

FAQs: taking part in our written and practical assessment pilots

What can doctors get out of the experience?

Taking part in a pilot day is an opportunity for you to gain extracurricular experience that can be used in applications or appraisals. For doctors in training, this is also a chance to get valuable exam practice.

You'll also receive **£350** for taking part in an OSCE pilot, and **£175** for taking part in a knowledge test pilot.

What are the pilot days?

At the pilot days, volunteer doctors test the material we use in two assessments:

- The [tests of competence](#), which form part of an overall assessment of a doctor's professional performance and are a way of assessing their knowledge and skills. A doctor may be asked to take this when we are investigating their fitness to practise. This assessment uses questions and OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) stations.
- The [revalidation assessment](#), which forms part of a doctor's revalidation and is a way of assessing a doctor's fitness to practise. A doctor may be asked to take this if they don't have a connection to a responsible officer or suitable person. This assessment uses questions only.

Testing the material used in these assessments with a wide range of doctors helps us make sure the tests are reliable, set at the right level and fair to the doctor being assessed.

Pilot days are an opportunity to get feedback from doctors about the practical and written assessments, which helps us improve them. We also collect performance data on our content from doctors of all grades in individual specialties.

What about coronavirus?

We regularly review coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines and adapt how we run our pilot events to bring us in line with current advice, and all changes made are thoroughly risk assessed before implementation. Due to the changing nature of COVID-19, you'll be sent information about specific measures we have in place nearer to the time of the event. If you have any questions, please email adt.events@gmc-uk.org for advice.

Can any doctor take part in these events?

Doctors taking part in these events must:

- be registered with a licence to practise in the UK
- be FY2 to consultant level and have worked in the specialty being piloted for at least four months in the last year
- not have any fitness to practise concerns

You can take part in one OSCE and one knowledge test pilot a year as a candidate.

Can SAS doctors take part in the pilot days?

Yes, SAS doctors can take part if they have worked in the specialty being piloted for at least four months in the last year. If you have any questions when completing the booking form, please email adt.events@gmc-uk.org for advice.

Which specialties are you recruiting for?

We run various pilot days throughout the year, each testing a different specialty. We regularly review the material used in our assessments to identify which specialties need expanding or updating. Based on this, we usually advertise pilot days for the required specialties about four months in advance – take a look at which specialties we're currently recruiting for [here](#).

Where are the pilot days held?

The location of the pilot days will depend on the specialty we're testing as we require venues with specialist medical equipment and specially-trained staff onsite. At the moment, we plan to hold pilot events in Manchester and London.

What can I expect from the day? What will I be asked to do?

You'll either attend an OSCE pilot (full day) or a knowledge test pilot (half day).

- OSCE pilot: on the day, you'll complete an OSCE with 10-12 stations testing a range of clinical skills relevant to the specialty you work in. You'll then break for lunch and sit a second OSCE circuit in the afternoon.
- Knowledge test pilot: you'll sit a two hour written knowledge test.
- We'll ask you for feedback about the questions and stations too.
- For some specialties, you may also be asked to complete an additional test, for example, reporting on histopathology slides.

What are the timings and structure of the day?

The structure of each pilot event might vary slightly, but an average OSCE day will run as follows:

- Assessors and candidates arrive at 9:30 am for briefings and refreshments
- Candidates complete 10-12 practical OSCE stations
- Lunch is provided
- Candidates complete 10-12 practical OSCE stations
- Feedback from the day
- The day usually ends around 4:00 pm

On a knowledge test pilot day, you can expect to sit a two hour single best answer test in the morning, followed by a short feedback session. The day is expected to end around 12:00 pm.

Do I need to revise beforehand?

We wouldn't expect you to revise for the pilot day, as we want to get an idea of how doctors perform at various levels of experience rather than testing you specifically.

How difficult are the assessments?

The material will be appropriate for doctors practising within a certain specialty, with many scenarios aimed at doctors of FY2 level and some pitched at a more senior grade. At each station the assessor will ask you your grade and take this into account when scoring. We anticipate candidates with less experience to find certain questions and stations harder - we're not expecting perfect scores.

Can I take part as an assessor on the day?

If you're a consultant or GP, you might also be eligible to assess the practical exam within your specialty. You'll need to be registered with a licence to practise and have worked in the specialty being piloted in the last two years. You can register for this through the same pilot [booking page](#). We'll ask about your relevant OSCE experience before confirming your eligibility to be an assessor.

Assessors can attend pilot days within their specialty on a regular basis.

What's involved with being an assessor?

You'll be briefed on the morning of the pilot day and assigned an OSCE station to mark. You'll have time to run through your station with the actors and other assessors before the OSCEs begin.

We'll talk you through our marksheets and you'll assess each candidate's performance at your station. At the end of the day, we'll ask you for your feedback so that we can improve our OSCE stations.

Like candidates, you'll receive £350 for taking part as well as lunch and reasonable travel expenses.

Will my travel expenses be covered?

We'll pay reasonable travel expenses for candidates and assessors coming from any part of the UK to attend our pilot days. You'll receive more information about expenses with your confirmation email.

Knowledge test pilots are held on the same day in both London and Manchester. Please choose the event that you can attend at the lowest cost.

What happens if I perform poorly on the assessment?

In the unlikely event that your scores indicate a serious impairment of your fitness to practise, it will be our duty to consider investigating. However, based on how this process has worked to date, this is an extremely rare occurrence.

What happens to my data after the pilot day?

We scan your results onto our systems where they are kept securely. We then use your data, along with data collected from other volunteers, to help us edit and select content for our exams. Your personal details will not appear in any of our performance reports.

We may also use data from the pilot days to conduct research into assessments. Again, we would use this data anonymously and your personal details would not appear in our research.

How do I sign up?

Head over to our [booking page](#) to sign up for an event. Here, you can see which pilot days we're holding over the next few months and register your interest if we're recruiting volunteers in your specialty. We will then contact you with further information.