

PASS Case Study Update: CS1 & CS8

Summary

Variety of PFA	Integrative level/year assessment: As part of the overall programme assessment, students must complete assessments that demonstrate they satisfy all the learning outcomes which have been specified for one level/year of the programme (horizontal), or more than one level/year of the programme (vertical).
Course	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
Faculty and institution	Peninsula Medical School (PMS) University of Plymouth
Type/duration	5 year undergraduate full-time
Timing	PMS was established in 2000. PFA introduced in 2002 with the first cohort of medical students. The programme was approved in three stages, Years 1 and 2, followed by years 3 and 4, and then year 5. Updated February 2019.

What are the main characteristics of programme focused assessment which are incorporated in the course/programme in its present form?

Small number of longitudinal, assessment focused, modules. Frequent low stakes cumulative assessments based on final target learning outcomes, mapping, monitoring & supporting growth towards final targets in knowledge, clinical skills, and professionalism.

What are the main changes/progress since the original PASS Case Study?

Disaggregation of PCMD: No longer in partnership with University of Exeter. Regulations and QA now less independent and more closely aligned to Plymouth University.

How successful has this initiative been for your programme and what is the evidence of impact?

Disaggregation led to a requirement for reaccreditation by the GMC, which has been successful. Our graduates are repeatedly reported as some of the best prepared for practice in the UK, in research conducted independently of ourselves, as reported by all graduates and their clinical supervisors.

How has your approach to programme focused assessment influenced the practice of others beyond your programme team in your own institution?

BMBS retains its identity as a clear example of PBA, this has been adopted to a large extent by other programmes within the same faculty (i.e. PA, BDS, DTH), although BMBA remains the purest example.

How has your approach to programme focused assessment influenced the practice of other beyond your own institution?

Some other UK medical schools have adopted progress testing for knowledge, and a cumulative rather than resit approach to OSCEs.

What plans do you have for further development?

Review of our approach to Student Selected Components to strengthen PBA.

What tips would you give to others starting out on programme focused assessment?

Difficult to do unless you are both starting a new programme and have sufficient resources to resist adopting the default programme structure within your home institution and develop something different. However if you can adopt PBA, then the prioritisation of, and higher degree of relevance to, preparing students for practice is liberating and rewarding. It is enlightening to realise the restrictions that a teaching focused credit bearing modular system inflicts on the longitudinal development of students.

Further details

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Further information	CS8 Short Case study. CS1 Extended Case study.