

GCC Test of Competence

External Examiner's Annual Report

Period: January 2018 – January 2019

Results

Date of TOC	Results
January Pass rate first attempt 22% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 44 %	Number of candidates:9 Pass:2 Fail:5 Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence:2
March Pass rate first attempt 33.3% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 66.6%	Number of candidates:3 Pass:1 Fail:1 Further Evidence Required:1 Passed after submitting further evidence:1
June Pass rate at first attempt 40% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 80%	Number of candidates:5 Pass: 2 Fail: 1 Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence: 2

September Pass rate after first attempt 50% Pass rate after submitting further evidence 75%	Number of candidates:4 Pass:2 Fail:0 Further Evidence Required:2 Passed after submitting further evidence:1
January Pass rate 50% Awaiting further evidence from candidates 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

Please provide comment on the results in this period.

There were 25 candidates during the period January 2018 -January 2019. This is a significant decrease from last year (43), and slightly less than previous years (28 in 16/7, and 32 in 15/16).

Of the 25 candidates, 9 (36%) passed on the first occasion, 7 failed (28%) with a further 6 passing after submitting further evidence, with a resulting total of 15 (64%) of applicants eligible to apply for registration. 3 candidates appear to have not submitted their additional evidence yet.

It is difficult to provide a rationale for the decreasing numbers in TOC applications, however as stated above, this years numbers are more in line with earlier years.

The implications of Brexit on the future process, are I understand, currently under discussion by the GCC Council, however this may impact on the future numbers of TOC applications.

Analysis of Paperwork

Panel Member Recording Sheets

The panel member recording sheets are now mainly used as a preparatory tool, and note taking aid. A new checklist has been introduced which appears to have replaced this. This again is mainly used for preparation purposes. The sections relating to outcomes, were mainly left uncompleted, and it appears that the chairs are the only ones who tend to record outcomes.

Chairs Reports

These were reviewed and no issues of major significance were identified.

From January 2019, the Test of Assessment Outcome feedback (TOC form B) is written by the chairs, and attached to the Registrars cover letter to the participant. This removes a stage in the process, and is welcome.

As requested by the previous external examiner, a sample of the “additional evidence” provided by candidates was reviewed. Those sampled appeared to have put a lot of effort into addressing areas of identified concern, and had paid due care and attention to the process. All of those who had provided additional evidence, appear to have passed.

Result Letters from CER

Results letters (which now include the chairs report) are comprehensive and outline clearly the interview feedback and outcomes for participants, reflect the panels 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, and a sample (as part of my induction) for the September assessments. All panel members had prepared thoroughly, in particular the January chair who had appeared to put additional effort into the process, which assured the panel were adequately prepared.

The preparation appears to be robust, thorough and fair but is 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.

All panel members agreed questions to be asked, the order of questions and who would be asking these questions.

Discussion point – 1. The process itself could promote a deficit model, rather than an appreciative / strengths based approach to discussing an applicants competence. The assessors appear to be trying to identify gaps in the participants knowledge and skills during this preparatory stage. Whilst this is understandable, and I am not recommending a change in process, assessors could be encouraged to also consider the participants strengths, how to build on these, alongside how to assure competence by exploring any apparent gaps.

The usefulness of the curriculum mapping was questioned by all assessors during this process. **Discussion point 2-** This process could be questioned in terms of validity, reliability and cost/benefit in the process. Is this still considered essential?

TOC Interviews

I attended all the January 2019 interviews, alongside a sample in September, (the latter as part of my induction process).

An experienced chair in the January interviews, had his own checklist/preamble for explaining the process and putting the applicant at ease (as much as is possible). This appeared to work well, and perhaps could be shared with other chairs as an example of good practice.

The panel members worked well together and tried to put participants at ease. This is quite a challenging process for applicants and often anxiety levels are high.

Discussion point– 3. Following on from the preparatory session, perhaps a focus on strengths at the beginning of the process could put participants at ease more. In addition, due to the nature of the prepared allocation of questions, the interview process is quite fragmented with questions shared between interviewers. This was observed to be quite disorientating for some applicants as the questions continuously switched between interviewers.

Due to the amount of paperwork, there is also a tendency for some interviewers to lose eye contact with applicants when focussing on note taking.

There is therefore the potential to improve the preparatory and interviewing process.

Discussion point 4. The assessors noted that the newly qualified have little (if any) unsupervised practice to share. The patient notes they bring to the process, were often written by supervisors, or written under supervision.

Does this need to be considered further, in the context of the discussion around UK registrants and initial competence/potential for preceptorship. Should overseas applicants be asked to demonstrate experience in practice pre application?

Assessor Performance Appraisals

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

12 out of 13 assessors appraisals were undertaken.

One had not participated in a panel this year, and did not have an appraisal.

No overall issues noted.

Candidate and Assessor Feedback

Assessor Feedback Forms

I have reviewed all assessor feedback forms submitted, which were anonymised. All appear to feel that the panels worked well together. Comments around their peers were around interview techniques and how these may be improved.

Candidate Feedback Forms

The majority of the candidates appeared to find the process reasonable, with some describing it as “a great experience”. The areas that scored less well on Likert scales were around the Likert statements -“I felt supported during the interview”, “the panel made me feel comfortable”, and “the panel re-phrased questions if there was difficulty in understanding”.

One candidate stated that “ It was unsettling when the assessors moved files between each other”

One candidate stated that they had dyslexia, and found it difficult to undertake the preparation.

Discussion point 5 – How do we identify and support participants with dyslexia?

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints and Appeals for this period.

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

One candidate complained about a number of aspects of the process, in particular the interview process, which they found traumatic.

The GCC responded appropriately, and addressed a number of concerns.

There were no appeals.

Review and Evaluation of the Process

Please provide comment on the annual review meeting.

The annual review meeting was well attended.

Unconscious bias training was held in the morning session. Feedback from the assessors around the training was positive.

In the afternoon, a discussion took place around gender representation on the panels and the purpose of curriculum mapping.

Discussion point 6 - There are only three female assessors from a total of 13 assessors. The discussion on the annual review day focussed on why females are under represented in participating in GCC activities.

Alongside this, should the GCC aim to assure where possible that each panel has a female assessor from the current pool?

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Out of the 24 applicants, the nationalities of the applicants were 8 from the US, 6 from South Africa, 4 from Australia, 3 from New Zealand, and 1 from Canada. In terms of candidates, one was 63. The remainder ranged from 24 – 45. 61% (n14 from 23) were 30 years old or younger.

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

During the appraisals it was apparent that there is a good cohort of assessors who feel passionately about their role in protecting the public and are keen to continuously improve the process.

Pass fail and submission of further evidence rates are similar to previous years, however there are still a significant proportion of candidates who do not pass on the first interview.

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:-

- There may be implications of any withdrawal from the EU General Directive 2005/36/EC for mutual recognition of European qualifications, which will need to be considered in relation to future TOC applications.
- 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.
- Assessors could be supported regarding how to take an appreciative enquiry approach early in the interview process, to help put candidates at ease.
- The next assessor training day could include a focus on interviewing techniques- e.g. what works well, and what could be done better in the process.
- Further consideration be given to the purpose and validity of the curriculum mapping process, and whether this should continue.
- Wherever possible, a female assessor should be appointed to each panel.

- The education committee discuss the issue of registration of overseas students, who are newly qualified and struggle to demonstrate the record keeping standards, due to the lack of unsupervised practice.
- Ensure appropriate guidance and support is available for participants with dyslexia, or who have other learning support needs.

Signed: C. Ward

Date: 01/03/2019

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 2018/19 annual report.

Recommendation	Response	Planned Action (If applicable)
<p>There may be implications of any withdrawal from the EU General Directive 2005/36/EC for mutual recognition of European qualifications, which will need to be considered in relation to future TOC applications.</p>	<p>The GCC recognise the possible impact on the ToC 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 continue 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 consider whether there are any other support mechanisms that could be put in place to assist candidates to improve the first sit pass rate.</p>	<p>The GCC website provides candidates with detailed information about the TOC. This is provided to enable candidates to best prepare for what is a robust and rigorous process. We continue to strongly recommend to candidates that this information is reviewed before applying for the TOC and during the application and interview process.</p> <p>The GCC signposts candidates to additional resources, which includes information about Royal College of Chiropractors (RCC) online modules, which are primarily designed to assist candidates sitting the TOC.</p> <p>The GCC has also included reflections from previous TOC candidates on their experiences and how they would advise future candidates to prepare.</p>	<p>As part of the GCC website redesign, the information relating to TOC process and preparations will be review and amend where appropriate.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Planned Action (If applicable)
	The GCC strongly advises that candidates review all of this information before applying for the TOC.	
<p>Assessors could be supported regarding how to take an appreciative enquiry approach early in the interview process, to help put candidates at ease.</p> <p>The next assessor training day could include a focus on interviewing techniques- e.g. what works well, and what could be done better in the process.</p>	The GCC has always been supportive of assessors and happy to consider training that can be provided where useful and appropriate to do so.	The GCC will liaise with assessors to discuss their training needs, taking into consideration the need for any learning around appreciative inquiry.
Further consideration be given to the purpose and validity of the curriculum mapping process, and whether this should continue.	<p>The syllabus mapping element of the TOC process has been subject to a number of reviews over the last year. The GCC has worked with TOC assessors and we have provided some additional guidance to candidates for the completion of this document, including an example to guide candidates.</p> <p>The new guidance was made available to TOC candidates for June & September 2018, January & March 2019 and we will be seeking their feedback on these. Further discussions will need to be had with TOC assessors to ascertain the future of this process. The results of this will be communicated to the Education Committee.</p>	<p>The GCC will have further discussions with TOC assessors to ascertain the future of this element of the TOC process, the results of which will be communicated to the Education Committee and any changes will be made as appropriate.</p> <p>Depending on the outcome of discussions with the assessors, the GCC will seek feedback from candidates on the additional guidance for completion of the syllabus mapping.</p>
Wherever possible, a female assessor should be appointed to each panel.	With only 3 female assessors, ensuring at least one per panel can be challenging and depends on availability.	The GCC will, where possible, include a female assessor on TOC panels.
The education committee should	The GCC is open to this	This will be discussed at the

Recommendation	Response	Planned Action (If applicable)
discuss the issue of registration of overseas students, who are newly qualified and struggle to demonstrate the record keeping standards, due to the lack of unsupervised practice.	discussion, but the requirement is set out in the Education Standards and therefore must remain a requirement.	GCC Education Committee in April 2019.
Ensure appropriate guidance and support is available for participants with dyslexia, or who have other learning support needs.	<p>The GCC Reasonable Adjustments Policy is available for TOC candidates on the website.</p> <p>We would encourage TOC candidates with a disability, requiring a reasonable adjustment/s to advise the Registration Team at the start of the TOC application process to allow appropriate action/s to be taken.</p>	The TOC Evidence of Practice Questionnaire which is completed by each TOC candidate will be updated to include a question asking whether the candidate has a disability requiring a reasonable adjustment with a link to the GCC Reasonable Adjustments Policy.