

European Specialty Exit Exams: An idealist's dream or a necessity?

Arthur Felice

Head, Postgraduate Training Programme

Malta

Malta is so small!



'Big' Countries'



Relatively big or Relatively small



Need for European Exit Exams

- 'Big' States
(Professional mobility;
assurance of standards;
patient safety)
- Small States
(Critical mass;
Quality Assurance; Equity)
- A particular specialty
- All specialties

Applicable to:

- All States
- All Specialties

=

Europe as a harmonized area for
Postgraduate Medical Specialist Training

.....in the interest of.....

- Harmonization
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Maintenance of standards
- Equity
- Professional mobility with safeguards
- Patient safety

What is an Exit Exam?

- Leads to eligibility for CCST (but not automatic conferment), having completed the training programme and satisfied all the requirements of the relevant Curriculum
- Provides supporting evidence for Specialist Registration
- Eligibility for independent practice
- Not automatically a licence to work in any EU state (*Glasgow Declaration: Appendix 1; point 3*)

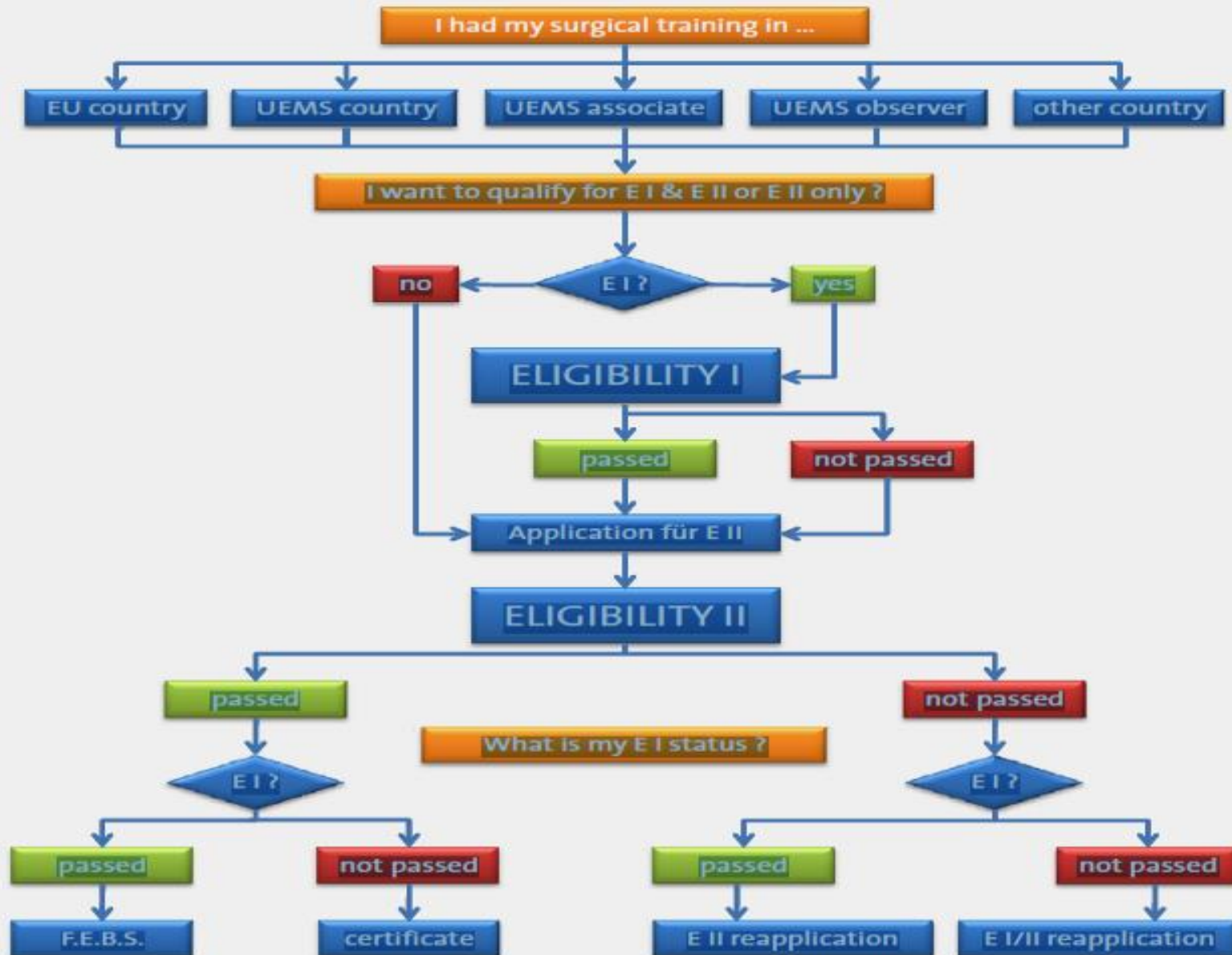
Content of Exam

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

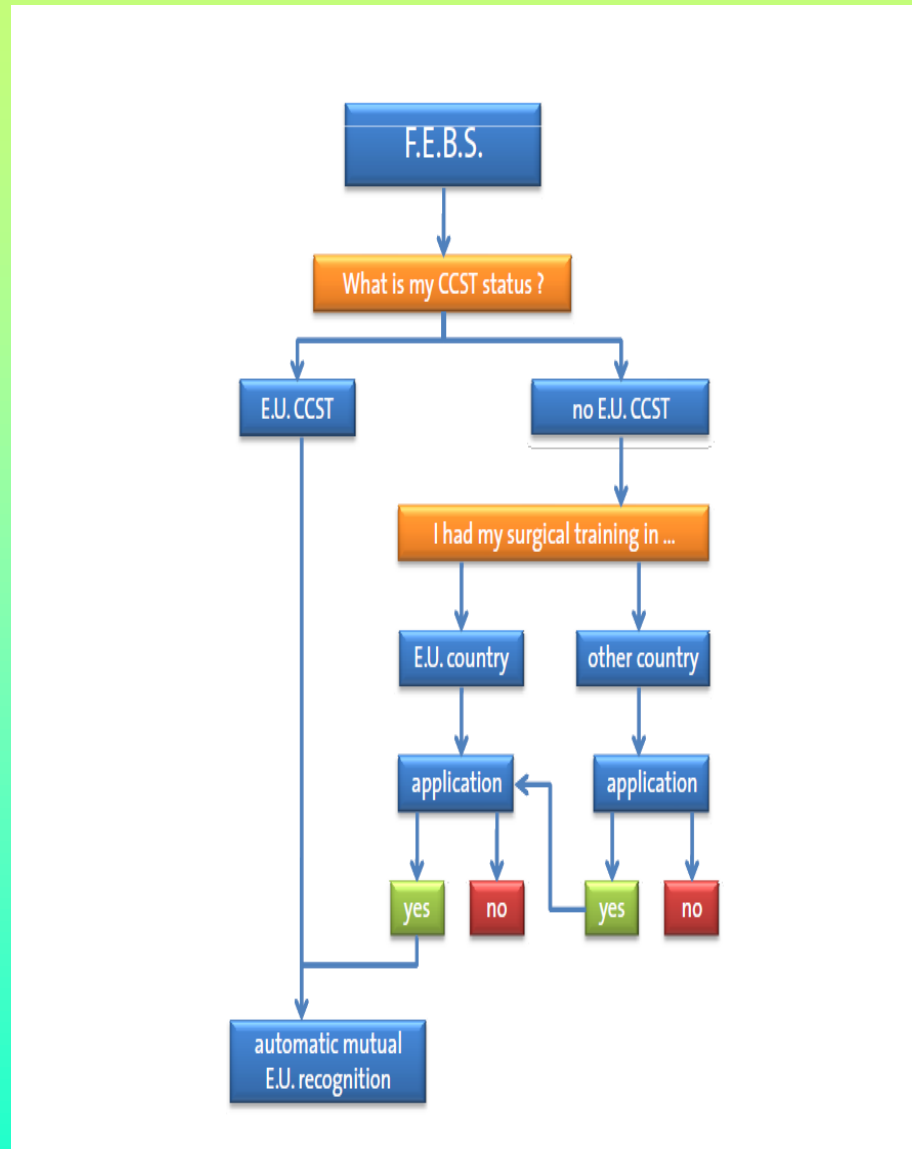
Requirements

- Clear exam regulations
- Sufficient resources to support the assessment
- Compliance with legislation, data protection and equal opportunities
- Quality Assurance
- Potential for Quality improvement
- Consistency of approach across and within the various specialties
- Review and Appeals procedures

Example: EBSQ Decision Making 1 (Feil, W.)



EBSQ Decision Making 2 (Feil, W.)



.....in line with.....

The Glasgow Declaration (CESMA 2007)

What can help?

- Eligibility criteria: 1. Clear
2. Unequivocal
- Curriculum: Competence based rather than number based
- Syllabus: Flexibility is necessary – reasons
(How much flexibility?)

Problems

- **Technical:**
 1. Language
 2. Diverse emphasis and attitudes

- **Political:**
 1. Euro-scepticism
 2. Neo-nationalism
 3. Defeatist attitudes

Solutions

- **Language:**
 1. Lingua franca e.g. English
 2. Lingua franca with 'escape clause' i.e. mainly English but with the possibility to use another language, providing translators for the benefit of examiners and quality controllers
 3. Any language, with translators (already adopted)
 4. Leaving it to the Sections of the various Specialties to decide (Passing the buck)

- Diverse emphasis:**
1. Correct degree of flexibility
 2. Competence based assessments

Competence-based Assessment Form: Criteria

Four sections each involving several elements:

- **I Overall professional capability and patient care**
- **II Knowledge and judgement**
- **III Quality of Response**
- **IV Bedside manners – related to the clinical part of the Examination**

Proposed developments

- European based and validated e-Learning and e-Assessment programmes
- Central electronic data collection and evaluation of Continuous Assessment results and progress, with feedback (an E-Portfolio)
- Adequate funding for evaluation and certification of training centres

Pan-European professional improvement depends on....

- Innovation
- Participation by member states

Future stages: Science fiction?

Stages:

1. Establishing and consolidating Exit Exams in all specialties
2. All National Authorities to recognize European Postgraduate Qualifications
3. All National Authorities to abandon their National Exit Exam in favour of the European one.
4. Convergence with the Bologna Process three cycles, with the development of a separate rail in the Third Cycle (i.e. the one leading to a Doctorate), adapted for the longer period of Postgraduate Medical Training

Modified Bologna Process

- 1st Cycle : 3 years – Leading to a Bachelor's degree in Medical Sciences (Undergraduate)
- 2nd Cycle: 2 to 3 years – Leading to a Master's degree (graduation as a 'doctor')
- 3rd Cycle: 3 years – Leading to a Doctorate. (Postgraduate)
- The European Postgraduate Medical Training Programme, which would be a much longer process, could be grafted on to the 3rd Cycle as a separate rail – leading to the European Specialty Board Qualification

Leads to a *real*.....

European Higher Education Area

Is all this possible?

Yes, Europe can!

We do not need another.....



....only vision, good will and expertise: The UEMS

The School of Athens by Raffaello Sanzio (early 1500's)



Thank you!