



General  
Chiropractic  
Council

# Test of Competence Annual Report

2021



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## Report on the 2021 Test of Competence year

### 2021: an overview

With restrictions still in place due to the pandemic in many countries, the Test of Competence (TOC) was again conducted remotely for the year. At the start of January, we had anticipated a busy, but predictable, year for the Test of Competence (TOC).

#### Interviewing Remotely

All TOC interviews remained remote following the move in 2020, due to the pandemic. The majority of candidates reported a preference for being interviewed remotely.

#### Test of Competence Review Meeting

An annual event in the Test of Competence calendar is the Review Meeting, which was held on 7 October, brought forward from previous years to avoid conflicts with other meetings. The Review Meeting is attended by assessors, External Examiner, GCC Staff and chaired by the Chair of the Education Committee. It provides an opportunity to review administrative matters and feedback from candidates, as well as for assessors to raise concerns or issues for discussion.

A number of actions came out of the Test of Competence Review Meeting, including minor amendments to the Evidence of Practice Questionnaire.

#### External Examiner Appraisals and Annual report

The External Examiner quality assures the TOC process, and, at the end of each year, conducts appraisals of all assessors and chairs.

The External Examiner has produced an annual report covering 2021 that sits alongside this report and includes both recommendations and suggestions for improvement of the TOC. The GCC's response to that report is published separately on the GCC's website.

#### The Test of Competence

The Test of Competence is open to chiropractors holding an overseas qualification, which is not recognised for the purposes of registration by the GCC. On initial application the candidate must provide:

- a completed Evidence of Practice Questionnaire, demonstrating how they meet the standards of The Code: Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics for Chiropractors, as well as their understanding of chiropractic in the UK.
- three anonymised patient records
- a copy of their CV/ Resumé
- evidence of their chiropractic qualification; and
- evidence of their identity.

The office conducts a cursory check of documentation, which is then passed to a panel of three assessors to review. The responses provided by the candidate in their submission

directly affects the questions asked at interview, which are tailored to ensure potential gaps in the candidates' knowledge are covered. The interview normally lasts in the region of 90 minutes, although can run longer with remote interviewing.

While it is possible to apply for the Test of Competence at any time, interviews are scheduled monthly from January through to November where there is demand. The August 2021 TOC interview was cancelled as there were no candidates.

## Test of Competence Outcomes

Once a panel has deliberated and reached a decision, the Chair will prepare a report for each candidate, giving the result (or an interim result in the should further evidence be required) often with some pointers for future learning. The report will show one of the following:

Pass	The candidate satisfied the assessment panel they provided sufficient evidence to establish they meet the GCC's Education Standards and considered safe to practise in the UK
Insufficient Evidence	This is not an outcome of itself, as the candidate will go on to either pass or fail after submission of further evidence as outlined in the report. In cases where the candidate provides insufficient evidence in several areas, additional specific information is required within six-months. Following submission of this additional evidence, the panel chair assesses the information, after which the applicant either pass the test, be asked to submit further evidence, or fail. If, after a second time of submitting additional evidence, the candidate has not met the standard they will fail.
Fail	Where the candidate was deficient in the majority of areas, or there were clear concerns above patient safety, the candidate will fail and need to apply again.

## 2021 Test of Competence Results

The Test of Competence has been running in its current format since 2015.

In 2021, 33 individual candidates took the TOC and 34 attempts were made; one candidate took the test twice. Of those 33 candidates, 21 have since registered.

A total of 15 candidates were asked to provide further evidence, in a total of 29 subjects, with the average number of subjects per candidate at 1.9.

**Table 1** - number of individual test candidates since 2015

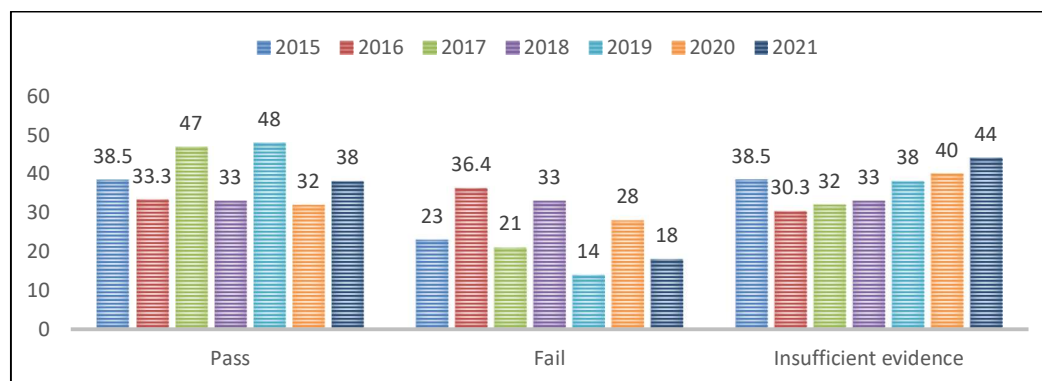
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of candidates	17	32	33	17	20	22	33

There was an increase of 50% on candidate numbers for 2021.

**Table 2** – 2021 initial results after the TOC interview

Initial test results	2021	Total %age
Pass	13	38%
Fail	6	18%
Insufficient Evidence	15	44%
Total attempts	34	

**Figure 1** - comparison of initial test results by percentage since 2015



The percentage of candidates failing fell to 18%, while those passing first time saw a 6% increase. It's noticeable that there has been a steady increase in those needing to supply further evidence since 2016. While there was an increase in the number of candidates in 2021, the number of candidates taking the TOC is still relatively small and therefore any one years rate are not necessarily statistically significant.

### Further Evidence

Those required to submit further evidence, were asked to do so based on some repeated themes as above, the main ones being: -

- Patient clinical records
- Patient safety and understanding of risk factors
- Appropriate use of ionising radiation
- Patient reported outcome measures
- Biopsychosocial model
- Evidence based practice
- Red and yellow flags

**Table 3** –2021 final Test of Competence results once any further evidence has been evaluated

Final test results	2021	Total %age
Pass	28	82%
Fail	6	18%
Total	34	

The final TOC results show a pass rate of 82%, which is a 10% increase on the 2020 pass rate. On average, we would expect to see two thirds pass and the 2021 figures do not show a significant divergence from that.

**Table 4** - Test of Competence results since 2015

	Passed	Further Evidence	Pass after Further Evidence	Fail	Fail after Further Evidence	Total number of tests taken
2015	10	10	19	6	6	26
2016	11	10	20	12	12	33
2017	16	11	27	7	7	34
2018	7	7	14	7	7	21
2019	10	8	18	3	3	21
2020	8	10	18	7	7	25
2021	13	15	28	6	6	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>194</b>

The table above shows a lower number of fails during 2021 than in previous years with fewer overall candidates.

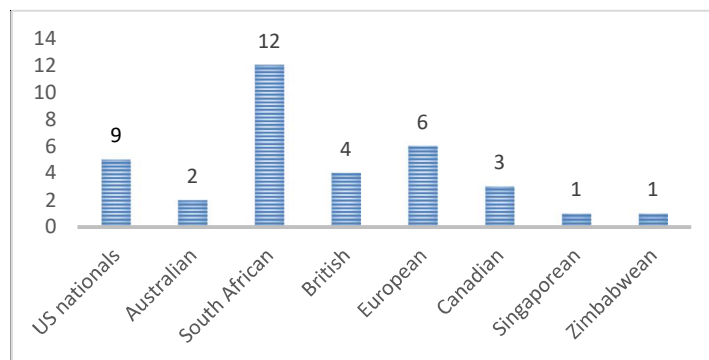
## The Candidates

All candidates applying to sit the Test of Competence are asked to provide details of protected characteristics as well as their nationality, some of which are given below.

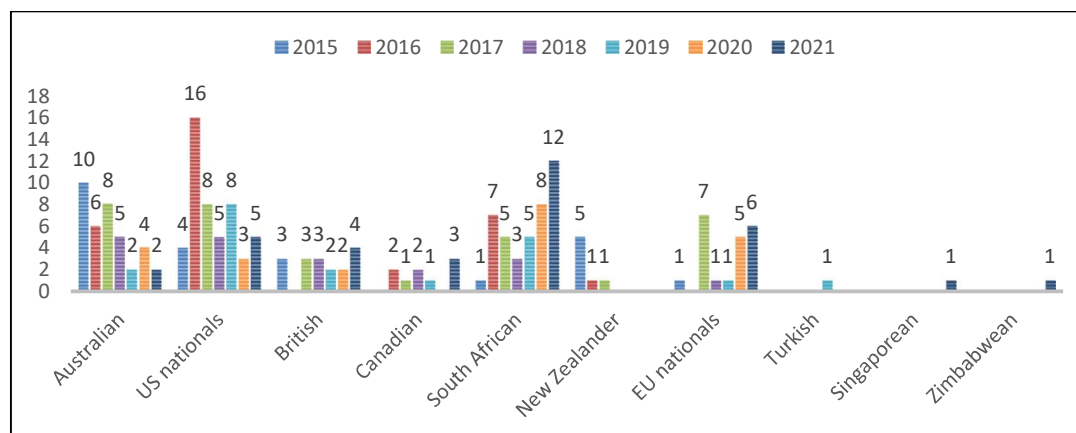
Of the 33 candidates taking the test in 2021 there was an equal split between female and male.

## Nationality of TOC Candidates

**Figure 2** - nationality of test candidates in 2021



**Figure 3** – Nationality of TOC candidates since 2015

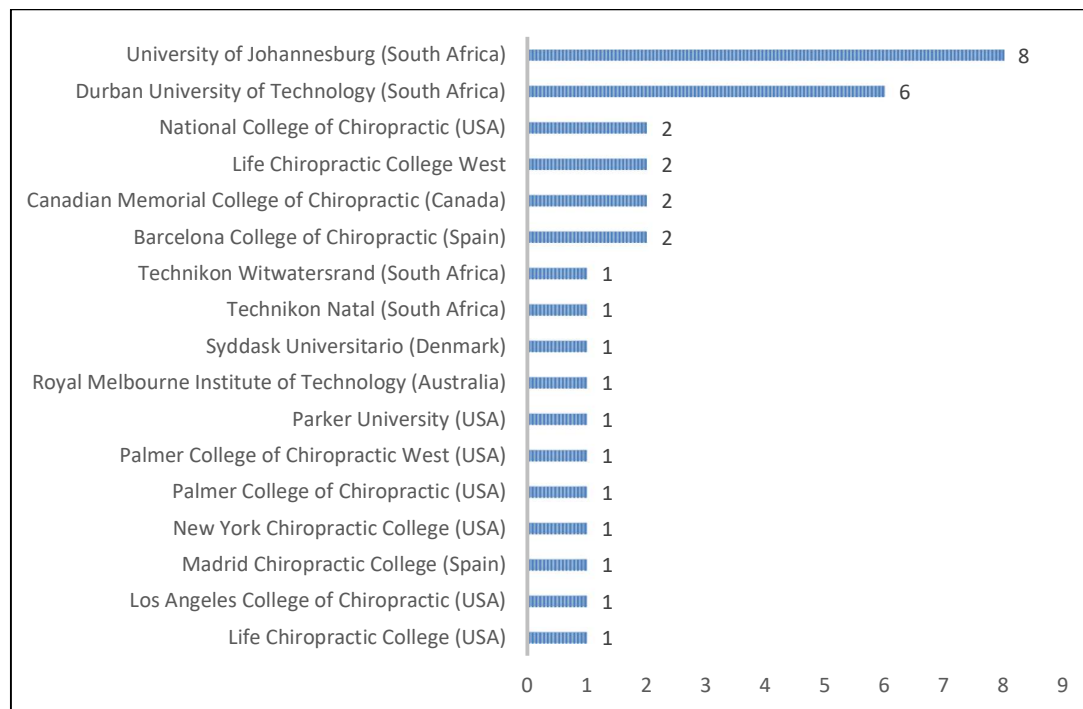


The GCC continues to see a small contingent of British nationals returning from studying overseas and taking the Test of Competence in order to practise in the UK. Additionally candidates from both Singapore and Zimbabwe applied for the first time in 2021.



## Qualification of Applicants

**Figure 4** – number of candidates per education provider in 2021



The number of chiropractors who applied from individual education providers is small. The largest contingent was from the University of Johannesburg. Applications are regularly received from a number of colleges, notably almost 50% of candidates graduated from South Africa.

Only one application was received from a graduate from an Australian chiropractic programme, which may be a result of restrictions in place due to the pandemic.

Five EU nationals applied to sit the Test of Competence in 2021, four of those graduated from chiropractic programmes in Europe. In previous years those four candidates may well have been eligible to apply via the EU registration route.

**Table 5** – Graduation year of 2021 candidates

Year of graduation	Number of candidates
1980-1989	1
1990-1999	2
2000-2005	5
2006-2010	3
2011-2015	5
2016-2020	14
2021+	3

More than half of candidates graduated within the five years prior to taking the Test of Competence, 3 graduated in the year they took the test. This is unremarkable as new graduates are often more mobile than those who have been practising for several years.

## Equality and Diversity Data

As part of the application process, candidates are asked to complete an Equality and Diversity Monitoring form. Collated data from those forms for candidates who took the TOC during 2021 is given below.

### Sex

**Table 6** – Sex of candidates

Sex	Number of candidates
Female	17
Male	16

### Age

**Table 7** – Age of candidates

Age group	Number of candidates
Under 24	0
25-34	17
35-44	7
45-54	7
55-64	2

### Ethnicity

**Table 8** – Ethnicity of candidates

Ethnic group	Number of candidates
White other	17
Asian – Indian	5
Black African	2
Chinese/ Asian	2
Mixed ethnicity	3
Prefer not to say	4

## Religion/ Belief

**Table 9** – Religion/ Belief of candidates

Religion/ Belief	Number of candidates
Christian	19
Hindu	2
Muslim	1
No Religion	9
Sikh	1
Prefer not to say	1

## Disability

**Table 10** – Candidates with disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Number of candidates
Yes	0
No	32
Prefer not to say	1

## Sexuality

**Table 11** – Sexuality of candidates

Sexuality	Number of candidates
Bisexual	2
Heterosexual	30
Prefer not to say	1

## Other TOC matters

### Test of Competence Assessor and Chair Recruitment

During the last month of 2021 a further round of recruitment was conducted for assessors and chairs. This will ensure an adequate number of assessors, as the first cohort of assessors recruited in 2013 come to the end of their term in October 2022. The recruitment drive was particularly focused on encouraging female chiropractors to apply, who are underrepresented in the current pool of assessors. A further seven assessors were appointed, along with one chair. A total of seven of the eight appointed were female. Given the small number of assessors, the increase in the number of candidates coming forward and also that five panel members come to the end of their term in 2022, we will be running a further round of recruitment in 2022.

### TOC literature

There were a number of small changes to the Evidence of Practice Questionnaire to ensure it captures the information required by the assessment panel.

### UK Exit from the EU

The UK's exit from the EU in 2020 meant that the route to registration for EU nationals via EU General Directive 2005/ 26/ EC was no longer available from 11pm on 31 December 2020, resulting in applicants with EU qualifications having to pass the Test of Competence before being able to apply for registration.