



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title:

Supporting Transition to the Workplace through Entrustable Profession
Activities: Student and Tutor Perspectives

Principal Investigator : Katharine Rankin

School / Department : Edinburgh Medical School

Team members : Alan Jaap, Helen Cameron

For further information, please contact:

Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following : nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

What did you do?

Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) are assessments that reflect relevant clinical tasks. Learners are assessed on a scale of how much supervision they require (from observing to acting semi-autonomously). Our research aimed to augment the sparse literature on their validity in undergraduate medical education by providing evidence of their educational impact, feasibility and face validity with final-year medical students.

A large-scale pilot of two EPAs was carried out in 233 final-year medical students. Students completed four of each formative EPA over a 6-week clinical block, with a variety of level of assessor. We then conducted five student focus-groups, in the five main hospitals where students were placed, to explore their views on feasibility, educational impact and whether the purpose was relevant and clear. We were unable to recruit any tutors at this time. These were transcribed and have been analysed thematically.

What did you find out?

Whilst limited to one year group at a single institution this work encompasses a large number of students working in a variety of hospitals and environments. Overall, it appears that it is feasible to use EPAs as a way of assessing final-year medical students on a clinical placement. There was, however, a strong feeling that it was much more difficult to obtain assessments from clinicians who were more senior; they were not felt to know the students sufficiently to make a valid assessment of their abilities.

Students understood the purpose and relevance of assessing them in this way. It was felt that the concept was unfamiliar and slightly complicated. Therefore not all assessors understood it before completing the form – thus reducing the face validity of their assessment.



The educational impact of this type of assessment was generally positive. Students understood the benefit of focusing on particular clinical tasks and felt that the assessment signposted relevant tasks to them. Some also felt it motivated them to try to improve on their performance at the task. Students generally appreciated that the assessments were formative and focused on overall performance. Several commented that this reduced the desire to use them strategically.

How did you disseminate your findings?

These results are currently being written up for submission as a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal. We have established a collaborative network of interested parties from the other Scottish medical schools and have used this network to disseminate these results.

What have been the benefits to student learning?

Whilst there are some practical issues to be resolved, these new assessments have been well received and seem to have a positive educational impact. They are being re-implemented in this academic year and extending their use. They have been refined on the basis of this feedback from the students.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

The EPA concept is directly transferable to other health care related courses at the University. We would therefore make ourselves available for discussions with interested Schools.

Who can be contacted for further details?

Dr Katharine Rankin
krankin@ed.ac.uk



Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):

Or

This project has remaining funds unused and we require details of how to return the balance. The Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

Please send an electronic PDF copy of this report to:

Email: iad.teach@ed.ac.uk