

HONG KONG COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE 香港急症科醫學院	Document No.	EC/TG/CSC/WBA/EPA-V1
	Issue Date	01 Jan 2022
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Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine

Workplace Based Assessment

Version	Effective date
1	01 July 2020
2	01 Jan 2022
3	

Document number	EC/TG/CSC/WBA/EPA-V1
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Endorsed by	College Council
Approved date	20 Dec 2021
Distribution List	Training Supervisors, Trainers and Trainees

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A. Background:

The Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine (HKCEM) has been revising the training curriculum since 2011 by adopting a competency based medical education (CBME) curriculum. According to the training program document of HKCEM, there are 6 core competencies in our CBME curriculum, namely:

- medical knowledge and clinical skills,
- patient care,
- interpersonal and communication skills,
- professionalism, ethic and legal,
- research and education, and
- organizational skills.

The Education Committee (EC) of HKCEM has formed a Curriculum Subcommittee (CSC) to propagate CBME. The CSC has performed a gap analysis in 2018 on the current College training and assessment system and recommended that **the College should develop Workplace Based Assessment (WBA) in the College training and assessment system as one of the top priorities.**

The CRC has reviewed the literature and **recommended the college to start WBA with Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA)** according to the most contemporary ideas on WBA and selected 2 EPA in the pilot phase:

1. Rapid sequence intubation (RSI)
2. Chest drain insertion / Aspiration of Pneumothorax

Two more EPA was added in the second phase starting 1 Jan 2022:

3. Closed reduction of shoulder dislocation
4. Closed reduction of Colles Fracture

B. Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) in HKCEM

EPA is a competency oriented workplace based assessment widely used by many postgraduate healthcare institutions. It is a comprehensive assessment activity on a particular clinical (and sometimes non-clinical healthcare related) task.

In order to implement EPA in our college, we need to clarify who are the assessors, what we are going to do in the assessment and the assessment program logistics (when to start assessment, how frequent and when to exit).

- a) **EPA Format:** In principle, not all EPA are assessing procedure skills but for HKCEM, our EPA starts with skills to cover the blind-spots of our current assessment system. So the name of each EPA will be in the format of:

EPA (# EPA number #) #category# (#category number#) : description

Example:

EPA(1) Procedure skill (1): RSI

EPA(2) Procedure skill (2): Chest drain or aspiration

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e.g.

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- b) **Assessors:** All College trainers are entitled to become EPA assessors provided they have undertaken an EPA training module which is a set of self-study document of less than 30 min including
1. This document
 2. Four EPA documents

As EPA will be an integrated part of formal college training activity, all existing College trainers are expected to do the self-study and take up the role as assessor by the end of 2020. All future trainer applicants are required to undertake the EPA training module before they are granted trainers status. In the pilot phase starting in mid-2020, training supervisors should encourage all College trainers in their departments to undertake EPA training.

c) Assessment details for trainers

1. For each EPA, there is a predefined starting point and end point of assessment. They are clearly stated in the assessment document of that EPA.
2. An assessment should preferably be initiated by a trainee when a suitable case is encountered in their working environment.
3. It is advisable that all trainers should download the College e-portfolio apps and use the apps to do the assessment. The EPA assessment function will be made available in the apps for trainers.
4. It is advisable that assessors should familiarize with the narrative description of competencies of each EPA. Please read the EPA documents.
5. The assessor should observe and supervise the whole process. The assessment has a formative part (feedback on the performance) and a summative part (make an entrustment decision).
 - i. Plenty feedback should be provided verbally during and/or after the process based on the performance of the trainee with reference to (but not limited to) the narrative description of competencies. The feedback should form the grounds for the subsequent entrustment decision. Trainees are encouraged to reflect on their own performance as well.
 - ii. A summative **entrustment decision** should be made by the assessor after the process based on the **subjective judgment** of assessor **supported by the feedback contents** which describe the performance of the trainee. There are 5 levels of **entrustment decision**:

Level 1: Novice	Restricted to observe or assist a skill; Not entitled to do it due to significant knowledge or skill deficiency.
Level 2: Advancing	Allowed to perform the procedure/skill under close or hands-on supervision as the skill is not to a competent level.
Level 3: Competent	Entrusted to perform the skill under hands-off observation or just on-site supervision in uncomplicated cases.
Level 4: experienced	Fully competent and entrusted to complete the task totally independent even for complicated cases.
Level 5: expertise	Entitled to teach or supervise others by showing excellent performance and deep understanding of the background knowledge.

6. The assessor could also enter the case difficulty by his own subjective judgment based on the case complexity.
7. The detailed contents of the feedback should be entered by trainee onto his portfolio. The assessor and supervisor are empowered to verify the EPA after trainee has entered the

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feedback contents.

8. In summary, assessor should

- i. At the time of assessment: enter case difficulty and entrustment decision based on subjective judgment.
- ii. After the trainee has completed feedback content entry, verify the EPA in the e-portfolio.
- iii. Training supervisor is empowered to verify all EPA by trainees in the department even not being the assessor. This is to make sure all EPA are verified.

d) Assessment logistic and requirement for trainees

Assessment requirement

- The assessment is compulsory for all A&E trainees and should start the latest after one year of post trainee registration.
- Non-EM trainees and BST trainees are not required. (BST have their own WBA requirement)
- Regular monitoring of WBA fulfillment is needed to ensure adequately supervised training. For a period of 12 months starting from 1 Jan of each year, there is a reference number of assessments per each EPA:
 - RSI: 3 assessments per 12 months
 - Chest drain / aspiration of pneumothorax: 2 assessments per 12 months
 - **Shoulder dislocation: 2 assessments per 12 months**
 - **Colles fracture: 2 assessments per 12 months**
- Training supervisors have the duty to oversee and ensure the fulfillment of assessments of their trainees and should report suboptimal performance in training supervisor meeting
- If a trainee has just enrolled in the middle of the year (say July 2020), monitoring of assessment fulfillment should start from the year after, i.e. 1 Jan 2022.
- If a trainee is rotated to a non-EM specialty during a year, allowance can be made to the number of assessments accordingly.
- A trainee can apply to EC for exemption of EPA through his Training Supervisor due to special reasons, e.g. has rotated out of EM for the whole year or suspension from training etc.
- There is no upper limit of assessment per year but the assessment can be stopped after an **Exit Level** for that EPA is attained.
- For the pilot EPA, **an exit for that specific EPA** is defined as
 - 4 cumulative assessments with an entrustment **level 4 or above** for RSI.
 - 3 cumulative assessments with an entrustment **level 4 or above** for chest drain/aspiration.
 - 3 cumulative assessments with an entrustment **level 4 or above** for shoulder dislocation
 - 3 cumulative assessments with an entrustment **level 4 or above** for Colles fracture
- All the level 4 EPA counted for exit should not be done by a single assessor. Therefore, in a department, it is advisable to recruit as many trainers as possible to be EPA assessors.
- Start from **EEEM 2022**, a trainee should attain **exit level for the 2 pilot EPA** before being allowed to sit EEEM. (However, re-sitters in 2022 exam are still allowed to take EEEM but fellowship will only be granted if one can attain all the EPA exits within two-years' time after exam)
- Starting from **EEEM 2024**, a trainee should attain **exit level for ALL 4 EPA** before being allowed to sit for EEEM.

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- The exit level is to be verified by training supervisor in the e-portfolio.

Assessment logistics

- EPA should preferably be initiated by a trainee once he encounters a suitable case. The trainee should invite an available trainer to assess.
- The trainee being assessed should pay attention to the feedback given by trainer, and after the assessment, the trainee is required to enter the feedback contents into the e-portfolio for the trainer to verify.

Summary of HKCEM EPA Assessment requirement:

EPA	Recommended reference number of assessments within 12-month period starting from 1 Jan of each year	Exit level attainment	Remark
EPA 1 Procedure 1: RSI	3	4 level 4 or above by more than 1 assessor	
EPA 2 Procedure 2: chest drain/aspiration	2	3 level 4 or above by more than 1 assessor	
EPA 3 Procedure 3 Reduction fo shoulder dislocation	2	3 level 4 or above by more than 1 assessor	
EPA 4 Procedure 4: Reduction of Colles Fracture	2	3 level 4 or above by more than 1 assessor	

Time-line of implementation and Handling of non-compliance:

A trainee who cannot meet the reference number of assessments within a 12-month calendar year may run the risk of his training experience being unrecognized. The trainee must explain to his training supervisor the reason for not meeting the requirement. The training supervisor should raise the case in TS meeting for discussion. With reference to the TS meeting report and recommendations, remedial measure should be taken to improve the situation in the next year. Education Committee has the final authority to decide if a trainee's training period is recognized or not.

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Summary of EPA Assessment logistic and e-portfolio

Roles of trainee, trainer and training supervisor in EPA:

Item	Trainees	Trainers/TS as assessors	Training supervisor (TS)
Assessment	Initiate assessment, Do the procedure and receive feedback	Observe and make decision on the assessment form and provide feedback	
Immediately after the assessment	Receive feedback and reflection.	Provide formative feedback and decide an entrustment level	
Shortly after assessment	Enter feedback contents in the e-portfolio for that assessment.	Verify the EPA for the trainee	
At the end of 12-month calendar year	If reference number of assessment requirement was not met (or not met in proportion to working months in A&E), write to training supervisor to explain the reason. (for example, inadequate suitable cases...)		<p>Verify and ensure all trainees have been continuously assessed with EPA with a reasonable number.</p> <p>It a trainee has not met the reference number of an assessment (in proportion of working months in A&E), receive written explanation from the trainee and discuss in the TS meeting.</p> <p>Verify trainees who have met the Exit criteria for particular EPA.</p>

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C. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for trainers:

Can I award level 4 or 5 to a basic trainee if s/he was doing really well?

Theoretically, yes! But you run the risk of over-trusting bearing in mind of the working experience of the trainee. In such case, you must take case complexity into consideration seriously as it is always easier for an uncomplicated case.

If a basic trainee attained an exit level on an EPA, do we need to assess again in the higher training?

Theoretically, No need!

If the trainee did perfectly, how could I decide if I can give level 4 or 5?

If the trainee was aiming at level 5, He/She should have performed an information rich running commentary to show his/her understanding on the topic to a point that can teach the procedure well. In the running commentary provided by the trainee, the contents should show deep understanding on the topic which should probably include but not limited to strategy for complicated case, common misconception and mistakes, challenges in teaching this skill, etc. If trainee's performance was obviously at level 4 or beyond, please discuss with the trainee after the procedure to explore his understanding on the topic and test the teaching ability.

For exit level, why do we need assessment from at least 2 different assessors?

Inter-rater difference is a potential bias for assessment reliability. Assessment by different assessors and multiple assessments will increase reliability and hopefully can avoid favoritism. So please recruit as much trainers to be EPA assessors as you can in the department.

Although it is recommended the assessment should be initiated by trainees, could trainers or training supervisor initiate an assessment?

Yes. The reason for recommending trainees to initiate assessment is to make them more proactive and responsible in their training. A trainer can initiate assessment if a suitable case encountered, want the trainee to improve, want the trainee to complete requirement and for any other good reason.

Could a trainer observe only part of a procedure skill?

No! For each EPA, there is a defined starting point and end point of assessment. An assessor must observe the whole process unless allowance stated in that particular EPA. (For example, RSI allow an assessor to start observation at the time of induction.)

Could a trainee appeal to a trainer's entrustable decision?

No. The decision of assessor should be regarded as final.

If a trainee has met the exit criteria for an EPA but not yet meet the reference number of assessment that year, dose that trainee need to do more?

No, once the exit criteria for an EPA is met, there is no need to do further on that EPA.