

Accreditation Committee Report 2018/19

Key Points

1. Level I accreditation is now up and running with an established team of examiners. Practical examinations run twice yearly at Coventry and Bristol in March and September respectively. Feedback from candidates undertaking the process has been positive focusing on the feasibility and usefulness of the process.
2. Examiner quality assessment is now up and running twice a year and is mandatory for all active examiners once every three years.
3. Course endorsement is now live giving course organisers the opportunity to use the BSE logo to advertise their course.
4. Logbook submission will be 100% via the online portal through our website by the end of 2020.

Practical Examinations

We are now in our second annual cycle of running our main practical examinations at the same five central UK centres. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our hosts who are:

January: Wythenshawe Hospital Manchester
March: Coventry University Hospital
June: Oxford University Hospitals Trust
September: Bristol Royal Infirmary
November: St Bartholomew's Hospital London

Each centre hosts up to 30 examiners and 70 candidates per exam in transthoracic echo level I and level II and critical care. Transoesophageal echo accreditation runs two to three times per year at these centres and stress echo runs twice a year at Northwick Park and Wythenshawe Hospital, according to candidate demand.

After each centre has undertaken three years of hosting a practical we will offer the opportunity for them to have a break and use an alternative centre for the following three years.

Over the last 12 months we have seen a huge improvement in our feedback from candidates. This has been in part due to streamlining of the practical exam day itself, with candidates now going straight into the scanning station followed by case review while their logbook goes on its own journey through the examiners by itself! Candidates are then re-united with their logbook at the end and receive either notification that they have passed, or any feedback required to allow them to complete the process at their next attempt. Feedback has reflected the reduced time each candidate needs to spend at the centre and

also faster throughput through each station. The best feedback we have received this year has been from candidates needing to re-sit the practical who commented on how helpful, kind and informative they found the examiners. This is undoubtedly our aim.

In parallel with this Jo Thanjal and Nas Begum in the office have worked tirelessly with our new Director Jo Sopala, to streamline the enormous administration load which comes with organising the exams: this has been noticed by both examiners and candidates, so thank you team, great work.

We have nearly achieved our three-year aim to bring the cost per candidate of each practical down to the price we charge for the process. Hopefully we will be there by the AGM 2020.

Examiner Quality Assurance

I would like to give a personal note of thanks to Sadie Bennett who has worked tirelessly over the last 12 months to make examiner quality assurance a reality. This is now a rolling process which is mandatory for all our examiners, whatever their discipline as is undertaken once every three years.

The sessions began in June of this year at the British Society of Cardiology conference in Manchester. Twenty candidates attended a three-hour session covering all recent changes to the practical processes and looked closely at how to decision-make in the more difficult grey areas of the practical exam. This discussion was well received by the examiners and we will continue to develop this at the next session at our annual conference in October.

Written Examinations

Our written examination processes are now well established through our partner provider Pearson-Vue. Written examinations run twice a year in spring and autumn for all disciplines other than stress and transoesophageal echo, which run once a year at the autumn session. We are currently delivering exams to approximately 500 candidates a year which reflects a significant workload for the exam setters so a particular thank you to the exam setting teams for their attention to detail and relentless work on refreshing, reviewing and improving the exams.

Course Endorsement

We have now re-launched our course endorsement with new guidelines and processes: please see the website for full details. This process helps the course director to apply for endorsement from the BSE allowing them to use our logo for advertising and helping to make sure that courses are aligned with accreditation processes, improving course attendee numbers.

Log-book Portal

With the launch of our new BSE website candidates for all our accreditations will be able to engage with the on-line log-book portal making the process of collecting, collating and importantly anonymising your logbook faster and easier than it has ever been. We are aiming for 100% of exam candidates to submit through the portal by the end of 2020.

Future Directions

The accreditation team has started the process of looking at adding a new accreditation to our portfolio in congenital heart disease as it applies to both children and adults: much more on that by next year when we hope to have a fully realised accreditation process on offer.

Accreditation Stand at Conference

The accreditation team are on hand at the annual conference to answer any queries you may have in person. The stand is manned throughout the conference between sessions and is your go-to place for any feedback you may have for the accreditation team, or just to come and chat about what our work involves.

Thanks

I will close by thanking the whole of the accreditation team but in particular my deputy Steve Hodgson who stepped into the breach on the birth of my son in April this year: thank you all – you are a wonderful team and a pleasure to work with.

Claire Colebourn, Chair of the Accreditation Committee

