

GCC Test of Competence

External Examiner's Annual Report

Period: January 2019 – December 2019

Results

Date of TOC	Results
January Pass rate first attempt 50% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 100%	Number of candidates: 4 Pass:2 Fail: 0 Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence:2
March Pass rate first attempt 50% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 100%	Number of candidates: 4 Pass: 2 Fail: 0 Further Evidence Required: 2 Passed after submitting further evidence:2
June Pass rate at first attempt 43% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 71%	Number of candidates: 7 Pass: 3 Fail: 2 Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence: 2

September	Number of candidates: 6
Pass rate after first attempt 50%	Pass:3 Fail:1
Pass rate after submitting further evidence 83%	Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence:2

Please provide comment on the results in this period.
<p>There were 21 candidates during the period January 2019 -Dec 2019. This is a slight decrease from last years (25), however last year's report included the January 2019 results.</p> <p>When comparing calendar year outputs, there were 21 candidates in both 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>These were both less than earlier years, however the numbers applying appear to have stabilized.</p> <p>Of the 21 candidates, 10 (48%) passed on the first occasion, 3 failed (14%) with a further 8 (38%) passing after submitting further evidence, with a resulting total of 18 (86%) of applicants eligible to apply for registration.</p> <p>All candidates who were required to submit additional information, subsequently passed.</p> <p>In terms of country of qualification, 12 candidates qualified in the USA, 6 in South Africa, 2 in Australia and 1 from Turkey.</p> <p>The age range spanned from 25- 53. The number of those who had qualified within the previous 2 years, was 8. 2 candidates had been qualified 20 years or more.</p> <p>The implications of Brexit may impact on the numbers required to undertake the TOC process in 2021, however the implications for EU chiropractors wishing to practise in the UK, is not known at the time of writing this report.</p>

Analysis of Paperwork

Panel Checklist and Panel Member Recording Sheets
<p>The panel member recording sheets appear to now mainly be used as a preparatory tool, and note taking aid. The checklist appears to have replaced this. The latter again appears to be mainly used for preparation purposes and a checklist during the interview, which all panel members all sign. Of the 2 reviewed, one had been fully completed, the other partially.</p>
Chairs Reports/ Test of Competence Assessment Outcome
<p>The chairs reports are now attached as the 'Test of Competence Assessment Outcome' to the Registrars outcome letter. A sample were reviewed (including pass/fail and further evidence requirements). All were comprehensive, outlining the specific examples from the interview process and the rationale for recommendations.</p>

In particular, where further evidence is required, the chairs reports are very specific about future requirements, and the rationale for why this is necessary.

A sample of additional evidence from candidates was reviewed. It appears that a significant amount of effort is put into the process by candidates and the chairs reviewing the evidence. The production of additional evidence via this process, and the assessment process is quite comprehensive.

The chairs should be commended on the quality of the record keeping, and the time and energy committed to the process.

Result Letters from CER

Results letters are comprehensive and outline clearly the interview feedback and outcomes for participants, reflect the panel's discussion and decisions, and are clear and easy to understand.

Assessment Panel Operation

TOC Pre- Meetings

I attended the pre meetings for the January 2019 assessments. All panel members had prepared thoroughly, in particular the January chair who had appeared to put additional effort into the process, which ensured the panel were adequately prepared.

The preparation appears to be robust, thorough and fair but is still considered quite onerous for the panel members, not only in terms of preparing before the 'pre meeting', but also the pre meeting itself which is a lengthy process on the day prior to the panel interviews.

As identified in my last report the usefulness of the syllabus mapping was questioned by the assessors. Whilst providing a lot of detail it appears to be a time consuming exercise for both the candidate and the assessors, which may not necessarily add enough value to the process. This was further discussed at the TOC review meeting (see below)

TOC Interviews

I attended all the January 2019 interviews, which appeared to be fair and robust process. The chair was experienced, outlined the process to the candidate, and tried hard to put candidates at ease.

All panel members appeared conscientious and vigilant in reviewing the evidence, interviewing the participants, and worked well together as a team. When there were differences in opinion, the group worked through these considering the evidence and next steps before a decision was made.

At the TOC review meeting an issue was raised where a candidate appeared less proficient in their spoken English. The GCC is currently reviewing their policy on English Language proficiency, and how this may be evidenced, when English is not the candidates first language.

Assessor Performance Appraisals

Confirm whether appraisals have been completed for all TOC Assessors and highlight any overall issues that have arisen.

There were 13 assessors during 2019. 12 assessor appraisals were undertaken. One did not have an appraisal, as they have not been recently involved in the process. Two of those appraised had not been part of a panel during 2019, due to different reasons.

Following last year's report recommendations, the GCC has since recruited 4 more female assessors, to address the gender imbalance highlighted last year. Moving forward, there are now 17 assessors available, 10 male/ 7 female. As stated previously, wherever possible, the GCC should now aim to assure where possible, that each panel has a female assessor in the trio. I have noted that this has been planned for the three January 2020 panels.

Whilst the GCC should be commended for being proactive in this process, a small number of assessors are already voicing their concern during the appraisal process, about the number and spread of panel opportunities available for each individual assessor. Concerns have been raised about how assessors keep their knowledge and skills current, if they are only participating in a limited number of panels, spread over lengthier periods.

Allocation of panel assessors, will therefore need to be carefully managed moving forward.

Candidate and Assessor Feedback

Assessor Feedback Forms

I have reviewed all assessor feedback forms submitted.

All appear to feel that the panels worked well together, and that the process was fair and robust.

Comments around their peers were usually around interview techniques and how these may be improved.

Peer feedback from the assessor feedback forms were offered during their appraisal with myself, which appeared to be welcomed.

A discussion took place at the Assessor TOC review meeting, as to whether these could be shared as a form of peer review after each panel, as individual assessors do not usually see their feedback from others. It was agreed that these could be shared.

Candidate Feedback Forms

All candidate feedback forms have been reviewed, the majority were happy with the process. There were no particular areas of concern. Example of positive comments being:-

"I was told how the interview would be structured, so I knew what to expect"

"The interview seemed tough but fair"

"The panel was very kind and I was surprised at the efforts made to make me feel comfortable"

Less positive:-

"Maybe the questions could have been clearer regarding what the panel were looking for"
"More emphasis could be made in the preparatory work required, on what to review in

terms of reviewing UK legislation”

“Could supplementary information be provided on the healthcare structure in the UK”

“Seemed to work well, was tiring and fairly exhaustive, could have done with a break. Questioning got a bit much towards the end”

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints and Appeals for this period.

(Were any complaints received or appeals made, were they handled appropriately, what was the outcome.)

There were no complaints or appeals during this period.

Review and Evaluation of the Process

Please provide comment on the annual review meeting.

The annual review meeting was reasonably well attended (8 out of 13 assessors), a small number were unable to attend due to a conflicting GCC meeting.

Developments made to the TOC process during 2019 were noted:-

These being:-

- The Chair’s report is now given in full to candidates, as the Test of Competence Assessment Outcome attached to the registrars letter.
- 4 new assessors, all female, have been appointed and should address the gender imbalance in panels that was noted last year. One of these was appointed as a chair, alongside the promotion of another current assessor to a Chair role.
- The GCC have published the ‘TOC Myth Buster’, which is available on the website, however I am unable to find this. This may not be therefore easy for applicants to access at this point.

A number of items were discussed by the assessors, these included :-

- Concerns around Spoken English proficiency. As stated above, the GCC is in the process of reviewing their approach to assuring proficiency.
- Concerns around the validity of the syllabus mapping process, in particular for those who may have been qualified a long time. The majority agreed that the mapping process was flawed, and may not offer value in the process. Some however felt it was useful to identify areas for further exploration. A small sub group have reviewed this, and an amended process will be introduced this year.
- Panel peer review feedback- it was agreed to now share these.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The number of applicants (21) is the same as the last calendar year, however a higher success rate for those subsequently admitted to the register was recorded. A significant number were still required to submit further evidence (8/21) however subsequently passed.

The assessor training day was reasonably well attended, and a good discussion took place.

Assessor appraisal, engagement in the TOC review and panel observations continued to demonstrate that the assessors are conscientious, diligent and committed to the process.

Overall, I am satisfied that the process in the year under consideration has been operated satisfactorily, standards maintained, and public safety assured.

Summary of suggestions and recommendations

As part of a continuous improvement process the following are offered:-

- At the next TOC review meeting, it may be useful to clarify which of the current recording forms are essential and non-essential records, and the requirements of panels to fully or partially complete.
- Once the GCC is aware of the impact of the UK withdrawal from Europe for chiropractors who wish to practice in the UK, that consideration is given to the potential impact on the number of TOC panels and assessors required.
- The GCC should continue to consider whether there are any other support mechanisms that could be put in place to assist candidates to improve the first sit pass rate. Whilst applicants are given a link to the Royal College of Chiropractors (RCC) module for TOC preparation (which costs £49), perhaps more emphasis could be placed on the potential usefulness of this. From the candidate feedback forms, it appears that they were looking for better signposting around current health structures in the UK, and supporting legislation requirements. The RCC module appears to cover this.
- Now that the GCC has proactively recruited additional female assessors, wherever possible, a female assessor should be appointed to each panel. Alongside this however, the overall allocation of panel assessors will need to be carefully apportioned to assure where possible, maintenance of knowledge and skills in the process.

Signed :- Carol Ward

Date 27th February 2020

GCC Response to the Test of Competence External Examiner's Report

Below is the response and actions to the suggestions and recommendations made by the External Examiner in her 2019 annual report.

Recommendation	Response	Planned Action (if applicable)
<p>At the next TOC review meeting, it may be useful to clarify which of the current recording forms are essential and non-essential records, and the requirements of panels to fully or partially complete.</p>	<p>Given the review meeting will not be until later in the year, we will email assessors to remind them.</p>	
<p>Once the GCC is aware of the impact of the UK withdrawal from Europe for chiropractors who wish to practice in the UK, that consideration is given to the potential impact on the number of TOC panels and assessors required.</p>	<p>The GCC recognises the possible impact on the ToC that withdrawal from the EU may have. This is because EU applicants apply via EU General Directive 2005/36/EC which will no longer have effect from Exit day. The GCC continues to monitor the situation</p>	<p>The GCC continues to liaise with government, responding to requests for information to ensure that which ever route to registration is available to EU applications, the process runs smoothly.</p> <p>Once the UK's exit route becomes clear we will analyse the available options and apply right touch regulation principles to ensure applicants are not disadvantaged and that patients are not impacted.</p>
<p>The GCC should continue to consider whether there are any other support mechanisms that could be put in place to assist candidates to improve the first sit pass rate. Whilst applicants are given a link to the Royal College of Chiropractors (RCC) module for TOC preparation (which costs £49), perhaps more emphasis could be placed on the potential usefulness of this. From the candidate feedback forms, it appears that they were looking for better signposting around current health structures in the UK and supporting legislation requirements. The RCC module appears to cover this.</p>	<p>There are already a number of resources available for candidates. However, given the recurrence of the same subject, we will look at what other support could be offered.</p>	

Recommendation	Response	Planned Action (if applicable)
<p>Now that the GCC has proactively recruited additional female assessors, wherever possible, a female assessor should be appointed to each panel. Alongside this however, the overall allocation of panel assessors will need to be carefully apportioned to assure where possible, maintenance of knowledge and skills in the process</p>	<p>It is our intention, wherever possible, to include at least one female assessor on each assessment panel.</p>	<p>This has already been implemented.</p>