

## Title

Changes in student perceptions to electronic exams: Results from a longitudinal study.

## Authors

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## Background

In 2017 after the conclusion of a small opt-in pilot, all summative exams for pre-clinical MD students that would otherwise have been conducted as paper-based exams were moved to an electronic assessment platform.

## Summary of work

We surveyed students across a span of three years (before their first summative exam experience and at various time points after) using a questionnaire modified from one previously used to measure student perceptions to electronic exams (e-exams).

## Summary of results

Survey results provide strong evidence for increasing confidence in the reliability of the technology and the exam day processes. While both qualitative and quantitative data from pre-implementation surveys highlighted anxiety and distrust of both the technology and the ability of staff to successfully implement it, post-implementation survey responses demonstrate a consistent increase in satisfaction with e-exam processes and technology. In particular, students increasingly report improved comfort with the use of their own devices; trust in the technological approaches to exam integrity and security; confidence in the equitability, reduced perceptions of stressfulness, and support for the notion of e-exams as being consistent with contemporary learning approaches in a university environment. Residual concerns tend to be unrelated to the electronic platform.

## Conclusions

Educators and administrators can expect to meet resistance from students faced with changes to their assessment practices. Much of this resistance is due to fear of the unknown and scepticism of the motives for change.

## Take-home messages

Prior student engagement is pivotal to the success of the implementation of a new assessment strategy such as a change to e-exams; however, it is only once students can appreciate the advantages of the change that acceptance can be expected.