

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY BASED MEDICAL EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

IMPLEMENTACIJA MEDICINSKE IZOBRAZBE TEMELJENE NA KOMPETENCIJAMA U STANDARDE EUROPSKIH SPECIJALISTIČKIH PROGRAMA

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European Training requirements (ETR) are educational standards developed by the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) to define the expected competencies, (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that postgraduate medical trainees must acquire to become a qualified specialist across Europe. Aims are the harmonisation and advancement of the quality of postgraduate specialist training to assure the high-quality patient care and facilitate the mobility of medical professionals within Europe. ETRs, prepared by the UEMS specialist Sections or European Boards, are three-part documents that include: (1) Requirements for trainee, the training programme and curriculum, (2) Requirements for trainers and (3) requirements for training institutions, and (3) assessment and evaluation.

Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) is a central principle in the ETRs, that shifts the focus of training from the traditional time-based model to a competency-based approach, where the key question is not how long a doctor has trained, but what they are actually able to do independently and safely in clinical practice.

Within this concept, CBME values are embedded to define the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours/attitudes expected at different stages of training. The implementation of CBME in ETRs includes incorporation of an internationally accepted physician's competency framework CanMEDS which define physicians' roles and domains including medical expertise, communication, collaboration, professionalism, leadership, scholarship, and health advocacy. These domains are translated into specific competencies and measurable outcomes.

Assessment in CBME is continuous and formative, using tools such as workplace-based assessments: mini-CEX, DOPS, multisource feedback, and reflective portfolios. Increasingly, ETRs also use Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) — core clinical tasks that trainees must be trusted to perform without supervision once they are required to demonstrate sufficient competence. The goal is to document trainee's progress toward defined milestones rather than rely solely on summative examinations or time in training. Trainers act as mentors and assessors, supporting feedback and reflection as integral parts of learning.

By implementing CBME principles, the ETRs promote transparency, accountability, and flexibility in postgraduate education, ensure that European specialists are competent to deliver high-quality, patient-centred care across all member states.

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