



# The Council for European Specialist Medical Assessment (CESMA – UEMS)

*Association internationale sans but lucratif International non-profit organisation*

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## CESMA Spring Meeting Minutes and Notes

**13th – 14th May 2022, Venice (Italy)**

### Day 1

#### **Introduction President & introduction of delegates**

Professor Westwood opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to the first in-person meeting following the height of pandemic-related travel and meetings restrictions.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Professor Parigi presented his report

He proposed that:

- o Membership fees would be deducted directly from Section accounts by UEMS.
- o Appraisal fees would similarly be deducted directly by UEMS
- o He proposed that this would be discussed further and be the subject of a vote at the next meeting

#### **Presentation of the final analysis of the CESMA survey on the future of European Examinations in the post-COVID 19 era**

As an introduction to the session, Professor Parigi presented an update to the survey undertaken among delegates to CESMA on their perception of the manner in which exams would develop as the lockdowns consequent to the COVID pandemic are lifted.

In the following discussion, there was an increasing realisation that despite the risks and dangers of remotely delivered exams, these are now becoming embedded as accepted practice.

Candidates welcomed the ease and reduced travel / accommodation costs.

Examiners were concerned about security and validity. They were also concerned that remotely delivered examinations resulted in a high risk of the leakage of the whole examination word-for-word and effectively fatally undermined the re-use of questions from year to year, and fatally undermined their use as anchor questions as part of the standard-setting process.

#### **Where do people see their exams compared to pre-COVID – Setting the scene for delivering exams in post-COVID era**

Presentations were made by Dr Mifsud (microbiology) and Dr Durkan (endocrinology) with their experience with development of the delivery of their examinations.

#### **Challenges of setting exams: the MCQ**

Following presentations by Professor Parigi and Professor Westwood, the following points were made:

- o Clarity over the legal entity that owns the exam is needed. Is this a commercial organisation, UEMS (Section or Board) or scientific society?

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- o In order to come under the UEMS-CESMA umbrellas, the examination itself should be under the direct control of UEMS. It appears that some examinations are run by commercial organisations. Should CESMA appraise such examinations? Does UEMS require legal consultancy to resolve this?
  - o In examinations co-organised by a UEMS body with a scientific society, it is essential that there is clarity over the ownership of the questions.

When developing a contract with a commercial examination provider, it is essential that it is made clear to the provider who owns the question bank, so as to enable transfer of the question database to another provider

- o Question writers should be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- o Onsite exams are easy to invigilate, but are expensive for candidates (travel / accommodation).
- o Costs for setting up and running remotely delivered examinations are high and this is not immediately obvious to candidates.
- o Security is a major concern and cheating is extremely easy.

### **Considerations when developing a new MCQ-style examination**

- **What to look for in a provider**
  - o **Logistics of applications**
  - o **Arrangements for exam delivery**
  - o **Security arrangements**
- **Question writing**
  - o **Setting up exam writing groups**
  - o **Setting up standard setting**

Dr Durkan chaired a session that discussed the features to be considered when identifying a partner to support a new examination. The following points were made:

- o There should be consistency within exams with respect to the questions types, eg SBAs with clear clinical stems, EMQs, etc. The software must support the question types selected.
- o Careful consideration to be taken whether negative marking should be used as it has been argued that it favours risk-taking males, although more recent work has cast some doubt on this.
- o While building MCQs, some questions are needed to assess basic level of knowledge, others are needed to differentiate the good from excellent candidates
- o Software packages should have the capacity to produce statistical analysis of questions.
- o Standards are in existence that could be used for the development of examinations: ISO17024 and MCCAs. First, they forbade online exams, and afterwards they both came up with guidance on what to put in the contract with providers. They both make available templates of contracts.

### **Remote appraisal of the exam process: challenges & advantages**

Professor Mathysen delivered his presentation

### **Delivery of clinical examinations: experience in Orthopaedics**

Professor Jorge Minero delivered his presentation

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## **Day 2**

Professor Westwood opened the second day of the meeting

### **Update on EACCME**

Professor Wetwood and Dr Durkan provided the following update:

- o Importance of recognition of work involved in preparation of exam noted; EACCME credits can be claimed.
- o Number of credits will be dependent on time spent on exam preparation at a rate of 1 hour = 1 CME credit
- o Activities include drafting questions, reviewing questions in bank and standard setting.
- o Quality assurance from CESMA representatives suggested to EACCME
- o A simplified application process has been with CME credits awarded on central receipt of the list of question development participants, without a requirement to submit full documentation individually. The process would be optional until 2026.
- o It has been proposed that the cost of EACCME accreditation for all exam contributors would be built into the examination fee costing structure.

### **Presentations by Providers**

#### **Provider 1: European Board of Radiology**

**Contact details: Violeta Iranzo <[Violeta.Iranzo@myebr.org](mailto:Violeta.Iranzo@myebr.org)>**

Belongs to the European Society of Radiology that provides training and assessments. Works in collaboration with the UEMS Section of Radiology and other UEMS bodies.

Have an examination platform, MCQ format exam:

- o Questions can be uploaded manually into the system; bulk import is possible.
- o There is no approval process for the questions.
- o Questions can be categorized and filtered on this basis.

Costs:

- o Dependent on the services chosen.
- o The cheapest is a licence for 1 year for the platform with a training for €6,500.

Everything is done by the client. Automatic bulk import of MCQ questions not included

- o Alternatively, EBR can provide a full service

Statistical analysis

- o The package includes the capacity to provide a statistical analysis of the whole question paper and individual questions.
- o Questions can be excluded and the analysis re-run.

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## **Provider 2: Orzone**

### **Contact details: XXX**

- o Orzone are happy to facilitate diverse Sections / Boards to work together to achieve cost savings.
- o Orzone uses Microsoft's AI services during exam registration and during the proctoring of the examination itself. For example, the system can measure pupillary movements and facial movements to provide real-time invigilation. The system records all behaviour factors during the exam.
- o With respect to exams run in different languages, the software supports a huge collection of questions in many different languages.

Some of the latest research actually says that the exams in different languages should be treated as separate exams, or as subgroups to analyse them separately or altogether.

## **Provider 3: Fry IT - Questions/Answers**

### **Contact details: Will Garnett <Will@fry-it.com>**

- o The services provided are very flexible. There is a basic license and standard prices for each component.
- o The services are very flexible. Agreements can be made with an organisation that run multiple examinations, with a minimum pricing at entry level. For example, the company works with a College that runs 60 exams, some of which having as few as 10 candidates.
- o Exams that comprise multiple steps, eg OSCE or vivas can be integrated and aggregated.
- o Remote exam delivery can be done in different ways, dependent on the organisation's philosophy on risk.
- o The system can support oral examinations, providing scheduling of candidates and timing of rotations, all done automatically.
- o In oral examinations, the system allows marking of different scenarios in different manners.

## **Provider 4: RCPI**

### **Contact:**

- o RCPI is a non-profit charity organization, with 29 specialties, training across six faculties.
- o RCPI are here representing technical executive expertise from within the Royal College for supporting exams. We're here as a service provider.
- o While RCPI runs national speciality examinations, in the context of exam provision to third parties, RCPI provide an examination solution to include full governance.
- o On line exam delivery is done in partnership with an established external company.

An independent company was commissioned to do a full audit of the security system to ensure that it was secure, and that's something that we'll be periodically renewing. This technology is evolving all the time.

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## **Provider 5: CYIM**

**Contact: Florentin Thubert ,f.thubert@cyim.com>**

- o Exams can be delivered remotely or on-site
- o For on-site exams, iPads are provided to the candidates to take the exam.
- o For exams delivered remotely, a mock exam platform is provided to enable candidates to test their system. This helps reduce the risk of exam collapse.
- o After the exam, CYIM provides each candidate's responses and some additional information in an Excel file for further analysis in an external psychometric package.

## **Update on European Board Examination in Orthopaedics: a 3 part examination**

Professor Jorge Minero delivered his presentation

## **Next meeting: December 2022 in Brussels, date to be confirmed**

Suggested topics to include:

- o Training in appraisals
- o Training in question writing or question review
- o Workshop on managing the failing candidate and appeals

The Executive invites attendees to offer a venue for 2023, and subsequent years.