



Developing an online Primary FRCA OSCE course

Dr Alasdair Turnbull & Dr Yong Hui Soo, LAT ST3 Anaesthetics (WOSSA)



Introduction

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the RCOA have made provisions for examinations to continue in an online format. As such, the Primary FRCA SOE & OSCE are held on an online platform (Practique). Presently, there are a lack of online OSCE courses nationwide. As successful candidates in the November Primary FRCA OSCE examination, we were in a unique position to organise a regional online OSCE course based on our experience.

Methods

A half-day online course was organised for candidates attempting the Primary FRCA OSCE in January 2021. The course included 14 OSCE stations, each lasting 5 minutes, as per the primary FRCA OSCE exam. We included a 15 minute break for candidates and faculty after 7 OSCE stations had been completed. The course was hosted on Zoom (version 5.0.7), using the 'meeting room' function to allow candidates to be moved from 'station to station'. All examining faculty members are Anaesthetists in Training who have achieved the Primary FRCA. Prior to the course both candidates and faculty were emailed with details of the intended format, and WhatsApp groups were created for both groups, in case of technology issues during the course. OSCE station questions and marking schemes were generated on Microsoft Powerpoint and Word respectively. The WOSSA training committee were consulted on the format of the course and questions and were instrumental in advertising the course to the West of Scotland Trainees

Discussion

The course was delivered as planned on the morning of 12th January. Each candidate received their station mark sheets individually via email on the afternoon of 12th January. Feedback was not offered immediately after each station to simulate exam conditions. Examiners could offer written feedback to candidates by annotating their station mark sheets appropriately. After the course, SurveyMonkey questionnaires were emailed to candidates and faculty to provide the opportunity to give anonymous feedback. All candidates offered feedback that they felt better prepared for the OSCE after the course. Faculty members offered very positive comments and constructive suggestions to improve station questions for future courses, which we are currently editing.

Some responses to our post-course SurveyMonkey questionnaires are highlighted below.

We have advertised the course for candidates preparing for the May Primary FRCA OSCE and are planning to run it on Wednesday 28th April.

Really well run,
format worked well

Good experience of
timings, online
environment and
possible scope of
questions

All course candidates
would recommend
the course to
colleagues!

Clear instructions
for faculty and smooth
running of course

Helped me to direct
my learning for
revision

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to the following for their help with developing the course: WOSSA, Paul Harrison, Brian Lafferty and finally all our faculty members!