

## External benchmarking of UNSW Exercise Physiology OSCE

### Feedback on OSCEs



**Matthew Jones**

To:  Kate Edwards

Monday, 12 February 2018 at 9:16 am

Hi Kate,

Hope you had a nice weekend. I was wondering if you could provide me with some feedback on what you thought of our OSCEs last week, either from your observations or from what the students told you when you chatted to them? For example, are there things we did well, not well, and how do you think it could be improved?

Regards,

**Matthew Jones PhD, AEP**

*Associate Lecturer, Department of Exercise Physiology, School of Medical Sciences, UNSW Medicine  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, The Kirby Institute, UNSW Medicine*


### RE: Feedback on OSCEs



**Kate Edwards <kate.edwards@sydney.edu.au>**

To:  Matthew Jones

Monday, 12 February 2018 at 12:40 pm

 You replied to this message on 12/2/18, 12:44 pm.

Hi Matt,

Thank you – I very much appreciated the opportunity. My overall impressions that I'll be taking to our teaching leadership is that the OSCE works really well to support the development of communication practise and skills, and I'd like us to be able to add it, or a smaller version, somehow. I think our use of Case defence's valuably targets a different part of EP skill sets, but if we could balance it more we should.

It was interesting that several of the students already knew that USyd students don't have the OSCE from discussions meeting each other at placements!

Student feedback:

- Stressful but good – reminds you of all the things you've learnt during the degree
- All of them said they had to revise a lot as the skills weren't what they've been doing on placement – relatedly they told me that on placement they almost never did an initial consult, so it was good to have to do an 'intro' many times over in the OSCE.
- They found several of the stations really rushed – felt they were compromising their approach by trying to fit everything in.
- A couple said they though the OSCE was much better than an exam as they got to show their ability 'as a person relating to another person'
- They gambled on the disease group for the education sessions being Osteoporosis and T2D from history, so concentrated revision there.

My thoughts.

- The real clients you bring in are fantastic to add veracity for the exam
- The emphasis on communication is great, but I was surprised that use of lay language wasn't encouraged more.
- Not checking accuracy – eg BP readings, I guess that's a decision to focus on communication?
- I watched a few of the anthropometry measures being taken and noticed students didn't ask clients to breathe in for height, and squeezing the tape in for waist, but I don't know what feedback they got on those.
- Having many markers, and especially different markers on the same station makes moderation incredibly important, I don't know exactly how you managed that. Do you provide 'exemplar video's to students / staff for example? I also thought the amount of written feedback varied a lot between staff, but me talking to them during the next 'reading time' might have been causing that.
- Students didn't get any feedback (although I think someone said they could ask at the end of the station?) Using the ipad marking system means that it should be easy to give immediate feedback to students - if they are asking for that!
- Overall I'm impressed that you can find allocation of time in the workload for an hour per student of assessment time!

If you'd like to talk about any of these or if we have any resources (like the video rubrics / feedback errors sheets) we use that you might find helpful I'm more than happy to share.

I'm hoping that we can develop our plans to 'swap assessors' for oral/ practical exams in future so I'll hopefully see you again soon.

Best regards

Kate

## External benchmarking of USyd Practical Exam



### External exams



● **Kate Edwards** <kate.edwards@sydney.edu.au>

Monday, 8 October 2018 at 4:41 pm

To: ● Helen O'Connor; ● Matthew Jones

↩ You replied to this message on 9/10/18, 10:30 am.

Hi Helen and Matt,

Thanks so much for your collaboration today, I know it's above normal duties and it is appreciated.

I didn't want to disrupt today more as it's long already, but I would like to ask you both to send me an email summary of your thoughts, general and specific, that today's discussions have prompted. I'll be collating these along with those from other staff taking part in this external examination pilot to form part of our discussions moving forward.

Thanks again

**Kate**



## RE: External exams



🕒 Matthew Jones

Tuesday, 9 October 2018 at 10:30 am

To: Kate Edwards; Helen O'Connor

Hi **Kate** and Helen,

Thank you both again for having me along yesterday, I hope I didn't disrupt things too much.

I thought overall the session ran very well and the standard of the students was quite good. As I mentioned the stations are a little different to what we test our second years on in their equivalent prac exam (rest and exercise BP, rest and exercise HR, submax aerobic test, ECG, wingate, VO2max setup and interpretation, blood lactate) but I appreciate that this is because your subject is more nutrition based and they get tested on the other skills at other times throughout the program.

I tended to find students did a little better on the blood station than the resting metabolic station and that they finished the blood station a bit earlier as well (usually 8 minutes or so). Speaking with Nathan briefly that seemed to be his impression too. I thought the marking criteria for the metabolic station was quite detailed and specific which made it easier to discern between the better and worse students but this was a bit harder to do for the bloods station. For example, there was a range of standards in terms of explaining the procedures and obtaining informed consent, but pretty much all students got the mark regardless as long as they did it. I didn't get to see the anthropometry station but having watched the videos I think you definitely hold your students to a higher standard than we do ours in terms of obtaining skinfolds. The marking criteria for that station also looked quite specific and detailed so I think Ryan was able to easily judge the better and worse students.

I was also wondering whether the students get a chance to practice on metabolic carts at all (if not in your course then in any other ones)?

Overall, I think it was a good exam and as I discussed with both of you yesterday it's good to see an emphasis on the practical skills but it was also good that small bits of theory were included in each station too.

Thanks,  
Matt



## RE: External exams



o Helen O'Connor <helen.oconnor@sydney.edu.au>

Tuesday, 9 October 2018 at 2:45 pm

To: Matthew Jones; Kate Edwards

Hi **Kate** and Matthew

Firstly thanks to you Matthew for assisting us with the exam. It's a long day. I concur with the level of difficulty that you have raised. Sorry if the response below is a little rambling but I am just thinking it out.

I agree that the students found it easier to work the blood and Usg etc than the gas station. One of the reasons for 'packaging up' the gas or the 'blood' station as they are is the need for use of protective gear with the 'blood'. Given the staffing and time of prac classes we just do not have time for them to do all 4 stations. At least those allocated to the 'blood' station did the excel sheet (during the paper test) and comment on some theory questions for the gas, I did this to try and even it up.

I will however look at the marking criteria for the 'blood' station and see if I can break it down more to help split out the level of students better

I want students all to do the anthrop as this is unique to the nutrition unit and I think we teach this to a good standard but not clearly to the standard where they can get ISAK certification. I used to provide ISAK certification when we had 3 h practical classes most weeks, also then run practical exams to ISAK standard but our teaching time decreased and it was huge load I could not continue, especially when student numbers increased.

I think I could skip the paper test and get them to do the anthrop, gas and 'blood only so it's all practical. The paper test does however help with their capacity to manipulate data from the pracs that I am not testing in the final exam but I could go back to the way I previously did the final exam and examine some of the practical data manipulation there.

We could add an additional skill and test 3 of the 4 skills at the 'blood' station to even the time and make it a little more comprehensive.

We could test all practical skills:

- Anthrop in 8 mins
- Gas 12 mins
- Blood 10 mins to blood (with the additional skill or even all 4 skills tested at the blood station).

It has also been suggested that we collect and test actual blood. It would be a huge expense and students would need to do this in pairs. Some of the students are also a little 'phobic' of having blood tested so we can't force them.

There is another unit in Semester 2, Year 2 that runs practical examinations which includes a number of the skills you test at UNSW and they need to find a participant they can test blood on.

I think your point about metabolic carts is good and I will look into this for next year. I did actually order some ventilated hoods to use for resting metabolic rate attached to a cart but we had some issues getting this to work and I had been away on study and some other leave so it's one of the things still on my to do list.

I think we have improved our running of the nutrition practical skills exam this year but there is still more room to improve and your comments and participation in this is very much appreciated and most helpful

Thanks again

Helen