Statement on Confidentiality and Use of Data in the Undergraduate / Postgraduate Medicine Information Systems, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

February 2012

1.0 Introduction

The POWER and MedSIS systems are secure online repositories, and all data stored in both systems is encrypted and protected. There are technical and process protections in place to ensure that user data is fully safeguarded, and that only the appropriate persons can access data in either system.

The data use and access policies in place are designed to ensure full compliance with accreditation standards set out by the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the College of Family Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. These standards inform the type of evaluation data stored and accessed in POWER and MedSIS.

This Statement outlines the confidentiality protections in place for data captured in the POWER and MedSIS systems and how such data may be used.

2.0 Learners

2.1 Confidentiality

(a) Evaluations of learners and of teachers entered into POWER and MedSIS are not anonymous, but are treated confidentially and protected with strong security.

(b) A learner's identity will not be disclosed to the evaluating teacher except as required by law, by University Policy or practice, or in exceptional circumstances that warrant detailed follow up [described below in 2.1(c)].

(c) A learner's identity may be disclosed to the relevant teacher in cases that warrant detailed follow up such as comments in a teacher evaluation suggesting serious issues, including professionalism (e.g., abusive comments, unprofessional language) or extreme teaching deficiencies. In such cases, information from a learner's evaluation of a teacher may be subject to further review by the Program Director, Course Director, Department Chair, Department Vice Chair Education and/or the Dean at the discretion of the Program / Course Director or at the discretion of the Dean and the identity of the learner may need to be disclosed to the teacher as part of the follow-up process. Learner identities will not be disclosed, even in exceptional circumstances, unless it is necessary in order to address a serious issue. Learners will be notified of any disclosure of their identity.

2.2 Use of Data

Data from the following types of evaluations will be aggregated (i.e., data elements will be combined and presented in summary form to protect the identity of learners) and may be reported by the Program/Course, the Department and/or the Undergraduate /Postgraduate Medical Education office.

- Evaluations of learner performance.
- Learner's teacher evaluations
- Learner's Rotation/Course evaluations

A learner's personally identifiable evaluation data either about him or her or about teachers will not be provided to outside organizations without the learner's written consent, except as required by law or by University Policy.

3.0 Teachers

3.1 Confidentiality

(a) Individual teacher evaluations and learner's performance evaluations are confidential.

(b) Individual teacher evaluation data with teacher identifiers is accessible in the postgraduate program by Program Directors and Department Chairs through POWER. The undergraduate individual teacher evaluation data is accessible through MedSIS to Course Directors, Department Chairs, and to those with direct responsibility for teacher recruitment and teacher performance monitoring (and only as such information is needed for these individuals to carry out their duties). Everyone who receives individual teacher evaluation data will treat the information confidentially.

(c) Teachers will only receive aggregate data from learner evaluations of them (i.e., data elements combined and presented in summary form in a way that does not identify learners or make it possible with reasonable attempts to determine a learner's identity with his or her evaluation data), except as noted below (3.1d).

(d) A learner's identity may be disclosed to the relevant teacher in cases that warrant detailed follow up such as comments in a teacher evaluation suggesting serious issues, including professionalism (e.g., abusive comments, unprofessional language) or extreme teaching deficiencies. In such cases, information from a learner's evaluation of a teacher may be subject to further review by the Program Director, Course Director, Department Chair, Department Vice Chair Education and/or the Dean at the discretion of the Program / Course Director or at the discretion of the Dean and the identity of the learner may need to be disclosed to the teacher as part of the follow-up process. Learner identities will not be disclosed, even in exceptional circumstances, unless it is necessary in order to address a serious issue. Learners will be notified of any disclosure of their identity.

3.2 Use of Data

As noted in 3.1b, individual teacher evaluation data is shared with those who need the information for promotions, performance review monitoring and teacher recruitment.

Aggregate data from the evaluation of teachers and from the evaluation of learners may also be reported to the Program/Course, the Department and/or the Undergraduate/Postgraduate Medical Education office. In such reporting only summary, non-identifiable data would be presented.

Personally identifiable evaluation data about a teacher will not be provided to outside organizations without written consent, except as required by law, University Policy or practice.

4.0 Administrators (UG Course Administrators, PG Program Administrators, Teaching Site Administrators, UGME and PGME Office Administrators)

4.1 Confidentiality

(a) All evaluations of learners, teachers, rotations, and courses in the POWER and MedSIS systems are confidential.

(b) Administrators must treat all such data as confidential and only disclose or share identifying information if given permission to do so in writing by an appropriate academic administrator (and only when such disclosure or sharing is consistent with this Statement).

4.2 Use of Data

(a) Statistical reporting of evaluation data by program, training site or rotation must only be reported as aggregate data (i.e. summary data with identifying information about the learner and teacher removed) and must not be reported at all if there are fewer than 3 evaluation results. Gathering of the 3 evaluation forms is not necessarily limited to a one-year academic session.

(b) Individual teachers should receive their own evaluation scores (Teacher Effectiveness Score) as follows:

- As aggregated evaluation scores (that is, summary data without any identification of the learner) as long as at least 3 teacher evaluation forms are part of the scoring (if there are fewer than 3 forms, the teacher should not be provided with the evaluation scores)
- Consistent with time intervals set by Departments, Programs or Courses between the completion of evaluation and the disclosure of evaluation scores to teachers.

Approved:

Education Vice Deans, November 17, 2010
POWER Steering Committee, November 24, 2010
PGMEAC, January 27, 2012 (with minor amendment Feb 21, 2012)
UGME Executive Commitee, May 22, 2012