

MRCPsych CASC Quality Assurance Process

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is committed to providing a valid and reliable assessment of knowledge and clinical skills, and therefore employs several measures to ensure the quality of the CASC Examination.

Examiners are required to have held a consultant or equivalent post for a minimum of three years and must be involved in the training of junior doctors. Examiners are also required to attend an Induction Training Course as well as a refresher training course every two years, which includes Equality and Diversity Training. These training sessions utilise CASC videos that allow examiners to practice marking candidates and provides a forum for them to raise and seek clarification on any issues they may have.

Each station is internally criterion-referenced by the examiners through a standardisation exercise that is performed at each examination to ensure that examiners and role players are clear about how each station should run and the standard of the marking to be applied. In this exercise examiners break off into groups corresponding to the station that they are examining. There they engage in a discussion on the station construct, chaired by a lead examiner, and come to a consensus on the standard that candidates are expected to achieve in order to obtain a passing mark. The group of role players assigned to a particular station also meet to ensure consistency in the way the role is played, and then this is discussed and agreed with the group of examiners.

A group of internal and external observers made up of examiners, role players, and lay persons, monitor each exam for the consistency of administration, marking, and role playing and to inform examination development. The examiners and role players in the group are reserves that are on hand to stand in for someone in the event that they become ill or are otherwise unable to continue with the examination. This means that the observing group varies depending on allocation, and that they are able to focus solely on observation as they are not participating in the examination.

Following each diet of the CASC the Examinations Sub-Committee is provided with a detailed report by the College's Psychometric Analyst to ensure that candidates' scores are accurate and reasonably free from measurement error. This report includes but is not limited to; candidate pass rates by gender, primary medical qualification, training post, country of work, and attempts; reliability coefficients, pass rates by day and by station; item-total correlations; reliability coefficients if the item is deleted. This report is reviewed by the college's external psychometrician and the Examinations-Sub Committee Lay Member who is a senior academic.