



BUSADMIN C736
Quality Management in Health Services
Fall 2025 Course Outline

Health Policy & Management Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this course is to equip future health services managers with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to improve quality of care and patient safety.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Section 1: Tues 19:00 – 21:50

Alena Lukich

Instructor

lukica@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: after class

Course website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

Course prerequisites: C650, or registration in Global Health or eHealth, or permission of the instructor.

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: No	Global view: Yes
Avenue: Yes	Ethics: Yes	Numeracy: Yes	Written skills: Yes
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: Yes	Final Exam: No	Guest speaker(s): Yes



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Quality and safety challenges in healthcare continue to cause harm to patients and cost healthcare systems billions of dollars each year. This course is designed to equip future health services managers with the knowledge and skills to improve quality of care and patient safety. Students will explore fundamental improvement concepts, methods, and tools, and examine how they are applied across healthcare organizations. The course will also highlight the technical, psychological, social, and political dimensions of quality improvement, emphasizing a systems thinking approach. Learning will take place through a mix of lectures, case studies, collaborative in-class exercises, guest speakers, and student presentations.

Weekly course topics are summarized below:

- Week 1: Fundamentals of Quality Management and Improvement
- Week 2: Examining Patient Safety in Canada: Evidence, Theory & Legislation
- Week 3: Quality Methodologies/Tools & Artificial Intelligence
- Week 4: Statutory Holiday – *No Class*
- Week 5: Analyzing Patient Safety Incidents
- Week 6: Disclosing Patient Safety Incidents
- Week 7: Improving Clinical Care & Engaging Physicians
- Week 8: Developing Indicators for Quality & Safety
- Week 9: Engaging Patients, Families & Communities
- Week 10: Systems Thinking and Improvement
- Week 11: Creating an Organizational Context that Supports Quality and Safety
- Week 12: Governing Quality & Patient Safety
- Week 13: Analyzing Quality Failures Student Presentations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the fundamental principles and state of the evidence on quality improvement

- Analyze work processes and performance using key quality improvement tools
- Understand how to conduct critical incident reviews and disclose healthcare-associated harm to patients and families
- Identify effective strategies for engaging multiple stakeholders in quality improvement (i.e., patients and families, providers, board members)
- Identify effective strategies for fostering an organizational context and culture that supports quality and safety
- Explain the legislative frameworks that govern quality and safety in Ontario
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches for improving quality and safety
- Explain the value of systems thinking for analyzing and improving quality and safety

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

All required course content, including lectures, readings, and case materials, can be accessed at no cost using the web-based course management system, Avenue to Learn: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>.

EVALUATION

Components and Weights

Quiz #1 (individual)	October 14 (in-class)	20%
Quiz #2 (individual)	November 18 (in-class)	20%
Quality Failure Analysis Presentation (group)	December 2 (in-class)	15%
Quality Failure Analysis Paper (group)	December 7 (due on A2L)	30%
Participation (individual)	In-class Contribution	15%
Total		100%

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy at the following URL:

www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/UndergraduateExaminationsPolicy.pdf

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

Course Deliverables

Quiz #1 – Multiple Choice Exam (individual)

This in-class multiple-choice exam is worth 20% of your final grade. It will cover material from required readings, lectures, and class discussions from Weeks 1–5.

The exam will take place in class on **Tuesday, October 14, from 7:00–8:00 p.m.**

Quiz #2 – Multiple Choice Exam (individual)

This in-class multiple-choice exam is worth 20% of your final grade. It will cover material from required readings, lectures, and class discussions from Weeks 6–10.

The exam will take place in class on **Tuesday, November 18, from 7:00–8:00 p.m.**

Quality Failure Analysis Paper (group)

Quality improvement (QI) is always a team effort. Effective and sustainable QI requires the contributions of diverse stakeholders. To reflect this reality, a substantial portion of this course involves teamwork. In self-selected groups of four, students will produce a paper and deliver a presentation. Because all team members receive the same grade, it is the group's collective responsibility to manage its work process. If your team encounters difficulties, you may consult the instructor for guidance.

Each group will select a news story – local, national, or international – that describes a quality failure in healthcare. The story must be published within the last five years and referenced (via weblink or newspaper clipping). It does not need to be long or detailed to be suitable for this assignment.



The paper (10–12 pages, 12-point font, 1.5 spacing) should include:

- A brief summary of the news story
- Identification and explanation of the failed quality characteristic(s)
- Discussion of verified or potential causes of the failure, using a systems thinking perspective
- Consideration of stakeholder perspectives (e.g., patients, families, care providers, managers, policymakers, etc., as relevant to the story)
- Development and justification of one or more quality improvement recommendations, including:
 - Pros and cons of each recommendation
 - Time and resource implications for implementation
 - Suggested performance indicators for monitoring progress
- Original insights and solutions, even if the news story suggests its own response

Students are expected to apply relevant concepts and frameworks from class and/or the broader literature. Recommendations should be concrete, practical, and evidence-based.

Group members will share the same grade unless all agree to an adjustment.

Due Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. via Avenue to Learn.

Quality Failure Presentation (group)

Each group will deliver a 20-minute oral presentation summarizing their Quality Failure Analysis Paper, followed by 10 minutes of questions and discussion. Every member of the group is expected to present part of the work.

Presentations will be evaluated on the extent to which groups:

- Clearly, concisely, and effectively present the quality failure and analysis
- Identify concrete, practical, and evidence-based recommendations
- Apply concepts and frameworks from class and/or the literature
- Engage the audience and use effective communication methods to generate discussion
- Respond to questions and comments constructively

Presentations occur before the paper deadline, allowing groups to incorporate feedback into their final submission.

Presentation Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 (in class). Presentation slides must be submitted to the Avenue to Learn by **7:00 p.m.** on the same date.

Class Participation & Engagement (individual)

Attendance, preparation, and active participation are expected for all sessions of this course. Students may demonstrate engagement in a variety of ways, such as contributing to class discussions, asking thoughtful questions, or participating meaningfully in small-group collaborative exercises.



To support accurate recognition of participation, students are required to use name cards. A name card with your full first and last name must be clearly written and displayed in front of you during every class. Name cards will be provided on the first day of class.

Penalty for Late Submission

All papers and presentations must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn by the stated due date and time. Late submissions will incur a penalty of five percentage points per 24 hours. For example, a paper graded A (87) that was submitted three days late would be reduced by fifteen percentage points to a B (72).

Exceptions may be granted for valid reasons; however, the instructor must be notified prior to the deadline, and supporting documentation must be provided. Requests for extensions made within 48 hours of the deadline will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Such behaviour includes:

- following the expectations articulated by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work;
- asking for clarification of expectations as necessary;
- identifying testing situations that may allow copying;
- preventing their work from being used by others (e.g., protecting access to computer files); and
- adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

All courses use some online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user

names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

Students may be required to use the Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. The Respondus LockDown Browser is a downloadable program that allows a student to take an Avenue to Learn quiz in a secure environment. Quizzes can be set to use LockDown Browser or LockDown Browser.

For more details about McMaster's use of Respondus Lockdown Browser please go to <https://avenuehelp.mcmaster.ca/exec/respondus-lockdown-browser-and-respondus-monitor/>

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx, Teams, or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ATTENDANCE

Arriving late or missing class disrupts the learning experience for both you and your peers. Punctuality and attendance are crucial to maintaining a respectful, professional and productive environment for everyone, including our faculty.

Instructors may use Top Hat in their course in a variety of ways, including to capture attendance in their classes. Attendance is recorded by submitting a unique 4-digit code displayed in your physical classroom using your personal device.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Please do not use the online [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the DSB Student Services – Academic Office (DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office)), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#), can be found on the DeGroote MBA Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors (askmba@mcmaster.ca).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

Missed Final Examinations

Students must be available for the duration of the posted exam period regardless of their personal exam schedule. This is to ensure student availability throughout the entire exam period in the event that an exam must be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances (university closure, power outage, storm policy, etc.). A student who misses a final examination without valid reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

Students who have missed a final exam for a valid reason can apply to the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) to write a deferred examination by submitting an [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) with supporting documentation. The application must be made within five days of the scheduled exam.

The [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#) can be found on the DeGroote MBA Current Student website (mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca)

Deferred examination privileges, if granted, are normally satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following semester. In select cases, the deferred examination may be written at a time facilitated by the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) (DSB Student Services Academic Office) and agreed to by the course instructor.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

Use of Test Accommodations at McMaster University Burlington Campus Ron Joyce Centre

Whereas Student Accessibility Services (SAS), on Main Campus, determines all MBA student accommodations, the MBA Faculty Office manages the coordination of accommodations for tests, midterms, and exams at the Ron Joyce Centre in Burlington.

Process for Students

- SAS will now be using our online system, MySAS Portal, for graduate students to share accommodation letters with their Instructors and their Faculty/Program. Students will be responsible to activate their accommodations on a term-by-term basis and the approved accommodation letter will be directly sent to the Instructor.
- Students must engage the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) to implement their accommodation(s) (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.) for each upcoming test, midterm, or exam, at least two weeks in advance. Students can do this by emailing DeGroote MBA SAS scheduling office at DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca. If a student cannot meet this deadline, they should contact DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca to discuss alternative arrangements. The program is committed to exploring flexibilities where possible to support students.

- All tests, midterms, and exams are booked synchronously with the class's start time. Any deviations from the start time (e.g. start earlier than the class to enable completion at the same end time) requires a discussion with their instructor on protocol at the time of accommodation activation.
- Students will leverage the accommodation (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.), in a designated testing room. Rooms will be booked according to the student's SAS accommodation. Unless the accommodation states otherwise, students should expect that they will be writing in a room with other students. One or more invigilators will always be in the room.
- Following the request to implement the accommodation(s), dsbsas@mcmaster.ca will reach out to the student with their test, midterm, or exam details, including the date, time, and room number. As there may be other students writing tests in the room, we ask that students enter the room quietly and leave all personal items at the front of the room.

All policies and procedures, including restroom access, how extra-time is allocated for assessments under Universal Design, and the submission of memory aids in advance, are consistent with those of SAS on Main Campus. The only variance in procedure is communication around, and physical location of, assessment. There is not a dedicated testing space at RJC. Existing classrooms and lecture halls will be used for most testing. All SAS-approved accommodations will be honoured by our staff; however, core testing elements are not eliminated in alternative testing formats. Students should expect and plan for invigilation, incidental noise, and other potential distractions.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.



The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA C736 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Students may use generative artificial intelligence (AI) for idea generation, structuring, editing assistance, translation, summarizing/paraphrasing information as long as they reference and cite the use of generative AI following assignment citation instructions.

Please refer to this page information and guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence: [Generative Artificial Intelligence - Academic Excellence - Office of the Provost \(mcmaster.ca\)](#)