

Case for Direct Award to Altus Assessment (to pilot CASPer Test across the Undergraduate New Medical Schools)

HEE is a non-executive government body responsible for the recruitment, training, and distribution of the future healthcare workforce. Regarding recruitment, new medical schools have expressed a need to refine their recruitment methods to find the 'right applicants' and expressed interest in piloting CASPer as part of that process. HEE is therefore justified to collaborate with these medical schools to help improve their recruitment processes.

- Health Education England [HEE] believe that Altus Assessment is the only organisation capable of providing the CASPer test to the new medical schools. Altus Assessment is the only supplier with the requisite expertise and experience for which Casper provides data-driven, objective insights into an applicant's non-cognitive (people) skills. It provides medical schools with a well-rounded look at an applicant's non-academic abilities by measuring 10 key competencies: communication, empathy, resilience, professionalism, equity, ethics, collaboration, problem-solving, self-awareness, and motivation.
- We are proposing to pilot the CASPer test as a recruitment tool for prospective medical students applying to newly formed medical schools in 2021/2022. CASPer is an evidence based online situational judgement test used to assess non-cognitive competencies (i.e., personal, and professional) attributes that uses video-based scenarios, questions, and timed open-text responses to assess an applicant's non-cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, empathy, ethics, and collaboration. Unlike fixed-response SJTs, the open-ended format allows test takers to describe what they would do in each scenario, and more importantly why they would do it, a stronger indicator of future success and behaviour.
- A study using CASPer was launched recently to compare the feasibility and acceptability of this tool for applicants to two UK medical schools (UCLAN and Swansea medical schools in Spring 2020). Kent and Medway are currently piloting the test in this year's admissions process. Leicester university is scheduled next to pilot the test in early 2021.
- Hence by piloting this new undergraduate recruitment tool at new medical schools we would hope to ensure we are recruiting the most suited individuals as future doctors. Unlike current tests you are unable to prepare for the CASPer assessment, hence removing student's ability to pay for revision courses will ensure admission to medical school is based on merit not financial ability.

- HEE are keen to pilot CASPer across the new undergraduate medical school's recruitment processes to determine its potential for broadening the cohorts of individuals applying.

HEE believes that it is highly unlikely for any other supplier to be able to provide the following skills/tools provided by Altus Assessment as a current supplier for the following reasons:

1. CASPer was first created in 2005 at McMaster University and in 2010, the test was incorporated into the official admissions process at the Michael DeGroot School of Medicine.
2. The CASPer test was developed based on psychometrically sound research and data. The creators have incorporated a background of situational judgement testing, assessment, and technology best practices into CASPer.
3. The scope of this project is to extend initially to the new medical schools including - Anglia Ruskin, Aston, Sunderland, Edge Hill and Kent and Medway. Leicester university is also piloting CASPer test independently and we will seek to join this data to our project.
4. We hope to introduce the CASPer test initially as a one-year pilot funded by HEE across the five new medical schools. We hope to start the pilot for the admission cycle in 2020/2021. Across the medical schools, we hope to use CASPer test as a pilot for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students who are attempting to gain places at medical schools.
5. Once introduced we will run a formal evaluation process which includes all trailblazer sites. In this process we will compare the CASPer test to existing methods while also gaining information on user experience and university experience. We would hope to form an evaluation group at HEE which includes all the relevant stakeholder medical schools. This will allow us to have a formal overview of how the programme is running and what data is needed to complete the formal evaluation role.
6. No alternative exists to the CASPer test, they are the only market provider of the test. No other competitor or alternative test exists which has been through such extensive testing abroad and is currently being used in the UK.

The duration of the direct award is 1 year for the following reasons:

- This project fits into HEEs broader ambition of widening participation. By using the CASPer test we would hope to ensure we are recruiting the right individuals into medical school and basing recruitment on more than academic involvement and financial resource. This will ensure our future pipeline of doctors is diverse and matches the diversity we see in the population.
- This investment demonstrates value for money as the CASPer test is lower in cost than current alternatives. The alternatives tests are also not seen as supporting HEEs widening participation incentives and focus on purely academic recruitment strategies.
- By completing the CASPer test, applicants will provide the medical schools an insight into their people skills before the holistic review or the interview phase. Allowing the medical schools to look more than just academic ability and make more informed decisions.

In the event that Altus Assessment are unable to provide the CASPer test to the New Medical Schools:

- HEEs commitment to widening participation is unlikely to be fulfilled in the short to medium term future.
- Medical schools continue with current admissions processes, amid concerns that they are having difficulty in recruiting students with the ideal mix of academic and non-academic skills. Continue with admissions processes in which there is a concern that applicants are able to 'learn' ideal answers to non-academic skills tests. This leads to a risk that learners with strong non-academic skills, including those from widening participation backgrounds are not being as well represented in medicine as they should be.
- Prospective medical students will continue to be financially disadvantaged with more expensive assessments.

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