



**THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION OF MEDICAL SPECIALIST
QUALIFICATIONS (ECAMSQ®)**

October 2010

Since its creation in 1958, the UEMS ambition is to promote patient safety and quality of care through the development of the highest standards of medical training and health care across Europe. The UEMS is addressing these issues through the harmonisation of medical specialists' qualifications

In line with its Strategy adopted in 2008, the UEMS established the European Council for Accreditation of Medical Specialist Qualifications (ECAMSQ®) with a view to assess the competence of European medical specialists according to these high standards of medical training. When fully implemented, this competence-based approach aims to achieve a common background for the assessment and certification of medical specialists' competence all over Europe, based on the core curricula developed by the Specialist Sections of the UEMS. In a context of increased cross-border healthcare, the development of such a model will guarantee the delivery of safe and high quality health care for all European citizens.

While doing so, the ECAMSQ® is not intended to supersede the sovereignty of national competent authorities nor create a new layer of bureaucracy but rather to mobilise the existing initiatives and forces in the field of postgraduate training. Its founding philosophy is based on competence-based learning with periodical formative assessments of Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism, notably by means of multiple choice questions (MCQs) and direct observation of practical skills (DOPS).

I. The state of play

1. Member States' responsibility in licensing physicians

Medical training is determined at the national level as each EU Member State is responsible for the organisation of its own healthcare system. At the end of their training, medical trainees are certified by their national competent authority (Universities, Ministries of Health, National Medical Associations or Professional Orders) and licensed in order to work legally in their country.

2. Professional mobility through mutual recognition in the European Union

In 2005, The European Union adopted a Directive on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EC) ensuring the free movement of healthprofessionals through talloxing access to the profession in another European Member State. In essence, this directive provides mechanisms of recognition of titles of qualification between EU Member States. According to this legislation, a recognised medical specialist will be able to move temporarily or permanently in another country as his/her qualification will be recognised by the authorities of the host Member States. This does not preclude the formalities for practicing medicine to be imposed on the moving doctor (depending on the context of mobility (establishment vs temporary mobility)).

II. The issue

1. The European Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications

This directive ensures the recognition of professional titles in order to facilitate mobility and access to a professional activity by European citizens in other Member States. As regards the medical professional, the provisions on medical training are restricted to the duration and do not address either content or competence.

While this directive though facilitates free movement of medical doctors, significant differences in the content of training programmes from the different Member States exist. Uncertainties therefore remain vivid as regards the necessary guarantees in the competence of moving doctors.

2. Harmonising medical training to ensure effective free movement of persons

The UEMS committed itself to addressing the harmonisation of medical specialists' qualifications through the creation of the European Council for Accreditation of Medical Specialist Qualifications (ECAMSQ®).

Based on this initiative, the UEMS aims at ensuring that the qualifications of European medical specialists are harmonised according to the highest standards developed by its Specialist Sections.

Each Specialist Section has developed a core curriculum of competences as a recommendation of what each specialist should follow and comply with. Ultimately, the ECAMSQ® will ensure that the training in each specialty meet the standards of these curricula in each European Member State.

III. The actions

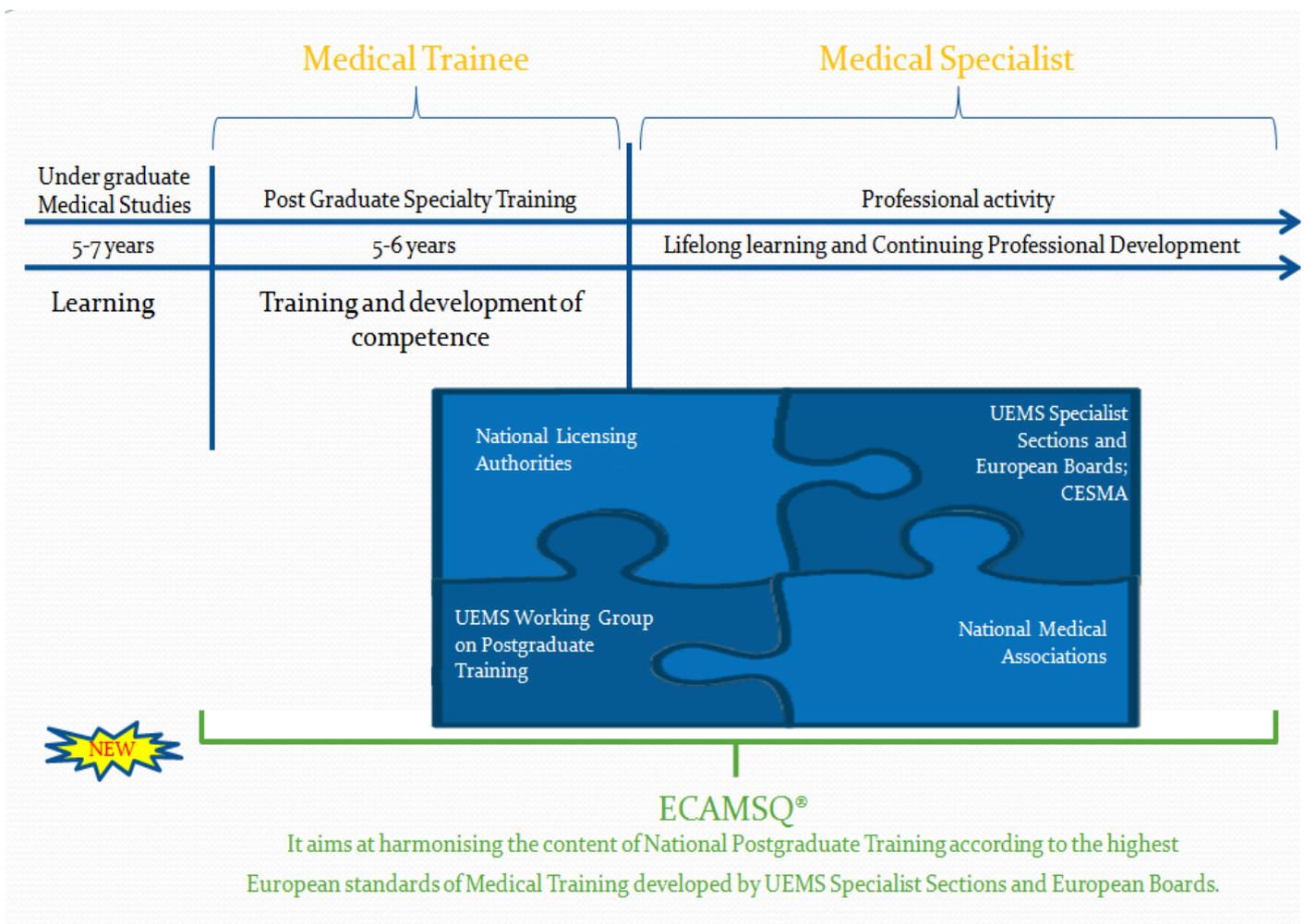
1. The existing European exams

Several specialties within the UEMS have already initiated a European examination for medical trainees at the end of their post graduate studies.

The ECAMSQ® aims to take advantage from such initiatives in order to develop a broader and integrated framework for the assessment and certification of medical specialist competence. As with the accreditation of CME activities through the EACCME®, the ECAMSQ® intends to bridge the national training programmes and the European examinations in order to facilitate the recognition of medical training across Europe.

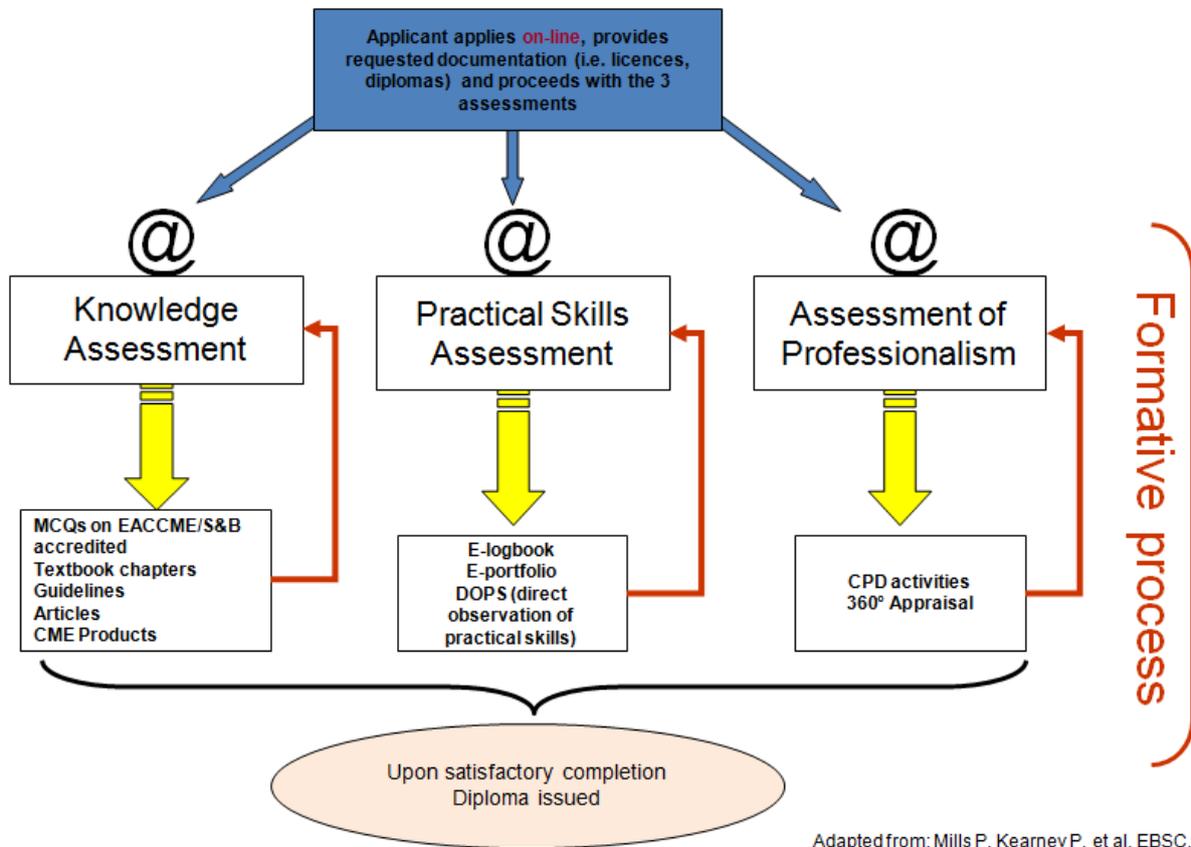
2. The added value of ECAMSQ®

The ECAMSQ® is not intended to supersede the sovereignty of national competent authorities in their essential role of training Medical doctors nor create a new layer of bureaucracy but rather harmonise to the upper the content of medical training for the benefit of patients across Europe.



The ECAMSQ® aims at assessing medical specialists' competence through the evaluation of their Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism on the basis of European-harmonised standards of medical training and in close collaboration with national authorities.

How to assess medical competence?



Adapted from: Mills P, Kearney P, et al. EBSC, 2008

Ultimately, the ECAMSQ® will enable European medical specialists to move freely from one country to another all over Europe while bringing the necessary guarantees to the Member States' authorities with regard to the moving doctors' competence.

IV. The Tool

The ECAMSQ® will use an electronic platform to support the assessment of medical competence. This platform will enable each medical specialist to have an online portfolio in which his/her training will be recorded step by step. Each medical trainee whose competence is assessed through ECAMSQ® will have access to online educational materials and be able perform formative and certificative tests thus improving his/her training.

Trainers will have an online record of the achieved progresses of the trainee they are in charge of. The personalised monitoring and the general overview of medical training will contribute to the improvement of post graduate training. Updated content will remain available for recognised Medical Specialists thus contributing to Continuing Professional Development and a secured access will be provided so as to integrate CME/CPD activities in the platform. The e-platform will therefore work as an e-portfolio tracking medical competence throughout the whole career of medical specialist.