

Dear students

Thank you so much for your comprehensive and systematic feedback! It will help us to improve the exam and it is sent to all teachers. Your thoughts were collected before you knew the results. I really hope that the censoring will revive your sense of mastering since around 96 % passed in both exams.

Your note addresses several issues of general importance, which I respond to below. You have also a lot of comments and good ideas about specific tasks of great interest for the responsible teachers. I regret being unable to respond in detail to all individual comments.

About OSCE:

- I am happy to see that we agree about the importance of the topics, and the results clearly show that we accounted for stress, lack of experience and varying performance, as promised.
- I really apologize that reminders were not given as intended in some stations. Fortunately, it did not affect the total result for any student. The same applies for the examiners' varying activity in stations with actresses. We will try to streamline this better and introduce stop clocks next semester.
- I should mention that the teachers reported a generally weaker performance in several well-established tasks. We believe you may have been less trained e.g. in structured pediatric history taking and summaries/conclusion of cases, which will be emphasized next semester. We will discuss a summary course in Pediatrics as you suggest. Some teachers believe that lower than usual attendance in bedside teaching and seminars (e.g. in pathology) may have contributed to lower scores.

About the digital exam

- It is impossible to construct a complex examination that perfectly matches the expected variation in characters. Instead, we assume that the students perform equally from year to year and adjust/normalize the results to previous examinations.
- We are obliged to give characters, and there are two main methods to disclose any differences among you:
 - To test knowledge beside the core curriculum. The lectures are meant to guide your studies but do by no mean cover the whole fields. Those who extend their studies will be rewarded.
 - To make the options less clearcut. The "best option" is defined and approved by teachers and previous students, and there may be differences between the answering options that not all of you discovered. You give a several examples yourself, but I leave out the details.
- The psychometry gives a different picture than you might think! We have eliminated some questions that did not work or were badly constructed. Most tasks did however correspond very well with the total result, meaning that a deeper understanding was reflected in the scores.

What should we test..?

Our intention is of course not to give you a bad feeling! Experience shows however that answering options that are not clearly right or wrong cause frustration. I tried my best to prepare you for this in the information beforehand but obviously did not succeed... What you dislike (the structure, not the feelings) is actually intended, even though it affects your sense of mastering. Here are some arguments:

- Some of the basic knowledge is tested at OSCE and omitted in the written exam. Cases with sequential questions will cover only minor parts of the curriculum, thereby introducing a big element of chance. Free text answers have some serious drawbacks. Single questions test broadly and, much more than you might believe, also in depth.
- We want to test your application of knowledge, not just its presence. Therefore, many questions have the form of assessments. And be sure; this will be part of your normal life as a doctor. You will probably discover that most of your patients don't fit with the standards and guidelines! You will have to cook without recipes, as you partly did in this exam...
- The dichotomy of right and wrong is a disturbing illusion that fits badly with daily life, both privately and professionally. Just think of all the things you buy! You choose between alternatives with pros and cons, and they are rarely totally right or totally wrong. You make your decision based on the available information and an evaluation of the totality. This is particularly true for you as physicians at work. Your life will get a better if you avoid the burden of right/wrong-philosophy and instead intend to make the best decision at the given time and conditions. This thinking is integrated in the new forms of examination, and consequently most answering options could be defended in some way.

We take your considerations into account, and I have already mentioned some of the direct consequences.

Again thanks for your feedback! After all, you did very well at the exam, and I wish you all a merry Christmas.

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