

# Introduction of Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments

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## Introduction

- ◆ Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments - assess theoretical, practical and problem-solving skills at multiple stations.
- ◆ Marking criteria structured and published in advance.
- ◆ Students receive the same test and interaction with different examiners.
- ◆ Six stations, each assessing a mixture of different skills (Figure 1).
- ◆ Would this method be suitable to assess Honours sciences students in practical and communications skills?
- ◆ Is it an efficient method to assess a large Honours class and provide timely feedback?

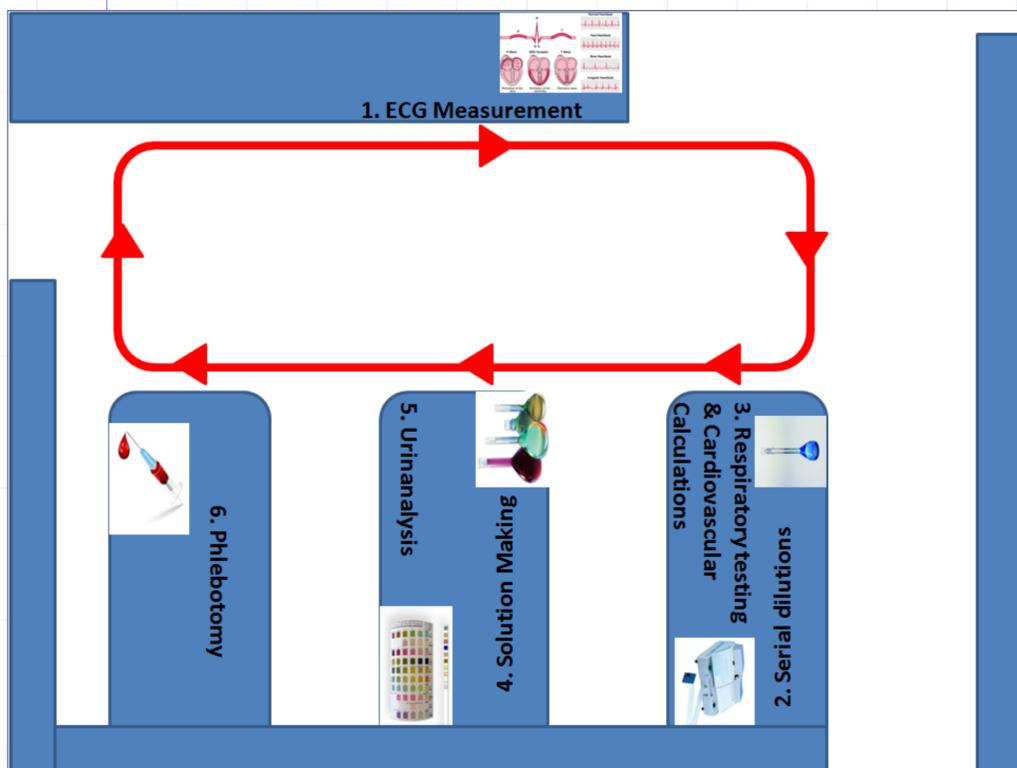


Figure 1: Schematic of laboratory layout with six assessment stations. Students start at different stations and move round in sequence.

## Outline Protocol

- 100 students over 2 assessment days
- Assessment tasks introduced during an all day practical class
- VLE resources/extra tuition provided
- Students move round each station for assessment
- Objective and consistent
- Stations reusable and adaptable

## Outcomes & Conclusions

- Students reported they found the process “a bit stressful” as they had to prove they knew how to perform specific tasks/skills.
- However, found it worthwhile preparation for upcoming practical work and employment opportunities.
- Staff felt it was a useful way of assessing wide array of graduate attributes at Honours level WITHOUT large amounts of paperwork.
- However, requires planning, clear aims and flexibility in initial stages (Figure 2).
- Students reported thinking more about skills expected in future employment, and also considering their strengths and weaknesses.
- Assessment of communications skills improved – sometimes forgotten in traditional science-based curricula.
- Students felt they could display their full range of knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Strong support team is required to set up such assessment activities.



Figure 2: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of this assessment method.

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