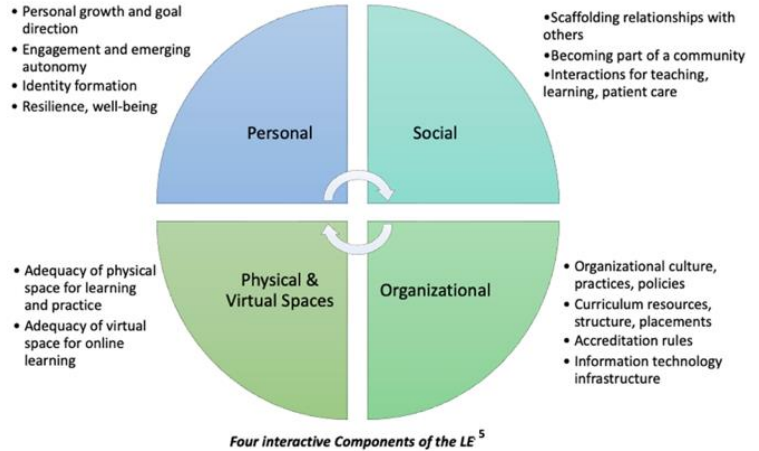
PGME Information Sheet

Learning Environment

Learning Environment (LE) encapsulates the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which learners learn.^{1,2} It involves the “social interactions, organizational cultures and structures, and physical and virtual spaces that surround and shape learners’ experiences, perceptions, and learning.”³ The LE exists **wherever** and **whenever** learners gather.⁴

The learning environment runs parallel to the hidden curriculum as it provides opportunities for learners to develop meaningful focus on learning and to establish their professional identity and autonomy.⁴

The LE can have both positive and negative aspects, resulting in various learner outcomes:



Effects of a Positive LE	Effects of a Negative LE
Increases and promotes learners' attention, engagement, focus, and learning experiences ⁶	Contributes to burnout, exhaustion, stress, and lack of empathy ⁶
Encourages higher performance level of learners ⁶	Causes learners to have low academic achievement, poor behavior, anxiety and/or depression ⁸
Provides supportive, inclusive, engaging, and constructive feedback for learners ²⁻⁴	Learners may feel uncomfortable, confused, and afraid to make mistakes ⁸
Increases learner success, satisfaction, and professional development ⁷	Professional attitude can be affected, and hence their values and identity as a future physician ⁹

Improving the Learning Environment

Sustained positive LE changes occur when individuals, programs & the College work together to actively participate and support the change. Provided below are some suggestions, that are relatively easy to implement, on ways to improve the LE.

Components of the LE (examples adapted from ⁵)	Suggestions for a positive learning environment (Patient-centered, Respectful, Caring, Safe and Inclusive): (Includes both formal and informal activities)		
	Program / Department	Faculty	Residents
Learning Supervision Teaching Feedback Curriculum Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure support and resources are available to faculty (e.g., faculty development, protected time). Ensure/work towards adequate staff to teach, supervise, and address clinical demands. Encourage/invite resident assessment of faculty and be responsive to their concerns /suggestions in a timely manner. Promote awareness of policies relevant to learning and teaching (supervision, assessment, accommodation). Provide learning experiences and service opportunities for all residents with underserved and disadvantaged populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clear in your expectations of the residents. Participate in Academic Half Days. Review relevant policies (supervision, assessment). Be familiar with the competencies the residents are required to meet. Ensure evaluations are completed in a timely manner. Provide actionable constructive feedback to the residents utilizing a coaching approach that supports learning and progress. Avoid giving constructive feedback in public spaces or in front of others. Practice empathy, acknowledging and addressing learners’ uncertainties. Consider mentoring residents. Access resources for professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with assessment and appeal policies, guidelines, and timelines. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of feedback. Be open and receptive to feedback from faculty. Develop strategies for dealing with critical and negative feedback and with the feedback with which you do not agree. Consider behaviours that role model the behaviour you expect in your program.
Well-being Resilience Burnout Safety Stress Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have wellness champions and ombudspersons for the program. Have a wellness representative on the RPC and include wellness as a standing item on the agenda. Promote awareness of available policies and resources (wellness, FRM, health & safety, discrimination & harassment (D&H) /mistreatment reporting). When applicable, refer residents to or contact PGME for advice. Provide safe environment for residents (duty hours, wellness, access to resources). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review available policies and advise residents accordingly (wellness, fatigue risk management (FRM), health & safety, D&H/mistreatment reporting). Consider using information on the PGME one pager on FRM for recognizing and addressing fatigue for yourself and residents. Consider reviewing the CMA learning module on safety in LE. Utilize wellness resources available within your program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself and use available wellness supports (e.g., Resident Resource Office, USask supports, SMA, RDoC). Use available reporting tools (e.g., red button, mistreatment reporting). Utilize PGME one pager on FRM and institutional resources for managing fatigue. Make use of available funding for wellness activities.

Continued...

Components of the LE (examples adapted from ⁵)	Suggestions for a positive learning environment (Patient-centered, Respectful, Caring, Safe and Inclusive): (Includes both formal and informal activities)		
	Program / Department	Faculty	Residents
Atmosphere Respect Team Spirit Support Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include learning environment as a standing item on the RPC agenda. Encourage the attendance of faculty and residents to Department and CoM social events and celebrations (e.g., PGME Celebration Night). Organize and utilize team building events/activities. Have annual resident retreats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be welcoming, kind, supportive, and professional to learners, peers and co-workers. Ensure others feel they belong and matter. Avoid mistreatment. Be positive and effective role models. Utilize relevant resources pertaining to healthy learning environments available through Faculty Development. Consider instilling humility in residents for life-long learning and safe patient care as we need a growth mindset and none of us has all the answers. Practice effective team behaviours. Do not talk down another specialty, colleague or a consult request. If there has been an inadvertent behavior that negatively impacts another person/resident, it is useful to have an open and honest conversation (and apology as needed) to restore the relationship and address the concerns. Participate in and leverage departmental/program/College level wellness and social events/activities and celebrations (e.g., department wellness events, PGME Celebration Night). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind, supportive, and professional to faculty, co-workers, and peers. Ensure others feel they belong and matter. If there has been an inadvertent behavior that negatively impacts another person/resident, it is useful to have an open and honest conversation (and apology as needed) to restore the relationship and address the concerns. Attend COM social events and celebrations (e.g., PGME Celebration Night).
Organization Resources Space IT Policies Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize appropriate tools to evaluate the learning environment (Attached HERE is a selected example of assessment tools), discuss the findings at the RPC, develop action items and evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken. Address negative aspects of hidden curriculum and promote positive hidden curriculum. Ensure additional supports are available for residents who need it through both informal and formal processes. Commit to processes that ensure transparency and accountability.¹⁰ Ensure policies and resources are in place that are relevant to the learning environment (e.g., wellness, learning (e.g., supervision), clinical and personal safety) for both residents and faculty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring issues to the program's attention. Review policies and resources that are in place for clinical and personal safety for both residents and faculty and respond to incidents appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring issues to the program's attention. Review policies and resources that are in place for clinical and personal safety for both residents and faculty and respond to incidents appropriately.

Learning Environment is Linked to the Following Accreditation Standards:

Program:

STANDARD 3: Residents are prepared for independent practice.
Indicator 3.3.1.3: Teachers contribute to the promotion and maintenance of a positive learning environment.
STANDARD 4: The delivery and administration of the residency program are supported by appropriate resources.
Indicator 4.1.2.4: Resident training takes place in functionally inter- and intra-professional learning environments that prepare residents for collaborative practice.
STANDARD 5: Safety and wellness are promoted throughout the learning environment.
Requirement 5.1.1: Residents are appropriately supervised.
Requirement 5.1.2: Residency education occurs in a safe learning environment.
Requirement 5.1.3: Residency education occurs in a positive learning environment that promotes resident wellness.
STANDARD 9: There is continuous improvement of the educational experiences, to improve the residency program and ensure residents are prepared for independent practice.
Indicator 9.1.1.2: There is an evaluation of the learning environment, including evaluation of any influence, positive or negative, resulting from the presence of the hidden curriculum.

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Other Resources:

- [PGME website](#)
- [Resident Resource Office](#)
- [Policies, forms for Residents](#)
- [Faculty Development](#)
- [Resident Doctors of Saskatchewan](#)
- [Resident Doctors of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Medical Association Module on safety](#)

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