

University of Victoria | HLTH 401 | Health Policy & Governance | Module 4

WRITE A BRIEFING NOTE

ON HEALTH SYSTEMS POLICY, GOVERNANCE, AND EVALUATION



University
of Victoria

About the Instructor



Kiffer G. Card, Ph.D. is affiliated with the School of Public Health and Social Policy at the University of Victoria. His research focuses on the social, structural, and systemic influences shaping health and behaviour with a focus on policy change, health promotion, and harm reduction strategies for substance use, HIV, and Hepatitis C. Dr. Card's advocacy focuses on the experience of individuals who are members of systemically oppressed and culturally devalued groups. He teaches on health policy, community health, and public health research methods.

About the School of Public Health and Social Policy

The School of Public Health and Social Policy (PHSP) provides a BA in Health and Community Services with four areas of focus – disability studies, Indigenous people's health, aging, and international and global development – and a Masters of Public Health in Social Policy, Indigenous People's Health, and Public Health Nursing. As part of the Faculty of Human and Social Development (HSD), PHSP values social justice, Indigenous knowledge's, interdisciplinary collaborative practice, good governance, health and social well-being, and ethical professional conduct (See HSD's [Strategic Research Plan](#) and the University of Victoria's [Indigenous Plan](#)). For more information about our program and course offerings, visit [our website](#).

Suggested Citation

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Course Description

HLTH 401 reviews historical and contemporary health policy as a context for understanding current health governance practices. The role of legislation, governance and regulation as essential strategies to ensure the health of the population will be explicated. The intersections of policy, health law and ethics will be explored. Course content and activities will focus on helping course participants developing a broad range of skills and competencies related to working effectively in multidisciplinary teams to develop policies and governance structures that will facilitate high quality health service delivery and community care.

Course Outline

Week	Activity Type	Topic
1	Introductory Module	Introduction to the Course, Assignments, and Syllabus
2	Learning Module	Health Policy: How Health Systems Shape Health (and How to Fight Back)
3	Learning Module	Health Governance: A Roadmap to Health Equity and Social Justice
4	Assessment #1	Knowledge and Skills Check for Weeks 2 and 3.
5	Learning Module	Decolonizing Governance: Indigenous Voices and Reconciliation
6	Learning Module	Canadian Healthcare Governance: An Historical Overview
7	Learning Module	Health Governance in British Columbia: Deconstructing Healthcare Access
8	Assessment #2	Knowledge and Skills Check for Weeks 5, 6 and 7.
9	Learning Module	Implementing Health Policies and Programs: A Practical Guide and Framework
10	Learning Module	Accountability in Health Systems: Transparency, Oversight, and Evaluation
11	Learning Module	Civil Engagement and Community Health: Balancing Diverse Priorities
12	Learning Module	Health and Human Rights: Respecting Patients, Resisting Paternalism
13	Assessment #3	Knowledge and Skills Check for Weeks 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, course participants will demonstrate their:

- **understanding** of health policy, governance, and evaluation,
- ability to **compare** health systems evaluation strategies,
- ability to **recommend** a health systems evaluation strategy to improve healthcare,
- ability to **create** a briefing note.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT #1

Background

Welcome to your first Assessment. As part of this assessment, you will be asked to prepare a two-page briefing note detailing your comparison of the four common evaluation frameworks for health governance and policy discussed in Module 3.

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate your mastery over the objectives of Modules 2 and 3 and to give you experience in writing briefing notes and policy recommendations. The content focus of this assignment will be on the three commonly used systems-focused approaches to health governance analysis described in Module 3.

Note: In this assignment you will be asked to take the role of a Public Servant working within Government. While this may or may not be the career path you are interested in pursuing, it is important to have some insight and understanding of the process from this perspective. Assessment 2 and 3 will require you to adopt other perspectives by asking you to take other roles.

Instructions

In your choice of one of the scenarios below, you are being asked to provide a recommendation to your executive director. Your executive director has been tasked with contracting an independent firm to conduct an evaluation of health policy and governance. There will be a request for proposals (RFP), in which firms will describe how they would achieve the stated goals and estimate the cost for doing so. To begin, she wants a recommendation for which overall methodology to request. Firms with experience using the methodology will compete to implement it and provide the results back to your office. Your executive director has pre-selected four methodologies that she is potentially interested in:

- [The USAID's Health Systems Assessment Approach](#)
- [The National Public Health Performance Standards Assessment Instrument](#)
- [Siddiqi et al's \(2009\) Framework for assessing governance of the health system in developing countries](#)
- [Abimbola's et al's \(2014\) Multi-level framework for analyzing primary health care governance.](#)

It is your job to provide a recommendation as to which evaluation framework your organization will go with.

Your briefing note should be two pages, briefly describe the options available to her, describe the implications of choosing each option, and explain why you have recommended the option you selected. You will not need to provide cost estimates, but you need at least to point out which options might be most or least expensive. In preparing your briefing note you should use the guidance provided in the “required reading” section.

Table 1. Scenario Options

Disability Studies Option

This [article](#) describes disproportionately negative outcomes from contact with Ontario’s healthcare for people living with developmental disabilities. British Columbia’s Minister of Social Development & Poverty Reduction has promised to act on these [findings](#) out of concern that similar issues may exist in BC. The minister has decided to contract a firm to conduct an independent evaluation of the health system from the perspective of people living with developmental disabilities. You will need to consider whether Ontario’s evaluation would be a good fit for BC’s system.

Indigenous People’s Health Option

Several federal governments have promised to repeal the *Indian Act* ([RSC, 1985, c. I-5](#)). While the political road to actually doing so is challenging, BC’s Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation participates in a federal-territorial-provincial (FTP) committee on the subject. He would like to submit a fulsome evaluation of BC’s Indigenous health governance and policy, with specific recommendations for moving beyond the Act. The First Nations Health Authority has provided this [backgrounder](#), which may be a good starting place. The minister’s core concern is around trying to faithfully represent the perspectives of Indigenous groups in BC.

Aging Option

Significant attention has been paid to the rising costs associated with caring for an aging population. As the population ages, reliance on informal caregiving is likely to increase, as suggested in this [article](#). The federal Minister of Health believes the current system to have inadequate supports for informal caregivers. She intends to fund an evaluation of the system to recommend policies that will pre-empt or mitigate Canada’s aging crisis’ impacts on informal caregivers.

International Global Health and Human Development Option

Human migration in response to climate change is predicted to increase dramatically over the coming century. No global framework can possibly address in full the [complex outcomes and experiences](#) these movements will entail. Mexico’s government expects that Mexico will become a major destination and/or source jurisdiction for many migrating persons. In partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency, Mexico’s Secretariat of Health will design a framework based on recommendations from a health system evaluation. CIDA will lead the RFP and provide much of the funding for the evaluation. Your executive director needs a methodology to evaluate how the organization can move forward with an evaluation in the face of immense uncertainty and complexity.

Submission

You will submit your (1) two-page briefing note via Course Spaces by September 29th at 11:59 pm. Please use the rubric and template provided in Part 2 and the instructions above to guide your completion of this brief.

After submitting your briefing note, you will also need to provide a 5-6 sentence evaluation of your experience completing this assignment by describing (1) what you learned, (2) what challenges you faced as you undertook this assignment, and (3) what you need to further develop mastery over this content.

Required Readings

- Doyle. "How to Write a Briefing Note." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/WritingBriefingNotes.html>

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- Doyle. "How to Write a Policy Recommendation." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/Policy%20Recommendation.html> Doyle. "Pre-Writing Notes." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/Pre-Writing%20Notes.html>
- Doyle. "Government Writing: The Essential Skills." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/EssentialSkills.html>
- Doyle. "The Characteristics of Good Government Writing." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/Characteristics.html>
- Doyle. "Plain Language: Writing for Readability." ENGL 302: Writing for Government. <https://web.uvic.ca/~sdoyle/E302/Notes/Plainlanguage.html>

ASSESSMENT #1 GRADING RUBRIC

The Rubric for this assignment is provided below. As you write, keep your audience in mind:

“I never read past page 2. I don’t have time.” – unnamed BC government executive

Criterion	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Content and Reliability	6 – Author demonstrates a clear understanding of the methodologies used to evaluate health governance and policy and the differences between them. Information is accurate, and the reasoning behind the recommendation is sound (Reliable). Important uncertainties are noted. The decision-maker will be able to choose any option with a sense for the implications of that choice.	3.5 – Author somewhat mischaracterizes the methodologies used to evaluate health governance and policy, and/or the reasoning behind the recommendation is somewhat unsound, but limited revision would be required to make the note exemplary. Important uncertainties are left unnoted. The decision-maker may be unsure of one or more option’s implications.	1 – The author is broadly inaccurate or uses unsound reasoning to the extent that an expert reader questions the author’s ability to provide a good recommendation. One or more options’ implications are left unaddressed entirely.
Clarity and Conciseness	5 – Note’s body (not counting reference list) does not exceed 2 pages (Short). Assigned template used without adjustment. ^B Every word is vital to the author’s argument (Concise). A member of the general public (Grade 10 or lower) ^A could understand the recommendation (Readable).	3 - Note’s body (not counting reference list) exceeds 2 but not 3 pages. Assigned template used without adjustment. Some unnecessary details or overly complex phrasing take up space. Some language may be difficult for a member of the general public to understand.	1 – Note’s body exceeds 3 pages and/or assigned template has been adjusted. Many details have an unclear purpose, or phrasing is difficult to follow. Language is well beyond the comprehension level of the general public.
Correctness of writing	3 – The writing has very few or no errors in grammar, spelling or usage (Clear).	2 – The writing has enough errors to draw a reader’s attention, but not enough to impede a reader’s comprehension.	1 – The writing has enough errors to impede a reader’s comprehension.

Score

out of 14

^A The *Hemingway Editor* is a helpful tool; it will not be used in grading, but it can help you identify overly complicated language. ^B The template for this assessment is posted on Canvas.