

How Anatomy is assessed at the University of Southampton. Dr C.F.Smith
20th July 2010

Anatomy at the University of Southampton is primarily taught in the first 2 years of the Bachelor of Medicine 5 year and 4 year (graduate entry) programmes (BM5 and 4).

The first 2 years of the BM5 programme offers a systems based spiral curriculum with an increasing case led approach. Integrated assessments occurs at the end of each semester. These typically comprise of an assignment, OBA/EMI Paper, Spotter and a Short notes, Problem Solving or Long Structured Answer Paper. Anatomy is frequently included in all of these elements and predominately in the spotter. The first 2 years of the BM 4 programme is a topic based approach which is assessed at the end of each year using OSCE, OBA/EMI and Short note Papers. Within later years of both programmes students may choose to undertake a dissection student selected unit and/or research project and these are assessed using presentation and dissertation methods.

A typical spotter comprises 30 stations each lasting 1 minute and each with an A and B part. Over the past year the spotter format has been developed to include other subjects, to reduce the number of 'Identify' questions and increase the testing of other areas such as function and application. For next year it is proposed that the spotter will be renamed Integrated Anatomy Practical Paper to emphasise these changes.

Students are supported in their learning by a number of formative feedback opportunities including (practical sessions, small group sessions, help desks, Identify Function and Application stations (self assessment spotters), zapper sessions, virtual patients, online mock assessments, CAL quizzes and questions in their handbook).

A number of methods are employed by the programmes to increase the validity and reliability of assessments. These include: standard setting (Ebel's, Hofstee and the borderline method); blueprinting to the learning outcomes; and evaluation and statistical analysis of a range of elements such as individual questions in an examination, the overall paper and performance across different cohorts.

In anatomy we monitor how our subject is assessed by auditing the anatomy components of assessments. We also value feedback from External examiners and students. We are thereby able to further develop our assessment questions and processes and work within the organisational structure to bring about any required changes.

Words:371