

Improving progression & retention on the Extended Medical Degree Programme (EMDP)

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- WP route to medicine, *extending* 5-year degree by 1 year
- 2001: HEFCE funding for 10 extra places on MBBS; + 10 places each subsequent year, reaching plateau of 50 in 2005-6
- 449 students enrolled; 72 graduated
- Pre 2005 entry: c. **85%** retention rate (cf. 97% for standard MBBS)
- Post-2005 entry: c. **92%** retention rate

- Why don't some students progress?
- What factors have lead to significantly improved retention?
 1. Selection
 2. Support
 3. Formative curriculum
 4. Learning environment
- After 2012: lessons learned & challenges ahead?

Causes of non-progression

1. Difficulties at home / personal problems
2. Lack of preparedness for university: learning style, confidence, organisation
3. Academic weakness

EMDP eligibility & selection

Ethos: To **'level the educational playing field'**

- Attended only non-selective state schools since age 11 AND non-selective state A level providers in London or Kent/Medway
- Targeted outreach (Yrs 7-11 and VI Form)
- "Contextualised" admissions for achievements & predictions: based on DfES average point score per student; average offer BBB
- Competition: out-performance; "commitment to community"
- c. 40% interviewed using MMI

EMDP Student Body

Ethnic Group	EMDP	Standard
Asian	36%	31%
Black	39%	3%
White	10%	46%

Socio-economic status	EMDP	Standard
Higher managerial & professional	9%	37%
Semi-routine / routine	23%	4 %

- 92% from average/below average A level providers
- c.65% of EMDP students from households <£25K pa
- c.70% first in family to HE
- c.70% live at home

EMDP Structure

EMDP	MBBS
1A	1
1B	
2 (less SSCs)	2
<i>Intercalated BSc?</i>	
3	
4	
5	

EMDP = 6 years
(+ optional intercalated year)

MBBS = 5 years
(+ optional intercalated year)

Core workload “stepped” over three years:

1A: 55%

1B: 65%

2: 80%

Scaffolded 'continuity of care' for 1st three years

- Academic EMDP adviser alongside MBBS personal tutor
- Advisers also teach students
- One-to-one meetings

Topics: revision & study techniques, home-life, welfare.

"I have developed a great relationship with my adviser, and I am thankful to have a member of staff show interest in my academic welfare" (1A student, May 2011)

Learning environment

“Dialogic”

For WP students:

“**learner identities [may be] fragile and unconfident**’ (Reay et al, 2010);
regular feedback can “**facilitate integration into university**” (Poulos & Mahony, 2008)

For medical education:

Recommended that students engage with “**zone of complexity**” (Fraser & Greenhalgh, 2001)

Aims of dialogic formative curriculum:

- To challenge surface modes of learning
- To develop confidence and conscientiousness

How?

- “Blended” feedback; an iterative approach

EMDP formative curriculum

- **Induction Week**

EMDP-specific, week-long intensive introduction.

- **Basic science small-group seminars**

Key concepts (e.g. chemistry) & revising concepts from phase 1 (e.g. pharmacology).

- **Numeracy small-group seminars (1A & B)**

Students sit a **formative test** in Induction Week. Seminars addressing key concepts are facilitated by lecturer and students sit a second **test**.

- **Biochemistry presentations**

Student-lead **20 minute presentation**. Facilitated by biochemistry lecturer and peer-assessed. Presentations filmed; short excerpts reviewed in small groups.

- ***Writing & Discourse*: lectures, tutorials & seminars (1A & B)**

Students learn key concepts of academic writing over 2 years, completing a **formative critical portfolio of writing**. Blended feedback.

Attendance is monitored and students must be signed-off in logbook for satisfactory attendance and completion of formative assessments.

Evaluation of learning environment

What do the students think?

“Really good - enjoyed the group setting and how the teaching wasn't just from the teacher but amongst students as well.” (2011)

Enables self-evaluation: “It was a very good experience, it helped me to evaluate myself and brought out many mistakes I was making without realising it.” (2011)

“W&D was an eye opener. It challenged me, and also allowed me to see the stage which I'm at.” (2011)

Develops professionalism

“I found it interesting the way we grew as a group - work ethic increased.” (2010)

What role does feedback play?

The opportunity for meaningful feedback makes formative assessment “count”, both for the student and the educator

Impact on progression

Formative curriculum identifies:

- a) students with instrumental approach (not interested unless it “counts”)
- b) students with professionalism issues: late, absent, missed deadlines

These are factors for failing and non-progression

Is there a relationship between formative content and core assessment?

Most clear correlate is attendance:

Cohort av. attendance:	90%
Core curriculum <i>high</i> achievers av attendance:	96%
Core curriculum <i>low</i> achievers av attendance:	79%

Indicating the “conscientiousness” factor

Lessons learned

- Competitive & fair selection vital for finding best students
- Vast majority are successful
- Students who don't out-perform schools more at risk

➤ Not just about getting in

- Value of formative curriculum & 'continuity of care' in early years:
 - a) Nurture confident learner identities
 - b) Encourage professionalism
 - c) 'Early warning' for those at risk of non-progression
 - d) Scaffolded system: encourage independence
 - e) Sets tone for later years

2012 and after

- Increasingly competitive admissions
- Increasing anxiety about non-progression: financial & pastoral implications
- Value for money: more is more culture?
- Realistic retention rate?