

# **Progressing Progress Testing: Initial results of Progress Testing implementation at the RCSI University of Medicine & Health Sciences**

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## **Abstract**

### 1. Background

RCSI is in the process of implementing its 'Transforming Healthcare Education Project (THEP)' which has focussed on the creation of a new curriculum for undergraduate medicine. One of the new assessment tools being used is a form of Progress Testing.

### 2. Summary of work

The RCSI version of Progress Testing involves 4 diets per year each consisting of 160 MCQs each with 3 options plus a 'Don't Know' option. 60 Items in each diet are focussed on content from the current stage of study and 100 items are focused on graduation-level content. Penalty scoring is applied with +1 (correct), -0.5 (incorrect), and 0 (Don't Know). By February 2024, these students will be just over halfway through their second year of Progress Testing.

### 3. Results

Predictably, initial feedback from students (& staff) to this new form of assessment has been mixed. Results from the first few diets showed very little progress with many students choosing to ignore the more advanced content. Additional communication was provided towards the end of the first year, resulting in a small but noticeable increase in performance as students became more familiar with the format.

### 4. Discussion

This is a new format for most students, and it will take time to bed down. The main benefits include more frequent, better-quality feedback and real-time estimates of their progress toward their ultimate goal (final-year knowledge competence).

### 5. Conclusions

Despite a great deal of preparation, additional support & communication was necessary to ensure students fully understood this new assessment format and how best to approach it.

### 6. Take-home messages/implications for further research or practice

Communication is key. Students & staff need to be prepared for this new type of assessment and this communication needs to be maintained throughout the application.

### **References (maximum three)**

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