

Appendix 12 - Assessment

Several definitions are possible, here are two:

— A measurement of particular attributes at a particular point in time

A measurement of achievements of progress towards meeting defined educational objectives.

Formative Assessment - designed to inform learners about their progress towards achieving mastery of the course. Usually involves **feedback** as an integral part of the teaching and learning.

See later for advice on how to give feedback.

Summative Assessment - is an assessment designed to make a decision about the candidates suitability to progress to the next stage e.g. from phase IV student to Foundation Year 1 doctor

Students really prefer assessment with a formative component

In 2002 Duffield et al asked students about the purpose of assessment (in an ideal world) they ranked the following from high to low

1. Ensuring competence
2. Providing feedback
3. Evaluating the curriculum
4. Guiding student learning
5. Predicting performance as a doctor

Of these only 1 and 5 of these are summative; 2, 3, and 4 are all formative. Students like assessment to have at least a formative component s this allows them to grow and learn especially where complex behaviours are concerned as in medicine ¹

Competencies - individual defined aspects of competence that can be learned and assessed

OSCE – Objective Structured Clinical Examination - is an assessment format that is used frequently in health professional training that combines several test methods and assesses a range of different competencies - particularly clinical and communication skills. It is not in itself a test method.

Rating Scale – Used in assessments - an aid to structured marking. Two kinds a semantic scale (excellent, very good, satisfactory, borderline, unsatisfactory) and numeric Likert Scales (1-2-3-4-5)

A Global Rating Scale is a simple scale that asks assessors to assess overall performance. With experienced examiners this can be as reliable as more detailed methods

Standard Setting – Process by which pass scores for each item and test in the assessment are set on the basis of a required level of performance – without reference to the scores of candidates. Ideally individual items have model answers developed at the time of writing the question and are agreed by some sort of consensus process.

Criterion- referenced (absolute standard) assessment – an external process that determines estimates of candidate performance and sets the pass mark. As a result the proportion of candidates passing may vary each time that assessment is taken.