Requirements for the MLA Clinical and Professional Skills Assessment

Medical Licensing Assessment
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Requirements for the Medical Licensing Assessment Clinical and Professional Skills Assessment is annexed to - and forms part of – Assuring readiness for practice: a framework for the MLA.

Background

The Medical Licensing Assessment

The purpose of the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) is to ensure that doctors seeking registration with a licence to practise medicine in the UK have met a common threshold for safe practice that is appropriate to their point of entry to the medical register.

The MLA has two components: the applied knowledge test (AKT) and the clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA), through which candidates can demonstrate they are ready for safe practice, able to manage uncertainty, and deliver person-centred care. These are the three themes underpinning the MLA content map, which sets out the core knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for UK practice.

The CPSA is a performance-based assessment* of clinical and professional skills, knowledge and behaviours. It is set and delivered by:

- UK medical schools† for medical students in their penultimate or final year of undergraduate education, and
- the GMC for those international medical graduates (IMGs) who wish to practise medicine in the UK and must demonstrate their knowledge and skills through taking the MLA.

* Irrespective of the format that each assessment provider has chosen to use (eg Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), Objective Structured Long Examination Record (OSLER), Practical Assessment of Clinical Examination Skills (PACES)).
† Under section 4.4 of the Medical Act 1983 medical schools may, with GMC approval, unite or cooperate to design, construct, and deliver the Applied Knowledge Test for UK medical students.
Joining the medical register

Before they can join the medical register with provisional registration with a licence to practise granted by the GMC, UK medical students graduating from the academic year 2024-25 will need to hold a medical degree awarded by a university included in the list maintained by the GMC of bodies entitled to award a Primary Medical Qualification that includes a pass in both parts of the MLA and the other assessments set by their medical school.

From 2024, before they can apply for registration with a licence to practise, IMGs who need to take the MLA will need to pass both parts of the MLA and meet our other conditions, including providing evidence demonstrating that they have an acceptable primary medical qualification, clinical experience and the necessary knowledge of English.

Purpose of this document

This document specifies the requirements that each assessment provider’s CPSA must meet.

By meeting these requirements, an assessment provider is demonstrating the quality, consistency and fairness of their CPSA to a standard that the GMC requires for the CPSA to count towards a candidate’s MLA. In identifying these requirements, we have ensured they are based on scholarship and effective practice.

An assessment provider must submit a narrative and supporting evidence (“the submission”) to us to show how their CPSA meets these requirements. We will then review the submission, with the help of a panel of independent assessment experts, to decide whether their CPSA meets the requirements.

Accompanying guidance

Further information on how to complete the submission is available in the accompanying guidance.

Design

Assessment strategy

1 Describe and demonstrate how the CPSA sits within the overall assessment strategy for the final and penultimate years, eg workplace-based assessments (WPBA) and clinical procedural skills.

* This document refers to all medical schools and the GMC as ‘assessment providers’ and all test-takers as ‘candidates’.
CPSA design
2 Describe the rationale for the design of the CPSA. This should include:
   a format
   b station type
   c testing time, including number and duration of stations.

Scoring
3 Describe the rationale for the approach to scoring candidate performance:
   a within station (eg domain/checklist/overall global judgement)
   b how results are aggregated at the level of the overall assessment
   c any marks or judgements given by the simulated or real patient, and how they contribute to the overall score.

Standard setting
4 Describe and demonstrate how standards are set for the first take and resit, as applicable, and the underlying rationale for the chosen method(s), including:
   a standard setting method at station and overall assessment level
   b any additional passing criteria (eg minimum number of stations passed).

Assessing professionalism
5 Describe and demonstrate how professionalism is assessed during the CPSA and unprofessional behaviours are captured and followed up.

Content

Content sampling
The MLA content map is informed by Outcomes for graduates, the Foundation Programme training outcomes, the Generic professional capabilities framework and Good medical practice.

6 Describe how the CPSA content relates to the MLA content map:
   a Demonstrate that the CPSA maps to the three overarching themes:
i Readiness for safe practice

ii Managing uncertainty

iii Delivering person-centred care

b Demonstrate how the CPSA maps to the individual domains:

i Areas of clinical practice

ii Areas of professional knowledge

iii Clinical and professional capabilities

iv Practical skills and procedures

v Patient presentations

vi Conditions

c Demonstrate that candidates can identify and interpret clinical findings.

**Quality of CPSA content**

7 Describe and demonstrate how stations are created and approved, and quality is maintained. This should include:

a how station writers are trained

b the process for creating, reviewing and approving new stations, and reusing existing stations

c how a range of appropriate stakeholders is involved in the creation and development of stations to assure their authenticity and level of challenge

d how feedback collected on the day of the CPSA and post-exam station metrics are fed into the writing and review process.

**Security of CPSA content**

8 Describe and demonstrate how the security of the assessment content is maintained.
Preparation of and support for candidates

Familiarisation with the assessment process for candidates

9  Describe and demonstrate how candidates have been given information about the CPSA in advance, and briefed on the day, covering:

   a  assessment format, including the criteria for achieving a pass

   b  expected standards of performance

   c  how the CPSA will be run on the day.

Results and feedback to candidates

10 Describe and demonstrate what results and feedback are given to candidates and how the quality of any feedback is assured, as well as what support is given to unsuccessful candidates.

Preparedness of examiners and patients for the CPSA

Examiners

We encourage the inclusion of multi-professional, lay and training grade examiners. Professionally qualified examiners must be in good standing with the relevant regulatory body.

11 Describe how examiners are recruited, trained, briefed and calibrated, and demonstrate:

   a  criteria for becoming an examiner

   b  training to support examiners’ preparedness

   c  details of marking calibration

   d  details of equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) training.

Simulated/real patients

12 Describe how simulated/real patients are involved in the CPSA, and demonstrate how they are recruited, trained, briefed and calibrated.
Collaboration between examiners and patients

13 Describe and demonstrate how the examiner and simulated/real patient for each station are given the opportunity to meet and familiarise themselves with the station content.

Feedback to examiners and simulated patients

14 Describe and demonstrate what feedback is given to examiners and simulated patients, and how the impact of this feedback is monitored.

Policies and resources

Policies and procedures

15 Demonstrate that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with all aspects of the CPSA.

Resources and space

16 Demonstrate that the CPSA takes place in a space appropriate for a high stakes assessment with access to appropriate clinical resources.

Data management

Data acquisition

17 Describe and demonstrate the approach to accurate and consistent data acquisition during the CPSA and dealing with missing data identified during the CPSA itself.

Production of results

18 Describe and demonstrate how results data are combined and checked after the CPSA to produce results for the exam board, including:

a approach to missing data identified during production of results

b approaches to post-assessment mark-data changes.
Evaluation and quality assurance

Psychometric analysis

19 Describe and demonstrate how the assessment data are analysed and how the outcomes of the analysis feed into post-CPSA review, evaluation and decision making. This should include:

a what analyses are conducted

b how the analysis is used to improve station quality

c how the analysis informs the development of the CPSA.

External examiners

20 Describe and demonstrate how the external examiners contribute to the quality of the CPSA and how the assessment provider responds to their advice.