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Sugar-coating the pill: the highs and lows of embedding interview practice into infectious disease learning.

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This presentation will explore interview-style assessments as a vehicle for students to gain both generic skills in job interviews and problem-solving, in addition to subject-specific knowledge.

Inspired by infectious disease outbreak scenario planning days which occur commonly in both the human and veterinary infectious disease sectors, this assessment was designed to improve students' ability to communicate their science, stakeholder-specific arguments, and ability to cope under interview questioning. This assessment has evolved through the last 8 years and we will discuss the successes, challenges, and improvements from both staff and students perspectives.

Students are provided with a timeline of a novel veterinary disease outbreak and tasked with representing an industry stakeholder and determining how best to advise the government.

The structure of learning includes three key aspects:

1. A formative, group seminar-based session for students to work together, hear other perspectives from differing stakeholders and understand the hard decisions faced in real disease outbreaks.
2. A seminar by career service and module staff held to highlight how to be prepared for job interviews and the overlap between this assessment and real-world job interviews/careers.
3. The summative individual interview-style assessment performed by careers service and module lecturers replicating the same general structure as the formative assessment.

This assessment is designed to embed employability in the heart of the module, with students discovering new potential degree-related careers, and gaining practice in interviews while understanding the cross-disciplinary nature of infectious disease outbreaks.

