

FAQs: taking part in our written and practical assessment pilots

What can doctors get out of the experience?

Taking part in a pilot is an opportunity to gain extracurricular experience that can be used in applications or appraisals. For doctors in training, this is 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 written exam pilot.

What are pilots?

At 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.

Pilots are an opportunity to get feedback from doctors about the practical and written assessments, which helps us improve them.

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 written exam pilot per year as a candidate.

Can SAS doctors take part in pilots?

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.

Can I take study leave to attend a pilot?

Yes, you can take study leave to attend a pilot instead of receiving the day fee. You'd need to agree this with your employer. We'll reimburse expenses in line with our policy.

Which specialties are you recruiting for?

We run various pilots 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 pilots for the required specialties about four months in advance – the specialties we're currently recruiting for can be found [here](#).

Where are pilots held?

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

Will my travel expenses be covered?

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

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

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

- OSCE pilot: on the day, you'll complete an OSCE with 6-10 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.

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- Written exam pilot: you'll sit a two hour knowledge test of single best answer questions.
 - We'll ask you for feedback about the questions and stations.
 - 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?

You can find an agenda [here](#). The timings and structure of each pilot might vary slightly.

Do I need to revise beforehand?

We wouldn't expect you to revise for the pilot, 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 examiner will ask you your grade and take this into account. We anticipate candidates with less experience to find certain questions and stations harder - we're not expecting perfect performance.

What happens to my data after the pilot?

Your feedback is stored and used to improve the assessment material. For written exams, we also scan and use your results, alongside other candidates, to help us select content for our exams.

All data is stored securely on our systems. Your personal details will not appear in any of our performance reports.

We may also use data from pilots 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 pilots 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.

What if my specialty isn't on the list?

Email adt.events@gmc-uk.org to register your interest for a future pilot in your specialty.

Can I take part as an examiner on the day?

If you're a consultant or GP, you might 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 [booking page](#). We'll ask about your relevant OSCE experience before confirming your eligibility to be an examiner.

Examiners can attend OSCE pilots within their specialty on a regular basis.

What's involved with being an examiner?

You'll be briefed on the morning of the pilot, our feedback process will be explained and you'll be assigned an OSCE station. You'll have time to run through your station with the actors and other examiners before the OSCEs begin. After lunch, you'll be assigned a new OSCE station to assess.

Throughout the circuit, you'll provide feedback on each candidate's performance at your station. At the end of the day, we'll ask for your feedback on the stations so we can make improvements.

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

Any other queries

Please contact adt.events@gmc-uk.org.