



CESMA MEETING

5 December 2020

9.30 - 13.30 CET

Meeting held online

- DRAFT MINUTES -

OPEN MEETING

Examinations in the times of COVID – Dr Maeve Durkan

Dr Westwood explained that the idea behind these presentations was to take a bit of reflection from this year and try to learn from each other and work out what CESMA will work on in the future.

Dr Durkan explained that experiences from different specialties will be presented, also representing a broad spectrum in terms of challenges. We wanted to present the reality of delivering exams in these challenging times.

There were several presentations from Sections and Boards running on-line / remote examinations. The presenters were the following:

- Dr Chris Plummer, European Board of Cardiology
- Dr Gerrard Philips, Royal College of Physicians
- Prof. Jan Kuks, European Board of Neurology
- Dr Ruth Brown, European Board of Emergency Medicine
- Dr Robert Ross Russell, European Board of Paediatrics
- Prof. Laura Oleaga, European Diploma in Radiology
- Prof. Christina Grupcheva, European Board of Ophthalmology

In general, it was noted that the majority of candidates seemed to be fine with these new systems, although they were not used to it. Several technical and security issues happened (e.g. the loss of questions), they were quickly fixed depending on the IT provider. The issue of cheating also arose, as it was experienced during the exams in two Sections / Boards.

Mark Westwood (Cardiology)
President

Albert Mifsud (Medical Microbiology)
General Secretary

Danny Mathysen (University of Antwerp)
Appraisals Liaison Officer

Maeve Durkan (Endocrinology)
Vice President

Gian Battista Parigi (Paediatric Surgery)
Treasurer

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Overall, these were quite positive experiences. They were try-outs, so will also be improved for future sessions.

Appraisal Lead: Challenges of appraisal process – Dr Danny Mathysen

Dr Mathysen explained that the fact that online examinations were organized instead of regular live ones does not mean that CESMA is lowering its standards. The appraisal system as it is now does need some modifications however. They are now looking into new methods with the help of several scientific societies. UEMS appraisal 3.0. will come after the pandemic. Dr Mathysen added that we welcome input and suggestions to improve our work as well.

To cheat or not to cheat: that is NOT a question – Prof GB Parigi

Prof. Parigi made a presentation on the cheating issue for remote examinations.

One of the presentations described the issues they faced in their exam, during which a candidate started filming the exam. He was excluded from the exam because they have very strict rules on the matter. The question is what else can be done? According to rules of the jurisdiction in which the exam took place, this candidate should lose his license. Is there any UEMS legal proposition on this?

Mr Daval explained that UEMS Sections are part of UEMS, so all legal and financial issues need to be brought to the Brussels office. We started seeking legal advice on the matter, our legal advisor is familiar with our functioning and will provide guidance very soon.

Mr Daval reported that as of now, there are two cases regarding cheating, including the case just referred to. Both are being reviewed by the UEMS lawyer. As a first step, all conditions and rules of the exam need to be very specific to avoid such issues. Mr Daval added that legal advising is quite costly, paid by the Section, and it can take time.

What would be needed is a document covering all the issues that may be encountered during an exam so it can be reported to our legal advisor who can be better prepared for future issues. As of now, we are working on a case-by-case basis, there is no general UEMS rule on this.

It was suggested to set up a CESMA working group on that kind of topic to prepare one document covering all possible issues.

Other Sections explained that they also experienced cheating issues. A question that arose was the reporting to governing bodies. In that specific case they did not, because it was not stated in their rules and conditions that such reporting would happen. The candidate was still excluded from the exam. Dr Felice (Surgery) added that the rules regarding cheating and sanctions need to be very clearly stated, and these steps will be followed.

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Dr Ramos (Medical Genetics) said that it would be good to have guidelines regarding contracts as well as advices for new exams. This could be very helpful. There could perhaps be a discussion on the pros and cons of providers that other Sections work with. This could be a discussion to take place during the closed part of the meeting. Dr Westwood explained that there is no preferred provider, and there will not be, because there are different exams and therefore different needs.

Dr Ross Russell (Paediatrics) suggested to have a centralized UEMS database with the names of candidates who passed, who failed, who were caught cheating.

As a summary, it was agreed that CESMA should look into the issue of cheating to come up with a common policy. It would be good to have a harmonized approach. Commercial providers could also be included so the technical part can also adapt.

Close

Dr Westwood thanked all attendees for this fruitful meeting with lots of good discussion. Hopefully we'll be able to meet in 2021.