

UCAN: 10 years of experience in cooperative medical assessment

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Background:

In order to face the future challenges in medical assessment, institutions have to cooperate more intensively. 10 years ago, UCAN was formed as such an interinstitutional cooperation. Today 60 schools and boards from 7 countries work closely together to share their knowledge, to combine and optimize their resources and to engage in collaborative research.

Summary of work:

In 2006, UCAN developed the ItemManagementSystem as a web-based platform for the authoring, sharing and reviewing of items and exams. Since 2007, exams can be delivered on computers or on scanner-readable sheets. Exams can be evaluated with test statistical analysis and graded with customizable algorithms. In 2010, a Simulated Patients Database was added to administer the SP programs (role management, billing). Since 2012, OSCEs and since 2014 MCQ exams can be delivered on tablets.

Summary of results:

More than 220.000 items were added by 6,000 colleagues. Best practice examples for reliable exams, assessment content and workflows are collected and used at the partner institutions. New item- and exam formats are continuously developed. So far, over 4 million students were assessed successfully in 12,300 exams.

Conclusions:

10 years of cooperation in a collaborative network has proven to be an efficient way to face new challenges in medical assessment. Especially with the future requirements in the assessment of competencies, close tie-ups are highly recommendable.

Take-home message:

Assessment institutions should work together in order to tackle common challenges. 10 years of successful cooperation at UCAN proves this approach to be both innovative and feasible.