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# European exams. UEMS Occupational Medicine Section

## Exámenes europeos. Sección de Medicina del Trabajo de la UEMS

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### Información · Information

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This document is the result of the activities of the Occupational Medicine Section of the UEMS (European Union of Medical Specialists: <http://www.uems-occupationalmedicine.org>)

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#### Fechas · Dates

Received: 2024.06.30  
Accepted: 2024.07.02  
Published: 2024.07.15

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The fifth European examination of the Occupational Medicine Specialty will take place on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 in Brussels.

The exam can be taken by any specialist in Occupational Medicine but is especially aimed at residents in their final year or those who have recently completed the specialty. The content of the exam complies with the European Training Requirements. On the website of the UEMS Occupational Medicine Section<sup>(1,2)</sup> you can find the recommended bibliography to prepare for the exam, testimonials from the candidates themselves, as well as other detailed information on registration, exam fees and accommodation in Brussels, where the exams are held<sup>(3)</sup>.

Through this article we proceed to disseminate the call for the exam to make it known to possible interested participants. Given that the main recipients are final year trainees, the different Teaching Units, the Spanish National Commission for the Specialty of Occupational Medicine, and the Scientific Societies of Occupational Medicine have also been informed.

We include below a summary about the UEMS, the importance of the European exams, and how the Occupational Medicine specialty exam has been developed.

### **The main objectives of the UEMS are:**

- The harmonization and development of European standards at the highest level, regarding postgraduate medical training in Europe.
- The coordination and accreditation of continuing medical training
- The representation of the medical profession within the framework of the European Union.
- The free movement of professionals and patients (health care in other EU states), maintaining the European principles of Medical Ethics.

To achieve the first objective of harmonization of the training of specialists, each specialty proposes the European Training Requirements (ETRs), and in accordance with them they organize the examination of their specialty following the CES-MA<sup>(4)</sup> standards (Council for European Specialists Medical Assessment), common to all specialties. The first European Examination was the EDA (European Diploma in Anesthesia) and was carried out in 1984. In 2007, the general operating rules for all sections were agreed upon in the Glasgow declaration<sup>(5)</sup>. Currently more than 30 of the 43 Medical Specialty Sections of the UEMS, including ours, have already organized their European exams. These certification exams can help ensure high quality training and quality standards for European specialists.

The exams mean a quality certificate for the participants who pass them, but they do not imply a specific official qualification, since the UEMS does not have the legal capacity to do so, nor are its instructions binding on the member states, but rather it advises the European Union in this matter. In this sense, some member states that carry out specific exams at the end of the residency to obtain the specialist title have chosen to use the UEMS exam in whole or in part as an evaluation method, but in no case is any member state or any specialty obliged to do so.

### **Reasons to promote the European exam. Advantages for the specialty, advantages for participants<sup>(6)</sup>.**

- The certificate issued by the UEMS constitutes evidence of competence and excellence in the search for job opportunities.
- It makes it easier to access jobs, especially outside the country of origin. The European specialist certificate is recognized in all countries, so this merit can be a potential deciding factor for employment, especially when opting for a job abroad.
- Desire and willingness to collaborate with other European colleagues. In the European exam, participants will encounter colleagues from other European countries, often with significant differences in their training curricula. The exam constitutes a test of competence, despite the existing differences. Participating in an exam at the highest European level (and performed in English) is a challenge that will increase the self-confidence of those participants overcoming it.

- It represents a commitment to the need for European standardization in medical specialties. The UEMS has set itself the goal of achieving a European standard at the highest level for medical specialties. The European exam is an endorsement of this and can serve as a comparison (bench-marking) between the training systems of the different states, stimulating continuous improvement.

### **Development of the Occupational Medicine Specialty exam.**

The examination of the specialty of Occupational Medicine is the product of a specific working group of which Spain is a part through our representative at the UEMS. This group, together with representatives of the European Association of Schools of Occupational Medicine (EASOM), has been working for years to develop and maintain it. Examining Committee was adopted. The former president of the Section (Alenka Skerjanc from Slovenia) and the representative of Belgium (Simon Bulterys) left their position and were replaced by the German representative (Thomas Kraus) and the Spanish representative (Mari Cruz Rodríguez-Jareño), to the current president of the Section (Fabrizio Maria Gobba) and the president of EASOM (Begoña Martínez Jarreta), to conform the Examining Committee that is made up of these four people.

The objective of the Section is to promote the exam so that in the long term it gradually becomes part of the training and evaluation in more European countries to contribute to the education of Occupational Medicine in Europe, as a mark of excellence with impact, not only on the trainees, but also on the postgraduate education system of each State and on the homogeneity in the different countries of the European Union, also benefiting the specialty of Occupational Medicine itself.

As we said at the beginning, we encourage potential candidates to take the fifth edition of the European Specialty Examination of Occupational Medicine in 2024. The exam has run uninterrupted, even during the pandemic, with candidates from Slovenia, Portugal, Belgium, Croatia and also from Turkey, since the exam is not limited to European candidates.

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