

Validating GMC Fitness to Practise Tests: FAQs

Why are you running these days?

The aim of the day for us is to collect performance data on a wide range of doctors of all grades working in a particular specialty. We use this data as the basis for our reports for poorly performing doctors who are asked to sit a Test of Competence (ToC) by the GMC. As a measure of how well that doctor performs in the ToC, their results will be compared to a group of volunteer doctors working in the UK. You will form part of that group. We also seek your specific feedback about questions and stations from the unique viewpoint of someone who has sat the tests.

What will the test consist of?

All volunteers will be asked to take a **12 station OSCE**, consisting of stations testing a full range of clinical skills relevant to the specialty you work in. You will also take a **written knowledge test** of roughly 120 items. This will be composed of Single Best Answer (SBA) questions. If you are not familiar with these, instructions will be given on the day.

What is the level of the test?

All questions will be appropriate to someone who is working within the specialty and cover common problems and scenarios for that specialty. Many questions will be appropriate for the level of full registration with the GMC i.e. FY2 level. Some will be a bit harder and may be more appropriate to more senior grades. In an actual assessment the questions and OSCE stations are chosen to be appropriate to the level of the doctor, however we need to try these questions/stations on all levels to see how they perform.

Who will be assessing me?

Your OSCE stations will all be marked by an assessor. They will be doctors in your specialty who are consultants or final year SpRs with experience of assessing OSCEs. Many will have already been on the other side of the fence and taken the tests. The written tests are computer marked.

What experience do I need?

We want to collect performance data on a full range of doctors, from FY2 to consultant level. Therefore, as long as you have worked in the specialty for 4 months or more within the last year, you can take part. Those with less experience may find some of the stations harder than others, but we anticipate this and expect more junior doctors to score less on these stations.

Do I need to revise beforehand?

The assessment is a test of competence for a practising doctor within a specialty. It consists of a written test of knowledge and a clinical OSCE. It draws on knowledge and skills that a practising doctor might be expected to have to be able to work in the UK. Much of this is based around College curricula and PMETB guidance, as well as core guidance such as Good Medical Practice. We would not normally expect doctors to revise for the day, as we are hoping to get an idea of how doctors perform at various levels of experience, rather than testing you specifically.

What happens to my data?

All your scores will be kept anonymously on our secure database. The data will be used along with the data from other doctors within your specialty who have attended similar days. This data will form the basis of the reports that are presented to the Fitness to Practise Panel. As part of our ongoing research into assessment, we may use data gained from these days in research and publications. Again it will be completely anonymous

Will my name appear in any reports?

No. Once we have marked your tests and given you your feedback, all data will be anonymous.

What happens if I do badly on the day?

Many people worry about this! However, remember the aim is to see how doctors in practice perform; we don't expect you all to get perfect scores and we don't expect more junior doctors to do as well as senior colleagues. In some cases, doctors may do less well in certain areas. If this happens, we look carefully at all their scores and may also ask OSCE assessors if they had specific concerns about any candidate. Only if a volunteer's overall score (i.e. in both written papers and OSCE) was significantly worse than any other candidate would we be concerned and, even then, it does not mean automatic report to the GMC.

What's in it for me?

We hope that you will find the days both interesting and informative. Those who have postgraduate exams to sit in the future will find it useful exam practice. Those who may not have done an exam in some time will find it a useful refresher, particularly with the prospect of recertification assessments coming up. It is also a chance to find out more about what is going on in the wider world of medical education and assessment. You will receive an honorarium of £350 and travel expenses and self-accredited CPD points.

Everyone will receive written feedback after the event; you will receive your scores in both the written tests along with the range of scores that the group attained. For the OSCE you will receive information on how you performed in comparison to the group for each OSCE station (i.e. your quartile ranking).

What is the dress code?

You can dress how you usually would for work.

I know other people who are interested. Can they take part?

Yes please! We are always looking to recruit volunteers so we build up data on lots of doctors of all grades. **However, please contact us on the email address below first before doing so!!**

Can I take part more than once?

You can only sit a specific specialty once. However, if you have worked in more than one area, you may be able to participate in another specialty. Contact us and we will let you know.

How much is the honorarium?

The honorarium for the day is £350 +lunch + standard class travel expenses.

Who organises accommodation and travel?

All bookings for hotels, rail and air travel should be made by the individual. GMC has a booking agency that you may wish to use **Capita (0844 245 5815)** the GMC travel management provider. Please mention you are a GMC associate. Please write the Capita booking reference number clearly on your expense claim form if you use Capita.

What expenses are covered? (Full details are available on the attached document on your confirmation email).

Travel

The GMC will reimburse your travelling expenses as follows:

- **Standard** class rail or air fare for all journeys, please attach tickets.
- Travel by car 45p per mile using the shortest or fastest practicable route.
- Travel by motorcycle 24p mile using the shortest or fastest practicable route.
- Travel by cycle 20p mile using the shortest or fastest practicable route.

The GMC would prefer Associates to use public transport wherever possible, but taxi fares will be reimbursed when an Associate is travelling on GMC business and:

- Carrying bulky files, equipment or luggage, or,
- It is awkward route by public transport, or
- It is essential, or is otherwise cost effective, to go by taxi, or,
- Travel late at night (after 8.00pm)

You must specify the start and finish points and the justification for your taxi journey on your claim, and attach a taxi receipt. Taxi fares to restaurants and other locations that are not an essential part of GMC or MPTS business will not be reimbursed.

Overnight accommodation

When it is necessary to stay away from home overnight, the actual cost of hotel accommodation and breakfast will be reimbursed up to a maximum of:

- £155 per night for London and overseas
- £100 per night for Manchester
- £130 per night for the rest of the UK.

These rates are amended from time to time to reflect the prices that we negotiate with our preferred hotels and are inclusive of VAT.

£25 may be claimed when you are required to stay away from home on GMC or MPTS business and choose to stay in non-commercial accommodation (i.e. with friends and relatives). This limit is set by HM Revenue and Customs and covers all costs including accommodation, evening meal and breakfast. No claim can be made by anyone staying in their own property.

The GMC will reimburse the cost of overnight accommodation in the following circumstances:

- For the night preceding your engagement if the start time means that you would have to leave home before 7.00am
- For the night following your engagement if the finish time means you would arrive home after 8.00pm.
- For engagements taking place over consecutive days where the cost of overnight accommodation is broadly similar to the cost of travel, or where the duration of travel is significant and so likely to impact on your ability to work effectively throughout the engagement.
- For the night(s) between successive engagements where the accommodation costs is broadly similar to the cost of travel. The cost of overnight accommodation and meals on Saturdays will not normally be reimbursed.

Subsistence

When you undertake GMC or MPTS business away from home, subsistence expenses may be claimed as follows:

- The GMC will reimburse up to £10 for breakfast when no overnight stay is involved, provided that the start time for your engagement means that you would have to leave home before 7.00am.
- The GMC will reimburse up to £10 for lunch, provided that you are away for more than seven hours and lunch has not been provided.
- The GMC will reimburse up to £30 for an evening meal taken in a restaurant, including gratuities. We will not reimburse the cost of alcoholic drinks. Where Associates choose to purchase food from a supermarket, take-away or other fast-food outlet, we will reimburse the actual cost of food purchased up to a maximum of £15.

Claims for evening meals will only be reimbursed when an overnight stay is involved or you would qualify for an overnight stay but choose to travel home.

Can I book a first class ticket for travel?

In some circumstances first class rail travel may be booked if the first class ticket cost is no more expensive than a fully flexible standard class ticket for the same journey. You should provide a screen-shot of the Capita booking screen or other documentation to verify the price comparison; the GMC will be unable to reimburse any costs without this. If you choose to travel first class and the ticket price is higher than a fully flexible standard class ticket for the same journey, the GMC will reimburse an amount equal to the standard class fully flexible ticket price. You should provide a screen-shot of the Capita booking screen or other documentation to verify the price comparison; the GMC will be unable to reimburse any costs without this.

How do I claim my honorarium and expenses?

At the end of the event you will receive a claim form via email to submit directly to the GMC Finance team in Manchester where they will process your claim. You can scan and email your form along with receipts or alternatively post your form. Contact details will be provided with the form.

Please ensure that all receipts are kept.

How long does it take for my expenses to be paid?

The payment for the honorarium and expenses take roughly 2-4 weeks to be processed after receipt of claim form.

[Note: Attendees are strongly advised NOT to book travel or accommodation arrangements until you have been sent a CONFIRMATION email.](#)

For more information or other questions, please contact gmc-events@ucl.ac.uk