



GUIDELINE ON EXAMINER SELECTION FOR EUROPEAN POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS

UEMS 2015/17

Adopted by UEMS Council 10/04/2015	UEMS-CESMA Guideline	UEMS-CESMA
Authors: Zeev Goldik, Danny G.P. Mathysen, Jean-Baptiste Rouffet, Alfred Tenore, Vassilios Papalois, Owen Sparrow		



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary	3
Vacancies	4
Selection procedures	5
New examiners	6
Routine review of examiners	6
Confidentiality of examiners	6
Conflict of interest	7
Advantages and disadvantages of oral assessment	8
Advantages of oral assessment	8
Disadvantages of oral assessment	8
“Doves” and “hawks”	9
Related documents	10



GLOSSARY

Examinership term: The standard duration of appointment for examiners

Dismissal: The removal of an examiner following a decision of council

Extension: An increase in the duration of a standard examinership term

Re-appointment: Either the appointment of an examiner who has retired within the previous two years for a further specified number of years, or the appointment of a former examiner to a second full term

Resignation: The departure of an examiner at his/her request before the end of his/her full term of office

Retirement: The departure of an examiner at the end of his/her term of office

Stand down: A period of one academic year during which an examiner is prospectively excused from all duties.



VACANCIES

The *Council for European Medical Specialist Assessments* (UEMS-CESMA) advises the Boards and Sections that are organising European postgraduate medical assessments to publish the vacancies for examinership. The following essential criteria are to be considered:

- An examiner shall normally be a Fellow of the Board or Section;
- An examiner shall be in good standing with the profession;
- Examiner applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the **competence**, **confidence** and **credibility** to assess the next generation of specialists;
- An examiner shall currently be **active** in clinical practice;
- An examiner can demonstrate active involvement in the **education of trainees**;
- An examiner needs good written and verbal **communication skills**;
- An examiner needs to have the ability to work as **part of a team**;
- An examiner needs to display a **long-term commitment** to the role of examiner.

If possible, the following desirable criteria can be included within the published criteria for vacancies:

- An examiner shall demonstrate (a) special interest(s) directly relevant to the balance of expertise required in the board of examiners;
- An examiner shall have visited one or more assessments within a period to be decided.

When the European postgraduate medical assessment is organised at multiple venues, criteria should be set on whether examiners are expected to assess candidates at different



venues or at a single venue.



SELECTION PROCEDURES

After the closing date for examiner applications (as published in the vacancies), the Examination Committee will compile a list of applicants who meet the criteria. Applicants that are rejected at this stage shall be informed in writing of the reasons and, if appropriate, shall be invited to re-apply when they become eligible.

The Chairperson of the Examination Committee will ask individual Examination Committee members to make enquiries about specific applicants from council members, regional advisors (e.g. national delegates) and educational tutors who know the applicants.

At a subsequent meeting, the Examination Committee shall confirm **how many new examiners must be appointed** to bring the Board or Section up to strength for the following academic year. They are then to select on merit new examiners for appointment. Factors that may influence the selection criteria for examiners, include:

- Geographic distribution;
- Linguistic skills;
- Special interest(s) directly relevant to the European postgraduate medical assessment;
- Clinical versus academic;
- Leadership considerations.



New examiners

New examiners are normally appointed subject to a probationary period. No new examiner shall take up his/her appointment until he/she has successfully completed a period of training (probationary period).

During this probationary period the relevant Board or Section shall **assess** each new examiner's performance and recommend to the Examination Committee whether the examiner should:

- **be confirmed** in appointment;
- **continue as a probationer** for a specified period; or
- **not be confirmed** in his/her appointment.

Routine review of examiners

At the end of every academic year the Examination Committee shall review the performance of **all** examiners. Examiners whose performance is considered to be unsatisfactory, may be:

- **reviewed again** after a further period determined by the Examination Committee, possibly with a requirement for further training;
- **asked to resign**; or
- **dismissed**.

Confidentiality of examiners

Examiners are expected to support the European postgraduate medical assessment by **developing questions** for use in this assessment (either in a written or in an oral



component). Such questions are **to be kept strictly confidential** and must under no circumstances be used in other situations or courses or books as such use would inevitably compromise the fairness and impartiality of the examination.

Conflict of interest

There is a clear **conflict of interest** in being an examiner at the same time as managing or playing an equally significant role in a local **examination preparation** course or the writing of **revision textbooks**.



ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ORAL ASSESSMENT

Advantages of oral assessment

Oral assessment mirrors the oral form of communication that dominates professional medical practice, while being able to test the limits of knowledge and understanding. In this way, oral assessment is an effective way of assessing cognitive processes, interpersonal competence and interpersonal qualities.

In contrast to a written form of assessment, oral assessment displays the quality of being flexible, and therefore clinical competences and higher order cognitive skills that cannot be assessed with written assessment, can be assessed by oral assessment.

Disadvantages of oral assessment

There are several disadvantages to be considered when oral assessment is concerned. First of all, oral assessment is resource intensive. Secondly, during oral assessment judgements will be made on the basis of limited evidence, which in case of appeal may be troublesome without written evidence to justify the marks given. Furthermore, examiners will need to be able to distinguish between what a candidate says and how it is being said. Candidates may display performance-inhibiting stress, which may lead to underestimation by the examiners and which may lead to poor agreement between examiners.

In contrast to a written form of assessment, oral assessments are expensive to organise,



require complex logistics and are very time consuming.

“Doves” and “hawks”

It is important for the Examination Committee to identify **potential extreme examiners**, i.e. examiners whose average score was more than **three standard deviations** above (potential “dove”) or below (potential “hawk”) the average score for all remaining examiners.



RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Mathysen D.G.P., Rouffet J.B., Tenore A., Papalois V., Sparrow O., Goldik Z. (2015).
Guideline for the organisation of European postgraduate medical assessments.
UEMS-CESMA Publication
- Papalois V., Goldik Z., Mathysen D.G.P., Rouffet J.B., Tenore A., Sparrow O. (2015).
Guideline for the quality control on behalf of UEMS-CESMA of European postgraduate
medical assessments. UEMS-CESMA Publication (2nd edition)
- Tenore A., Mathysen D.G.P., Mills P., Westwood M., Rouffet J.B., Papalois V., Sparrow
O., Goldik Z. (2015). A guide to successfully writing MCQs: executive summary. UEMS-
CESMA Publication (2nd edition)
- Sparrow O., Mathysen D.G.P., Rouffet J.B., Tenore A., Papalois V., Goldik Z. (2015).
Guideline on appeal procedures for European postgraduate medical assessments.
UEMS-CESMA Publication
- Boorman J., Mathysen D.G.P., Noël J.L., Bloch K., Rouffet J.B., Tenore A., Papalois V.,
Sparrow O., Goldik Z. (2014). Survey on European postgraduate medical assessments by
the Council for European Specialist Medical Assessments (UEMS-CESMA). *MedEd
Publish* 3 (42), 1-4
- Mathysen D.G.P., Goldik Z. (2015). On the quality control and importance of European
postgraduate medical assessments. *Medical Teacher*
- Royal College of Anaesthetists (2014). Primary and final FRCA examinations (selection
and appointment of examiners) regulations. [http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/system/files/EXM-
APPT-2014_1.pdf](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/system/files/EXM-APPT-2014_1.pdf)



UEMS-CESMA
European Council of Specialist Medical Assessments

Rue de l'Industrie, 24 – B-1040 Brussels – Belgium

