

## Common Content of Assessments and Selection into Foundation Training

The Option Appraisal steering group for selection into Foundation training has recommended that all students be provided with a fine-grain score for educational performance during their studies at their medical school. This score will be derived using an agreed, prescribed framework that each school will adhere to, and which will be based primarily on performance in knowledge and clinical skills assessments. Whilst this defined framework will give some guarantee of the equivalence of these scores, the steering group is proposing an additional quality assurance measure whereby all UK schools will draw assessment items from a common pool.

Currently, more than half of the Medical Schools in the UK work together on raising the quality of their assessments through developing assessment items, which are held in a joint question bank and are drawn on by participating schools. The proposal is to extend this work to all UK Schools and also to widen the bank to include common clinical (OSCE) assessments. This standardised, high quality, bank of assessment items will be benchmarked against current Foundation trainees. This approach will allow diversity to be maintained, but will embed an element of common standards in relationship to knowledge across all UK Medical Schools and, with time, in relationship to clinical assessments.

It is proposed that all UK schools, under the direction of the Medical Schools Council (MSC) will contribute to the development of a common bank, from which at least 15% (but a different 15% at each school) would be included in a finals examination (whenever this was taking place in a programme). The 16 Medical Schools which are already members of the Universities Medical Assessment Partnership already take between 40 - 100% of their examination questions for Finals from this common bank.

The common assessment items will be blue-printed to assess patient safety particularly in areas such as communication, consent, professional behaviour, prescribing and working within the UK ethics and legal framework. Once agreement was reached on the themes, then application of knowledge questions, OSCE type stations or scenarios with marking criteria will be devised. The expected performance in these would be calibrated using Foundation trainees.

In summary, all UK medical schools will draw a minimum proportion of their assessment content from this bank of calibrated items or stations (across the themes) for inclusion in their examinations at the appropriate time in their programme. This will add substantially to the quality assurance of the education performance score used in the application for Foundation training.