

IN SWITZERLAND: DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPECTS



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THE UCM MODULE OFFERED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES – GENEVA: FEATURES AND RESULTS

Background and objectives

The first Swiss module was offered in 2010. It was designed as part of the post-graduate course: “Interdisciplinary treatment of wounds and tissue viability”. This course has been conducted since 2005 at a certificate level. From 2013 it will be integrated in the diploma level programme.

Ever since the Swiss French certificate level course was introduced, the regional wound conference⁴ day (or the Swiss day held during the EWMA 2010 Conference) has been incorporated in the training.

This allows post graduate students to develop critical approaches and positions in the field as well as stimulate their interest in research activities. It also meets the demands for increasing requirements with regards to expected student outcomes and stimulates individual motivation and networking at national and international levels.

Motivated individuals who are not receiving ongoing wound care and tissue viability education, but have relevant professional experience within the chosen topic may also participate.

The first Swiss module attracted 11 students with the following backgrounds:

- One physician (GP) from a Swiss French rehabilitation center.
- Eight nurses specializing in wound care (seven holders of a Certificate of Advanced Studies, one holding a University Degree in wounds and healing) from various Swiss French cantons and various health care facilities (independent, home care, medical-social facilities, private clinics, regional hospitals, university hospitals, specialized professional associations). One clinical nurse.
- One nurse in charge of managing wounds within an institution.

The following year, only one nursing student with a University Degree in wound care and tis-

sue viability enrolled. Language difficulties, difficulties obtaining free time for training from employers and lack of financial support largely explain this.

Structure and content of the Swiss module

The Swiss UCM module offers students the opportunity to plan their individual programme, based on a selected topic covered at the annual EWMA conferences. If students have similar topics, a shared course is suggested to them.

The aim of this approach is to stimulate individual investment in the conference sessions (such as plenary sessions, open paper sessions,

ABOUT THE EWMA UCM

Since piloting the EWMA University Conference Model (UCM) in Glasgow in 2007, this education activity has consistently been evaluated as very successful by the participating students and their coordinators. This unique model combines attendance at the annual EWMA Conference with academic study at a university of the student’s own choice and has arisen from a pragmatic desire at future EWMA conferences to:

- Combine academic study with existing professional development activities
- Enable maximum utilisation of expert knowledge & skills
- Utilise excellent facilities & learning resources

The students get the opportunity to discuss the value of conference contributions with their teacher, update and supplement their skills and knowledge, expand their professional network and discover pragmatic means that could enhance their field of practice and improve the quality of care. As the UCM courses are offered via a university, students can obtain ECTS3 credits.

Consequently, the UCM provides an original and unique opportunity to validate the attendance at a specialized international conference as a short specialized postgraduate training course. EWMA will continue to develop the specific programme for UCM students offered during the conference to maximize the student outcome of the conference and secure exchange of knowledge as well as networking between students. These objectives are supported by common workshops, exercises and social events involving all UCM student groups.

Read more about the EWMA UCM and previous student evaluations at www.ewma.org/english/education/ewma-ucm.html

symposia, workshops, posters, exhibition stands) based on the selected topic. This chosen “conference pathway” is validated by the university coordinator who provides support to students throughout the conference.

A portfolio serves as support for the students to record the attended sessions, take notes and collect information about the requirements and conditions for module validations.

A formal meeting with the university coordinator is organized for Swiss students. This meeting is held to receive feedback from students with regards to the progress of their planned programmes, answer possible questions and make adjustments in the programme if needed. This meeting is also open for French speaking UCM students enrolled via other universities.

After the conference the students are given three months to complete a written report, based on their conference participation and experience, including:

- Motivations for choosing the specific topic and its relationship to practice.
- Prior knowledge of the student about the chosen topic.
- Added learning outcomes of the conference (with critical analysis of the collected content) and additional research to identify updated materials available about the topic.
- Concrete proposals for practical methods and applications that may be implemented in a daily clinical context.

For the first modules offered, this report had to be presented either in written or oral form to a supervisor from the student’s workplace. This way a double review was conducted allowing both the university and the workplace supervisor to bring in added value via their feedback. In the case of failure to pass the module, a new attempt was allowed.

If the report was not handed in, the students did not obtain the associated ECTS credits.

In conclusion, the UCM module offered by the *University of Applied Sciences – Geneva*, allows students to:

- Select a topic of interest and focus their attendance and follow-up on the conference on this issue.
- Study the topic chosen by detailed research;
- Highlight the assumptions of and concrete actions needed to improve their professional qualifications;
- Form the basis of positioning themselves as an expert within wound care and tissue viability;
- Meet and share knowledge with other professionals and students;
- Strengthen their professional network by access to online forums for communication between former UCM students and coordinators.

- Develop skills for a reflective approach to existing work and the ability to produce additional work and research of relevance within their field of interest.

CONTINUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SWISS UCM MODULE

Since the first UCM module offered in Switzerland efforts have been made to improve the structure which has already proven its relevance and quality.

For our new course starting in 2013 we have incorporated the UCM module in the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) education module “Expertise in wound care and tissue viability” which will allow more students to enroll. Moreover it is now possible to complete the course independently and be credited for subsequent cumulatively accredited university education.

This revised concept was presented in a free session during the EWMA 2012 conference in Vienna. We have also presented the previous Swiss concept and experience during the World Conference of Stomal Therapists⁵ in Phoenix, USA, in 2010, and at the Wound Healing Conference (CPC) in Paris in 2011.

Based on our experience, we are convinced that this type of concept can be transferred to other conferences.

For the new course, the requirements related to the completion of the report were revised to be consistent with the complete course offered. Thus, the presentation of the report before a supervisor from the workplace of the student has been cancelled as this type of evaluation was already covered in another module.

With regards to costs related to participation in the Swiss UCM module, it should be mentioned that the course registration fee include the conference registration fee. The search for financial support to fund travelling and accommodation of students remains to be done with our partners: industry sponsors, local associations etc.

An alternative module offered within the framework of the wound conference to be held in France targeting non-English speaking students will also be initiated in 2013.

Both UCM modules remain open to other students from other French-speaking countries. In collaboration with our Swiss German colleagues we hope to welcome these students to the Swiss UCM module in the years to come.

In the meantime we will continue our evaluation of the module to secure continued development of the programme offered. ■

1 www.ewma.org/english/education/ewma-ucm.html
 2 www.heds-ge-ch/portail/welcome.nsf/pages/fc_plaies_cicatrisationsF
 3 www.optra.net/fr/formations/ects.html
 4 <http://safw-romande.ch>
 5 www.wcetrn.org