

# Test of Competence: A Guide for Employers

**Information and help for sponsors of  
candidates taking the GCC's Test of Competence**

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**General  
Chiropractic  
Council**



## Introduction

Anyone who wishes to practise in the UK as a chiropractor and who doesn't have a UK degree approved by us or can take advantage of EU rights is required to take – and pass – our Test of Competence (TOC) before they can apply for registration.

We have found that people taking the TOC with the assistance of a UK based chiropractor (usually the person who is going to employ them once they have passed the Test) have a significantly greater chance of passing the TOC than those without such help. This is a consequence of them having a better understanding of how chiropractic fits into the UK healthcare system, and particularly how our Code impacts on the practise of chiropractic in the UK.

As a consequence, we encourage candidates taking the TOC to consider spending time with a UK based chiropractor to increase their chances of success, and have produced this booklet to provide chiropractors receiving such requests with information and advice on the best way to help.

While taking and passing the TOC represents an important step to registration with us, passing the TOC doesn't entitle someone to practise as a chiropractor in the UK. They will still have to go through our normal registration process once they have passed the Test. Since this could take some time, make sure that you don't book appointments with patients until their registration has been confirmed.

## What is the TOC?

The Test of Competence must be passed by any chiropractor who wishes to practise in the UK and:-

- does not have a chiropractic degree from one of the UK courses that we approve or
- is unable to take advantage of the EU rights route to registration

The TOC ensures that we maintain high standards of public protection amongst the chiropractic profession by ensuring that chiropractors who wish to practise in the UK are able to do so safely. Crucially, it ensures that chiropractors from abroad have the same level of knowledge as their colleagues with a UK chiropractic qualification.

Until the end of 2014 the TOC was administered by the Welsh Institute of Chiropractic, and the tests were carried out in Wales. Since then, the Test has been carried out by the GCC, and is now held in London.

## The Test of Competence

The Test of Competence system ensures that chiropractors who do not have a GCC approved chiropractic qualification meet the same standards as chiropractors who do.

As a consequence, the Test looks at the chiropractor's training and experience to identify any gaps that suggest they will not understand how chiropractic is practised in the UK, and identify any areas where the candidate fails to meet our requirements.

### *How it Works*

Once a chiropractor decides that they wish to come to the UK and need to take the TOC, they must submit an application to us to attend one of the TOC interviews. TOC interviews take place on four dates each year.

To apply for an interview, the candidate must supply the following information:-

- A letter from their college explaining how their qualification meets our registration requirements
- Details of the modules that they completed as part of their qualification and the learning outcomes of those modules
- A completed Evidence of Practice questionnaire
- Anonymised patient records
- A CV / Resume
- The personal details pages of their passport
- The fee

TOC interview dates fill up fast, so we encourage candidates to apply early, but they should remember that the interview is challenging and so give themselves plenty of time to ensure that they are ready for the interview.

They are also required to provide anonymised patient records. Ideally, the applicant should provide genuine patient records – if they do, the patient records must be anonymised to maintain patient confidentiality.

If the applicant submits records belonging to your patients, we will only use those records for the sole purpose of the TOC, and we don't share them with any third parties so, as long as they have been anonymised, you can be confident that by providing them to us, you won't be breaching any patient confidentiality requirements.

### *The Evidence of Practice Questionnaire*

The Evidence of Practice Questionnaire is designed to provide us with evidence that the candidate meets the standards in the GCC Code. It has the following sections:-

- A profile of the applicant's caseload
- A neuromusculoskeletal case presentation
- A case presentation where the patient was considered unsuitable for chiropractic treatment or was referred to another healthcare practitioner
- A case presentation in which the applicant concluded that certain techniques were unsuitable (contra-indicated)
- Application of patient management through the completion of a table showing the different forms of assessment and care that the applicant uses
- Learning undertaken in the last three years

### *The TOC Interview*

After the Evidence of Practice Questionnaire has been submitted, the candidate will be invited to an interview.

The interview is carried out by a panel of three chiropractors. They meet before the interview and look at the information that the candidate has provided to identify where the candidate's experiences or training differs from that in the UK.

The panel then identify questions to ask the candidate to let the candidate demonstrate to them that they are aware of the differences between where they have been practising and how chiropractic is practised in the UK.

### *After the Interview*

After the interview, the candidate will receive the result of their Test of Competence within seven days.

It will be one of the following:-

- **Pass**  
The candidate has achieved the required standard, and can apply for registration
- **Insufficient Evidence**  
There is insufficient evidence in a number of specific areas to pass, but the candidate may submit further evidence in relation to those areas which, if sufficient, will allow registration to be granted

- Fail  
The candidate has not achieved the standard required, and if they wish to apply for registration will have to re-apply and re-sit the TOC.

### How can you help?

If you are helping someone who is taking the TOC, the key thing to remember is that the TOC seeks to ensure that the candidate is safe to practise in the UK, and understands how chiropractic is practised here and fits into the wider healthcare system.

We find that a common reason that candidates fail the TOC is not that they lack chiropractic skills per se, but that they fail to appreciate how chiropractic is practised in the UK, and the implications of our Code for how they would be required to practise here.

So if you are asked to help a TOC candidate, what can you do?

#### *Check the Evidence of Practise Questionnaire*

Ensure that the candidate's Evidence of Practise Questionnaire isn't just about what they have done, but that it outlines what they would do in the future if they were faced by a similar situation in the UK.

The candidate's response must identify any discrepancies between the action that they took and that is outlined in the questionnaire and our Code, and explain how they would ensure compliance with the Code in the future. So, when you see the questionnaire, ensure that the responses fully demonstrate that the candidate understands the requirements of our Code and wider UK legislation.

Note, it doesn't matter if the candidate did something that contravenes the requirements of our Code, so long as the candidate recognises that the Code has been breached in their answers and that they explain how they would ensure compliance with the Code should they find themselves in a similar situation in the future.

#### *Ahead of the Interview*

When we receive the Questionnaire, it will be reviewed by the three chiropractors who will form the interview panel, and they will agree what questions to ask the candidate.

The questions that are asked are unique to each candidate, and respond to the answers that the candidate has provided in the Evidence of Practise questionnaire. The interview panel will be looking to ensure that the candidate is safe to practise, meets our requirements outlined in the Code and the UK legislation that applies to chiropractic care.

So go through the questionnaire and try to identify the areas where the candidate's answers suggest a lack of understanding of our requirements and ensure that they are able to articulate how they would ensure they meet our requirements in the future.

### *Shadowing*

Throughout the TOC process, we expect the candidate to be able to confidently speak about how chiropractic is practised in the UK and integrates into the wider healthcare system.

Successful candidates have commented that they found it invaluable to spend some time ahead of the interview shadowing a practising UK chiropractor. Doing so gave them an insight into the realities of day to day practice, and allowed them to refer back to what they had seen during the interview.

If a TOC applicant shadows you during patient consultations, you will need to ensure that you have consent from the patient to do so.

### *The Code*

One of the key objectives of the TOC is to ensure that the applicant understands our Code. Candidates taking the TOC can expect to be quizzed about the Code in some detail to ensure that they are aware of its requirements, and how the Code would impact on the way they practise in the UK.

So make sure that the candidate fully understands firstly the requirements of the Code, and then secondly how it impacts on how you practise. You may want to pay particular attention to how the TOC would impact on the cases referred to in the Evidence of Practise questionnaire, and also, if the applicant shadows some of your patient consultations, how you applied the Code during the consultations.

### *UK Healthcare System*

During the TOC interview, applicants will be asked specific questions about the UK healthcare system, and will be also be expected to refer to it, where appropriate, in the answers that they give to the other questions they are asked as well.

Therefore, make sure that the applicant fully understands the role of the NHS, and also the interaction between the public and private health systems in the UK.

### **Further Information**

If you need any further help or assistance, have a look at our website (<https://www.gcc-uk.org/registration/test-of-competence/>) or contact us at [toc@gcc-uk.org](mailto:toc@gcc-uk.org).

We have also produced a booklet providing further details on the TOC process that you can find [here](#).