



GCC Test of Competence External Examiner's Annual Report

Period: January 2017 – January 2018

Results

| Date of TOC | Results |
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| January Pass rate at first attempt: 33% Pass rate after resubmission: 50% | Number of candidates: 6 Pass: 2 Fail: 3 Further Evidence Required: 1 Passed after submitting further evidence: 1 |
| March Pass rate at first attempt: 66% Pass rate after resubmission: 100% | Number of candidates: 9 Pass: 6 Fail: 0 Further Evidence Required: 3 Passed after submitting further evidence: 3 |
| June Pass rate at first attempt: 36% Pass rate after resubmission: 63% | Number of candidates: 11 Pass: 4 Fail: 3 Further Evidence Required: 4 Passed after submitting further evidence: 4 |

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| September Pass rate at first attempt: 50% Pass rate after resubmission: 88% | Number of candidates: 8 Pass: 4 Fail: 1 Further Evidence Required: 3 Passed after submitting further evidence: 3 |
| January Pass rate at first attempt: 22% Pass rate after resubmission: N/A | Number of candidates: 9 Pass: 2 Fail: 5 Further Evidence Required: 2 Passed after submitting further evidence: |

Please provide comment on the results in this period.
(E.g. Any causes for concern, significant trends noticed or any significant differences between these results and those from previous years.)

There is an increase in the numbers of candidates taking the TOC in the period of this report, and as in the previous year based on the same number of panels. During the period of January 2017- January 2018, 43 candidates took the assessment, of whom 18 (42%) passed at their first sitting. Conversely, 12 failed (28%). After submission of further evidence the pass rate rose to 29/43, 67%. [note there are 2 resubmissions arising from the Jan 2018 sitting whose outcomes were not available at the time of this report being written].

It is pleasing to note that on the evidence of the data, the TOC assessment remains as popular as in previous years, which perhaps reflects the popularity of the UK as a destination of young, mobile chiropractors, particularly those recently graduating. It would be interesting to know the age profile of those sitting the TOC.

It is apparent that all candidates who have failed the TOC since 2015 have gone on to pass on their second attempt. . Whether this indicates that some candidates do not adequately prepare for the assessment the first time round is not clear, but it is suggested that the GCC see if there are any further measures that could be put in place to aid candidates to pass on their first attempt.

Analysis of Paperwork

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| Panel Member Recording Sheets (Please provide comment on the sample of panel member recording sheets (TOC Form A)) |
| No issues of major significance were identified. |
| Chairs Reports (Please provide comment on the sample of Chair's reports (TOC Form B) e.g. are they consistent with comments on the TOC form As, do they provide clear information to the Registrar.) |
| No issues were identified with Chairs reports. It would be helpful, as last year, for the external examiner to sample some of the written documents resubmitted by candidates as additional evidence which have then been assessed by the Chairs, to assure consistency between chairs, so far as is possible. Nonetheless, so far as is possible it is concluded that the process has been followed appropriately. |
| Result Letters from CER (E.g. Are these consistent with Chairs Reports? Do they provide sufficient feedback and recommendations to the candidate? Are they clear and easy to understand?) |
| No outstanding issues were identified with the result letters from the CER. |

Assessment Panel Operation

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| TOC Pre- Meetings (E.g. Were decisions discussed appropriately and in detail, were the meetings conducted professionally etc.) |
| I attended a sample of the pre-meetings for the January 2018 assessment. All three panels I observed were operated with professionalism, and efficiency. They were thorough and fair. There was ample evidence that all assessors had read all the candidates' submissions carefully. There was consensus as to the areas identified for questioning in the subsequent panel interview, and use of the checklist (a new innovation for this current year) appeared to work well. It was pleasing to see how panels were developing a helpful methodology to structure their questioning the following day. |
| TOC Interviews (E.g. Were interviews conducted fairly, candidates put at ease, questions explained clearly, panel dynamics etc.) |
| Three panels were observed in January 2018. Each interview with all candidates was professionally conducted. Chairs demonstrated appropriate leadership and sensitivity, putting the candidates at ease. Questions reflected the panels' preparation the day before. An appropriate range of candidates' clinical skills and experience was tested. So far as I could determine, outcomes were appropriate and fair, and the process in accordance with established guidelines. Evidence of good practice in panel operations was observed of the use of pre-documented plans of questioning which greatly assisted efficiency on the day of the panels. |

Assessor Performance Appraisals

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

All appraisals were completed and no significant issues were identified. All appraisees confirmed that they found the process helpful, positive and fair. Assessors have asked for a copy of the completed signed forms sent to them by the GCC office for their records.

Two appraisees had not conducted any TOC assessments during the year under consideration due to unavailability (work constraints) but were willing to update themselves on current practice and experience from other TOC assessors. In my view the two colleagues had adequate experience and motivation to continue as assessors.

Candidate and Assessor Feedback

Assessor Feedback Forms
(E.g. Any significant issues highlighted)

No major issues were identified. All panel members felt that the day as a whole operated 'extremely' or 'pretty well'. It was also felt that the panels worked together 'extremely' or 'quite well'. In their comments on co-assessors all felt that colleagues operated professionally and effectively. It is good to recognise these comments and see standards of professionalism maintained, and a good esprit de corps amongst colleagues.

Candidate Feedback Forms
(E.g. Any significant and/or frequent issues highlighted.)

Most candidates commented that the assessment panels worked well together, though there were some comments that the process was intense. As in previous years, candidates found the assessors polite, supportive and professional, asking relevant questions. Some candidates had difficulty in navigating around the website, or submitting material electronically, though the reason for this is not obvious from my own inspection of the GCC web based material. I am also aware of the good levels of support offered by office staff which is worthy of comment.

Feedback from one candidate was received after the January 2018 panel concerning use of language perceived by the candidate to be judgmental. The external examiner was present at that assessment and observed the very few instances when this was so. It was not felt to be such as to unsettle the candidate, though highlights the importance of careful use of language, and communication skills by assessors.

Since many candidates report that the process is lengthy and tiring, and as external examiner I have noted the lapses in concentration of candidates towards the end of the EPQ section which tended to be the longest part of the assessment, consideration might be given to giving candidates a short break before moving on to the ethical dilemma or the bank questions. It might also be possible to move candidates around between panels to formalise the break, and give other panels opportunity to assess the same candidates.

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints and Appeals for this period.
(Were any complaints received or appeals made, were they handled appropriately, what was the outcome.)

No complaints or appeals were made in this period.

Review and Evaluation of the Process

Please provide comment on the annual review meeting.

Due to a clash in commitments, the external examiner was unable to attend the review meeting this year, though it is clear from the record taken of the meeting that ideas were discussed, and proposals made to improve and refine the process. There was sharing of good practice and information was given to update all assessors.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Regarding the countries from which candidates obtained their qualification, 18 were from US, 9 from South Africa, 10 from Australia, 5 from New Zealand and 1 from France (this candidate did not hold EU Community Rights). The outcome and effect of Brexit will be significant no doubt, especially if the current agreement under the EU General Directive 2005/36/EC is no longer maintained.

The review day provided a useful event to allow assessors to meet and compare notes and suggest refinements to the process and restatement of policy to be made, and is regarded not only as good practice but essential to the process.

Appraisals demonstrated that all assessors were operating professionally and reflection enabled areas of good practice to be identified as well as areas for further development.

The overall pass rates compare with those of previous years which reflects the high standard expected before candidates can register with the GCC.

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:

- Further thought might need to be given to the implications of any withdrawal from the EU General Directive 2005/36/EC for mutual recognition of European qualifications.
- The GCC should consider whether there are any other support mechanisms that could be put in place to assist candidates to improve the first sit pass rate.
- It would be helpful for the external examiner to sample some of the written documents

resubmitted by candidates as additional evidence which have then been assessed by the Chairs, to assure consistency assured between chairs, so far as is possible.

- A reminder should be issued to avoid judgmental language in panel assessment
- Assessors have asked for a copy of the completed signed forms sent to them by the GCC office for their records.
- Given the tiring nature of the day it is suggest that consideration be given to incorporating a rest between the EPQ section and the rest of the session

Signed:



Professor Barry Mitchell

Date:

3/2/18

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

The below is the response and actions as a result of the suggestions and recommendations made by the External Examiner in the 2017/18 annual report.

| Recommendation | Response | Planned Action (If applicable) |
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| Further thought might need to be given to the implications of any withdrawal from the EU General Directive 2005/36/EC for mutual recognition of European qualifications. | It is agreed that further discussions will need to be had following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. | The GCC will need to discuss any changes that may need to be made to requirements after the UK has left the European Union. |
| The GCC should consider whether there are any other support mechanisms that could be put in place to assist candidates to improve the first sit pass rate. | We continue to ensure that we offer as much information as possible on our website for TOC candidates and those who wish to apply. The GCC website provides a clear list of what is covered in the assessment interview as well as useful links and resources which includes details of the online module provided by the RCC that is designed for those preparing to sit the TOC. As the External Examiner has stated, candidates who fail on the first attempt go on to pass on a subsequent attempt. We are aware through anecdotal evidence that many of those who go on to pass the TOC on a second attempt will have utilised tools such as shadowing UK chiropractors and undertaking additional learning. | The TOC process is kept under review and is evaluated in depth on an annual basis. The anecdotal evidence that we have obtained suggests that useful tools that increase the chances of chiropractors passing include undertaking additional UK-based learning and shadowing a UK registrant in practice. We will seek to encourage this activity via our website and discuss the possibility of contacting professional associations to encourage the mentoring of overseas chiropractors. |
| It would be helpful for the external examiner to sample some of the written documents resubmitted by candidates as additional evidence which have | As stated in the last annual report, we agree that this would be helpful and will enable the External Examiner to | Further discussion will need to be had with the External Examiner as to which specific documents will need to be reviewed each year. The |

| Recommendation | Response | Planned Action (If applicable) |
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| then been assessed by the Chairs, to assure consistency assured between chairs, so far as is possible. | ensure that this part of the process is being conducted effectively, fairly and consistently. Unfortunately, due to an oversight this was not provided on this occasion. | office will produce a checklist of these documents to be agreed with the External Examiner. |
| A reminder should be issued to avoid judgmental language in panel assessment | Feedback from the External Examiner was sought following the receipt of feedback from a candidate that judgemental language had been used. The External Examiner concluded that the process was followed appropriately, chaired appropriately and the outcome appropriate and that there were a very few instances where the candidate could have interpreted comments as being judgmental. The External Examiner mentioned this to the panel after the assessment was concluded. | Potential further training for assessors will be discussed as part of the appraisal process for 2018. |
| Assessors have asked for a copy of the completed signed forms sent to them by the GCC office for their records. | We agree that assessors should receive a copy of their signed appraisal forms as part of the appraisal process. | We will ensure that assessors receive copies of their appraisal documentation following completion of the appraisal process. |
| Given the tiring nature of the day it is suggest that consideration be given to incorporating a rest between the EPQ section and the rest of the session | We acknowledge that candidates are under an immense amount of pressure during the interview stage of the TOC and recognise that it is a lengthy process. However, the External Examiner's suggestion earlier in the report to move candidates between panels will | This recommendation will be discussed further at the 2018 annual review meeting. |

| Recommendation | Response | Planned Action (If applicable) |
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| | <p>have significant resource and cost implications for the GCC. We will, however, consider whether short comfort breaks could be given during the interview and whether this will have a significant impact on the scheduling of a TOC interview day.</p> | |