

Test of competence 2021

Nursing Associates

OSCE information booklet

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SECTION 1: Before the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

1. Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) introduced a new test of competence for internationally registered nursing associates for use from January 2022. The test of competence measures candidates against the current UK standards of proficiency for [nursing associates](#)¹.

There is a test of competence specific to nursing associates which you will be required to undertake. This booklet provides information about Part 2 of the test of competence, which is an objective structured clinical examination (an OSCE). The blueprints and the test specifications are available on the [NMC website](#)². The university learning platforms at the test centres also contain links to online resources, which will help candidates to prepare for the test of competence.





There are currently five NMC competence test centres in the UK: Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Northumbria University, Oxford Brookes University, Ulster University and the University of Northampton. To quality-assure OSCEs across all five and for moderation purposes, it will be necessary for the centres to share OSCE data, including paperwork and video data associated with a candidate's examination. Data will also be shared with the test design partner for quality assurance purposes. All information is shared securely. By submitting your application, you are confirming that you have read and understood this information.

¹ [Standards of proficiency for registered nursing associates - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](#)

² <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/trained-outside-the-eueea/adult-general-nursing/>

2. General information about the competence test centres

Please allow plenty of time to travel to the competence test centre. Bear in mind that rush-hour traffic often causes delays. If you arrive late, you might not be able to take the OSCE.

University	Contact details	Location details
 The Leeds Teaching Hospitals <small>NHS Trust</small>	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net 0113 392 0764	You can find out more about how to get to the Leeds Competence Test Centre on the website³ .
 Northumbria University <small>NEWCASTLE</small>	Northumbria University CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk 0191 300 2441	You can find out more about how to get to Northumbria University – Coach Lane Campus on the website⁴ .
OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY	Oxford Brookes University ctc@brookes.ac.uk 01865 488 418	Oxford Brookes comprises two sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford • Swindon You can find out more about how to get to both sites on the travel webpage⁵ .
 Ulster University	Ulster University – Magee ctc@ulster.ac.uk 02871 675 150	You can find out more about how to get to Ulster University – Magee campus on the location webpage⁶ .
 University of Northampton	University of Northampton ctc@northampton.ac.uk 01604 892 066	You can find out more about how to get to the innovation centre at the University of Northampton on the website⁷ .

³ <https://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/careers/osce-test-centre-leeds/directions/>

⁴ <https://collab.northumbria.ac.uk/osce/location/>

⁵ <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/study/courses/professional-and-short-courses/healthcare-cpd/nmc-competence-test-centre/locations/>

⁶ <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/faculties/life-and-health-sciences/nmc-competence-test-centre/location>

⁷ <https://ctc.northampton.ac.uk/>

3. What is the UK like?

The UK is a multicultural, multi-faith society where all patients must have their culture, faith and human rights respected by all healthcare professionals. Furthermore, all patients must be treated equally and not be subject to discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation, in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#)⁸.

The UK may be very different from the last country you practised in, and you should spend time finding out about the population, health and social care, and other aspects of life. Your test will be related to current practice in the UK.

4. Becoming familiar with nursing associate practice in the UK

You must familiarise yourself with the ethical and professional standards expected of registered nursing associates, as outlined in [NMC \(2018\) 'The Code'](#)⁹. These are the required standards, which underpin professional nursing associate practice.

All healthcare professionals must work in partnership with patients, obtaining their consent and respecting their dignity and privacy. It is unacceptable for your words or actions to imply or express disapproval of any patient's lifestyle. You must not discriminate in any way against those in your care. Patients and the public expect high standards of professional practice from nursing associates.

Nursing associates work in partnership with other healthcare professionals. Nursing associates are expected to contribute to several areas of care where they have expertise. Many organisations are recruiting nursing associates, using 'the 6 Cs' – care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment – and you should be familiar with these and be able to demonstrate them throughout Part 2 of the test of competence (the OSCE).

5. Applying for OSCE Part 2

Part 2 is a nursing associate objective structured clinical examination (OSCE). The Part 1 computer-based test (CBT) and the Part 2 OSCE can be taken in either order, but the majority of candidates take the CBT in their home country before travelling to the UK and taking the OSCE.

Please note: Only the NMC can authorise you to undertake Part 2 of the OSCE.

Once your qualification has been confirmed to meet the requirements for registration and you have reached the application preparation stage on your application, you will receive a Test of Competence invitation email from NMC confirming your eligibility to sit the CBT and the OSCE. You will be able to contact one of the OSCE test centres to book your OSCE – part 2.

If you have a disability requiring any reasonable adjustments, please notify the competence test centre separately, after booking your OSCE. You may be entitled to extra time at the stations if you have learning support needs. Evidence from professional reports **must** be provided at the time of booking, to verify the learning support needs adjustments prior to undertaking the OSCE. The academic lead/manager and the appropriate wellbeing and occupational health team at the university will review the report and provide advice on an individual basis. Further information can be found in [Annexe 1](#)

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

⁹ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

6. How do I prepare for the OSCE?

The OSCE is designed to assess your ability to competently apply your professional nursing associate skills and knowledge in the UK. It is set at the level expected of nursing associates as they enter the profession at the point of registration. This means that you must demonstrate that you are capable of applying knowledge to the care of patients at the level expected of a newly registered nursing associate.

The examination is testing your ability to apply knowledge and skills to the care of patients, rather than testing how well you can remember and recite facts. All scenarios and associated questions relate to current best practice, and you should answer them in relation to published evidence. Please refer to the reading lists, which contain references for each OSCE station.

Support materials are available on the NMC website. There is a set of preparation materials available nursing associates. These include:

- mock OSCE
- reading lists
- marking criteria
- 'Preparing for your OSCE' handbook.

There are examples of the documentation, including observation charts, relating to the field of practice for which you are being examined included in the mock OSCEs, as well as background reading, useful information and links.

You are advised to access the following required materials to begin your preparation:

- NMC (2018) 'The Code': <https://www.nmc.org.uk/code>
- The NMC blueprints and test specifications: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/toc/toc-2021/resources/>

Please note: We have become aware that some organisations and consultancies are offering OSCE preparation training sessions for candidates for Part 2 of the test of competence. Please be aware that by attending these courses offered by third parties, you do so at your own risk. These training sessions are not endorsed or approved by either the competence test centres or the NMC, and they could prepare you inaccurately for the examination.

7. Overview of the OSCE

Your ability to apply your knowledge is tested in Part 1 of the NMC test of competence. In Part 2, you will be tested on your clinical and communication skills. In other words, you will demonstrate how you apply holistic patient-centred nursing associate care and how you apply key clinical skills.

Everything you see in the OSCE is as set out in the blueprints and the test specification on the [NMC webpage¹⁰](#). These set out the scope and content of the examination in terms of the topics, skills and procedures that a newly registered nursing associate would need to know and be able to do.

¹⁰ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/toc21>

For example, if a scenario involves a vulnerable adult or child with a non-accidental injury, candidates would be expected to know that the person or child may need to be removed from those suspected of causing the injury. Candidates would be expected to know how to raise concerns, know that they should alert the relevant safeguarding team, and be able to share information appropriately within and across care teams. We do not expect candidates to have detailed information about procedures or policies that are specific to certain NHS trusts. We cannot test everything, but we will test **typical** nursing associate scenarios and clinical skills that UK nursing associates will encounter.

8. Evidence base for nursing associate practice

You can find evidence-based guidelines in nursing journals and texts and from professional organisations' webpages, such as the [Royal College of Nursing](https://www.rcn.org.uk/)¹¹. [The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](https://www.nice.org.uk/)¹² and [Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network](https://www.sign.ac.uk/)¹³ are also useful sources. A reading list is provided giving links to the evidence base for each skills station.

¹¹ <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>

¹² <https://www.nice.org.uk/>

¹³ <https://www.sign.ac.uk/>

9. What will I be tested on?

The OSCE comprises 10 stations, with a total testing time of about 3 hours. Three stations will be scenario-based and will relate to three stages of the nursing associate care process:

- **Assessment**
- **Implementation**
- **Evaluation.**

Five of the seven remaining stations will take the form of stations which test practical clinical skills. Each skills stations will last for up to 12 minutes with a short break allowed between the stations.

Please remember that you will have done many of these nursing associate skills several times before. Make sure that you read the station instructions and scenarios carefully. Do not be afraid to take the opportunity to look at them again if you are unsure. You will not be penalised for this.

Typical skills that may be tested either on their own or within a nursing associate scenario include:

- Pain Assessment and Hospital Admission (Linked Skill)
- Administration of Inhaled Medication
- Blood Glucose Monitoring
- Catheter Specimen of Urine
- Fluid Balance
- Informed Consent
- Oxygen Therapy
- Peak Flow
- Physiological Measurement
- Pressure Area Assessment
- Subcutaneous Injection

In each OSCE, one station will specifically assess professional issues associated with professional accountability and the related skills around communication. One station will also specifically assess critical appraisal of research and evidence and associated decision-making. These two stations are both written stations.

10. Communication skills

Communication is central to nursing associate practice and will be assessed continually during the OSCE.

We assess the full range of communication skills (verbal, non-verbal and written) by observing the interaction between the candidate and a simulated patient (this may be an actor or a manikin) and also by assessing your nursing associate documentation in each station.

The assessor will assess your approach to the patient throughout the examination, and will assess your communication skills such as:

- clearly explaining care, diagnosis, investigations and/or treatments
- involving the patient in decision-making
- communicating with relatives and healthcare professionals
- seeking and obtaining informed consent
- active listening
- dealing appropriately with an anxious person or anxious relatives
- providing clear instructions on discharge
- providing advice on lifestyle, health promotion or risk factors
- demonstrating compassion and care during communication
- clear documentation that meets the requirements of NMC (2018) 'The Code'
- Professional behaviour
- professional attitude.

You should speak to the patient as you would any person you are meeting for the first time. If you are being assessed using a manikin, please remember to verbalise your actions, and reasons for actions, in the same way as you would with a real patient. If you ask the manikin a question, the assessor will answer accordingly.

A. Approaching the patient/manikin

- Introduce yourself and explain or clarify the purpose of the nursing associate encounter.
- Check what the patient wants you to call them.
- Be polite, respectful and non-judgemental, and maintain the patient's dignity.
- Be empathic, acknowledge the patient's emotions or concerns, and show sensitivity to any discomfort.
- Ensure that you gain consent from the patient (or carer/guardian for children or certain people with disabilities) prior to undertaking any procedures.
- Be sensitive to personal space, stand or sit at an appropriate distance from the actor/manikin, and be aware of their body language. You are too close if the actor moves back or recoils.
- Treat a manikin as you would a real patient.

B. Explaining and advising

- Establish what the patient already knows and/or wants to know.
- Explain clearly what you are going to do and why, so that the patient can understand.
- Remember always to check whether the patient understands or has any questions.

- Offer appropriate reassurance.
- Do not alarm the patient but you must be able to explain the need for urgent action if it is required.
- Do not routinely oversimplify names for parts of the body. It is reasonable to expect that most people will know common body names such as 'bladder', 'ovary', 'womb' and 'vein'. If you doubt a patient's understanding, check and alter your communication to meet their individual needs.
- Treat the manikin as you would a real person.

C. Involving the patient in management

- Respect the patient's autonomy, and help them to make a decision based on the available evidence-based information.
- Explain information and its implications so that the patient can make an informed choice about their care.
- Check the patient's understanding and feelings about the proposed nursing associate interventions.
They may not always agree with your proposed plan of care.
- Treat the manikin as you would a real person.

D. Nursing assessment

- You should be able to undertake an accurate nursing assessment and develop a plan of care.
- Identify the patient's nursing care needs accurately.
- Listen attentively to the patient's problems and concerns.
- Use clear language, and question at a comfortable pace.
- Clarify and check information and summarise understanding.

SECTION 2: The OSCE day

11. General information about the competence test centre

Please allow plenty of time to travel to the competence test centre. Bear in mind that rush-hour traffic often causes delays. If you arrive late, you might not be able to take the OSCE.

A full refund will be given only if more than 3 weeks' notice is given of the need to cancel or reschedule. The following refund rates apply:

- More than 3 weeks' notice of cancellation: full refund.
- Fewer than 3 weeks' notice of cancellation: no refund unless in exceptional circumstances, for which a medical certificate may be requested.
- No refund will be given for non-attendance or if no prior notice of cancellation is given (within the stated time above).

When you arrive, you will be asked to put all of the documents for your NMC ID check into a wallet so that these can be verified whilst you are taking your OSCE. Reception will take your photograph to accompany your documents so that we can confirm your identity. You will be asked to store all other belongings in a small locker so please avoid bringing bulky items.

Unfortunately, we do not have room to allow friends or family, including children, to wait for you while you take the OSCE. Do not bring large suitcases to the assessment centre, as we have no storage space for anything other than small handbags/rucksacks.

Smoking is illegal in enclosed public spaces and workplaces in the UK. Therefore, smoking is not permitted at the competence test centre. Once you have entered the competence test centre, you will not be allowed to leave until the OSCE is finished.

Once your OSCE starts, you will then be under exam conditions until your OSCE is completed in full. Prior to undertaking the OSCE, the invigilator will provide a briefing on its format.

12. Fitness to undertake the OSCE

You need to be fit and well to undertake the OSCE. You will be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement and declaration.

It is acknowledged that a candidate with a declared disability may require reasonable adjustments to complete the examination. The request for reasonable adjustments must be made before the date of the examination, by contacting the competence test centre, either by email or phone.

A reasonable adjustment will allow for a candidate to undertake nursing associate care that:

- remains effective and does not result in altered patient care
- is accepted within professional nursing associate practices
- enables the candidate to demonstrate competence
- will not place the candidate or patient at risk of harm by injury or illness.

A reasonable adjustment will not allow for the required standard of competence to be reduced because of a disability.

Please note: Reasonable adjustments can be made to assess how you demonstrate that you have met a competence or standard. The standard or competence itself is not subject to a reasonable adjustment. If you have a health condition, we strongly advise you to disclose it upon your booking, as the competence test centre can then give you information about the support that may be available to you and, if necessary, make any special arrangements. A disability or health condition cannot be considered if it is disclosed after the OSCE.

13. Fire alarm

If there is a fire alarm, follow the directions of the competence test centre staff to the fire exit. If the fire alarm sounds during the OSCE, you should remain with your assessor at all times. Staff will direct you to an assembly point and will conduct a roll call to make sure that all assessors, actors and candidates are gathered together. You must not speak to other candidates during an emergency evacuation. Once the area is deemed safe, you will be directed back to the competence test centre and given instructions about resuming the OSCE.

14. Identification

We will check your identity every time you attend a Test of Competence centre, and we will only accept a valid passport for this purpose.

If the name on your passport is different from the name on the application and/or the email/letter from the NMC authorising you to take the test, you must provide original evidence that you are the person named in that email/letter. This may be:

- a marriage certificate.
- a legal affidavit listing all names you are known by.

If you do not bring the documents listed above, or if your passport is not valid or current, you will not be allowed to take the OSCE.

Guidance on the ID Check

As part of the registration process, all NMC applicants must attend a full in-person ID Check, with a member of the ID Team at one of our Test of Competence centres, to verify that all documentation uploaded as soft copies to your NMC application is **original**.

If you need to sit the Test of Competence as part of your registration application:

- Your ID Check will be conducted on the day of your first attempt OSCE whilst you sit the exam (unless advised otherwise).
- The ID Check is independent from and doesn't impact taking the OSCE or your results.

If you do not need to sit the Test of Competence as part of your registration application:

- You will need to contact us to arrange an in-person appointment at one of our Test of Competence centres.
- **Please do not arrange travel before your appointment has been confirmed.**

- Please note, whilst your appointment will be at one of our Test of Competence centres, you will not be required to sit the OSCE.

Before you attend your ID Check:

- You **must** ensure that you have **submitted** your NMC application and **paid** the registration fee (application guides for [Nursing/Midwifery](#) and [Nursing Associate](#)).
- You will need to provide **all** required documentation below at your appointment.

If you have not been able to complete the above steps, your ID Check cannot be conducted and you will need book a further in-person appointment to return to a Test of Competence centre at your own expense.

Required Documentation:

All required documents below must be provided in their **original format**, see “**Guidance on Original Documentation**” for further information.

- Valid Passport
- Diploma/Qualification Certificate
- Registration Certificate/Card (If you have previously been registered as a Nurse/Midwife in another country)
- Name Change Evidence (if your name differs throughout any of your documentation)
- Police Checks for any country in which you have lived for a combined period of 12 months or longer in the 10 years before submitting your application (or from over the age of 18).
 - The Police Check for the country you are living in at the point you submit your application must be dated within 12 months at the point you submit.
 - All other Police Checks must be issued close to/after the date you have left the country.
- UK DBS (if you have resided in the UK for 3 months or longer at the point you submit your NMC application).
- Certified English Translations (from a certified translator) of any documentation not originally produced in English.

Guidance on Original Documentation:

We must be able to verify the original source of all above required documentation you have provided as part of your application.

- If your documentation was originally issued as a physical document, we must see the **original physical document**.
- For documentation originally issued electronically, please **print** a copy of the documentation and we will advise you if we require anything further to verify your documentation.

Booking appointments and further guidance:

To book an appointment or if you have any specific questions regarding the ID Check, you can contact the ID Team at ID.Checks@nmc-uk.org

15. What can I expect in the OSCE?

In stations that involve demonstrating a practical skill, you will find a manikin, an actor or other piece of equipment. Where a manikin plays the role of a patient, you must treat the simulated patient as you would a real patient. An assessor will be in each station observing you, except for written stations.

You must carry out effective hand hygiene before starting the stations. Soap, water and hand gel will be available at all stations.

You may be asked to take a nursing associate assessment or carry out a practical clinical skill. Each station will have a scenario overview, which will give relevant information about the patient, such as name, age and what is expected of you in the station.

Each station (or pair of linked stations) lasts between 8 and 21 minutes, and staff will be there to help you to make the transition from station to station as needed.

A lead assessor will be overseeing the test day, with assessors based at each station, observing. Each station has a camera and sound system installed. The built-in cameras will record the examination and will be used to review the examination afterwards for quality-assurance purposes. This is not optional but is part of the process, so you will be asked, at the point of booking, to consent and that you understand that videoing will take place throughout the OSCE. The videos are used for examination and reviewing purposes only, by the university and the NMC.

Please note: Filmed assessments are treated as examination scripts. Once the scripts have been marked and moderated, the pass or fail decision is final, and candidates or any sponsoring authority cannot request access to the film. An appeal or complaint may involve the investigator reviewing the filmed assessments, but films will not be released to you or any sponsor.

16. How should I dress?

We require that you dress for the OSCE in a manner that is appropriate for a clinical environment. All nursing associates must be dressed professionally, must maintain a high standard of infection control, and must ensure their own health and safety and that of their patients. The guidelines below are based on the expected standards for pre-registration healthcare students at any UK university. They mirror the professional standards required of all healthcare professionals in the UK.

- **Clothing:** Please dress as you would in clinical practice. In the UK, this is normally a clinical dress, tunic or polo shirt with smart trousers or scrubs. You must not wear jeans or shorts. Nursing associates in the UK frequently wear dark plain trousers and plain polo shirts/tunics. Where possible, candidates should be dressed in a similar manner. Candidates who wish to wear alternatives, for example because of cultural or maternity requirements, should discuss this with the competence test centre before arriving for the OSCE.
- **Shoes:** Must be plain, flat, black and rubber-soled, enclosing the whole foot and not made of porous or absorbent material.
- **Fingernails:** Must be kept short, unvarnished with no extensions or decoration.

- **Hair:** Must be tied up off the face and secured with simple hair ties/bobbles above the collar of your tunic or polo shirt. Hair should be of a natural shade and style. Facial hair should be kept clean, trimmed and tidy.
- **Head scarf/turban:** If you wear a head veil/turban, please ensure that it is appropriate in colour (plain black or navy), and it must be tucked into the collar of your tunic or polo shirt.
- **Jewellery:** Plain 'ball' ear studs are allowed to be worn (maximum of one per ear). No tongue piercings should be worn. A single plain band wedding/commitment ring is allowed. You must be bare beneath the elbow: no bracelets or wristwatches are to be worn.
- **Make-up:** Must be kept to a minimum and must be discreet and natural.
- **Socks/tights:** Dark blue or black socks with trousers, and flesh-coloured or black tights.

17. What conduct is expected during the OSCE?

The OSCE is a formal examination and candidates are required to behave appropriately and in accordance with university regulations and policies.

Candidates are already professional nursing associates, and they are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times while at the competence test centre.

You will be provided with all the materials you need during the examination.

18. Competence test centre rules and regulations

All personal items must be placed in the small locker provided at the competence test centre. The competence test centre will take no responsibility for any lost, stolen, or misplaced items.

The following items are not allowed in the OSCE, nor can they be accessed during your time at the competence test centre:

- any educational, test preparation or study material
- mobile phones, hand-held computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), pagers, watches or any other electronic devices
- weapons of any kind.

Mobile phones, pagers or other electronic devices must be turned off before they are stored in the locker.

During your time at the competence test centre, you will not be allowed to access personal items other than any medication or foods required at a specific time. You must have arranged this in advance with the competence test centre. If you require access to medical devices or aids during the OSCE, please inform the centre staff when booking your OSCE examination.

19. Confidentiality

As a registered nursing associate, you are bound by [NMC \(2018\) 'The Code'](#)¹⁴. Any cheating or misconduct during the OSCE or breaching the examination's confidentiality may bring your profession into disrepute and may raise doubts about your fitness to practise. Such incidents will be reported to the NMC by the assessors and will be investigated.

You must not seek help, or attempt to seek help, from any other party during the OSCE. This includes in person or by phone, text, messaging, email or any form of social media.

You must not disclose information about the OSCEs to, or discuss with, anyone, including instructors. This includes posting or discussing the scenarios or skills on the internet or on any form of social media.

20. Taking the OSCE

The results of the OSCE must be an accurate reflection of the authorised candidate's knowledge and professional skills as a nursing associate.

- You must not take or attempt to take the OSCE for anyone else.
- You must not allow, or attempt to allow, anyone else to take the OSCE for you.
- You must not engage in any behaviour deemed to be disruptive at any time while in the competence test centre or when taking the OSCE.

21. Grounds for dismissal or cancellation of OSCE results

All candidates must comply fully with the competence test centre staff's instructions and the rules and regulations, or they will risk having their OSCE results withheld, dismissed, or cancelled. Candidates who do not comply with this may be asked to leave the competence test centre, and their fees will not be refunded. Such incidents will be reported by the assessors and investigated. The OSCE result may be withheld during an investigation.

Please note: The competence test centre will always report such incidents to the NMC. See **Annex 5** for further guidance on how the malpractice cases are handled by the test centres and the consequences of candidates' inappropriate actions or behavior during the OSCE.

22. How is the OSCE assessed?

Each OSCE station has a unique criterion-based assessment sheet, which is matched to the scenario or skill being assessed. Assessors will score each criterion. The criteria are mapped against NMC (2018) [Standards for pre-registration nursing associate programmes - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](#)¹⁵ and NMC (2018) ['The Code'](#)¹⁶.

The assessment, implementation and evaluation stations are mapped against the above. The skills assessments are also mapped against the above but also against an appropriate evidence base for that station. The evidence base for each station is published in the Reading List (available on the NMC website).

¹⁴ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

¹⁵ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-nursing-associates/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-associate-programmes/>

¹⁶ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

23. The passing standard

The pass scores for each OSCE station are set using an appropriate combination of professional judgement and statistical information. To pass the OSCE, the candidate must achieve a pass score for every station. For more information about the passing standards, please refer to section 6 (standards and results) of the test specification.

24. Quality assurance, complaints and appeals

We have a robust quality assurance and moderation policy applied across all five of our test of competence centres to ensure that candidates are marked appropriately at all times.

The academic lead/centre manager and administration team will co-ordinate any appeals, complaints, reasonable adjustments and fitness to practise issues, and will refer such matters to the test panel for investigation and reporting to the NMC as necessary.

25. Unsafe practice and cessation of assessment

In the event that any candidate demonstrates unsafe practice, which may place the candidate, simulated patient or assessor at risk, then a red flag will be raised by the assessor. All red flag judgements will be reviewed by the panel assessors on the day of the OSCE. An agreed red flag always denotes an OSCE station fail.

26. How do I get the results of the OSCE?

The test centre will inform candidates of the result of the OSCE within 5 working days after the test is taken. Please do not ask the assessors or competence test centre staff. They will not be able to release any results directly to candidates.

The NMC test of competence Part 2 is made up of ten stations, split into:

- Three scenario stations (assessment, implementation and evaluation)
- 5 skills stations
- Two written stations, one assessing professional values and one assessing evidence-based practice.

If you are unsuccessful in up to seven stations, your re-sit will be charged at 50% cost: £397.

If you are unsuccessful in eight or more stations, your re-sit will be charged at 100% cost: £794.

27. What will the feedback look like?

You can expect to receive feedback on those aspects of the OSCE in which you failed to meet the level of competence. This will be a brief account of how you failed to show competence. The competence test centre is not allowed to teach you how to pass the exam, so the feedback will be short and factual.

28. What are the potential results?

Result	Description	Outcome	Cost
Pass	Passed all stations taken	Congratulations! The NMC will be in touch to issue your NMC PIN.	N/A
Fail 1–7 stations	Failed up to seven stations across both the APIE and/or skill stations	Will require a re-sit at 50% cost. You will need to re-sit only the stations you failed. If you need to re-sit the APIE station(s), you will be given your original paperwork from the APIE stations you passed in your previous attempt, to complete the re-sit stations in sequence.	£397
Fail 8–10 stations	Failed eight or more stations across both the AIE and skill stations	Will require a re-sit at 100% cost. You will need to re-sit the APIE station(s) you failed and the skill station(s) you failed. You will be given the same scenario and your original paperwork from the APIE stations you passed in your previous attempt, to complete the re-sit stations in sequence.	£794
Full fail	Fail any station on the third attempt	Will require 6 months to elapse before you can reapply to the NMC.	N/A

29. What happens if I pass?

Your OSCE result will be uploaded to your NMC application, and you will be able to continue your application for registration providing you have passed the CBT, paid your registration fee of £153 and the NMC have received your supporting declarations.

30. Can I have more than one attempt at the OSCE?

Candidates have three opportunities to attempt each part of the test of competence.

In exceptional cases, a further attempt at each part may be offered. This attempt will be agreed only by application to the NMC. The additional attempt will be granted in situations such as the following:

- The test centre did not follow agreed processes.
- The assessor behaved in a way that demonstrably did not comply with the agreed processes.
- There was an unanticipated interruption to the assessment, such as a fire alarm.
- Illness or severe anxiety in the candidate.

Candidates must wait at least 10 days between each sitting. Candidates can choose to take longer than 4 weeks between the second and final attempts.

The CBT (Part 1) and the OSCE (Part 2) can be taken in either order, although most candidates take the CBT first.

The OSCE will be passed or failed for each individual station. Re-sits will be required only for those stations the candidate failed. Re-sit candidates will take the same or a similar but different station(s) to the one(s) they failed. If the stations are not all passed in three sittings, then the whole OSCE must be re-taken.

SECTION 3: Candidate guidance

The next section of this information booklet provides guidance for you when considering applying for mitigating circumstances, appeals or complaints. The competence test centre manager will always offer guidance and advice in such matters. If, after pursuing such issues, you remain unhappy with the outcome and decisions reached, you have the right to raise the matter with the NMC.

31. Can I appeal my result?

If you believe that a mistake has been made at any point during the process of your test of competence, or that an irregularity has occurred in the conduct of the OSCE, and you think that this has had a direct and demonstrably detrimental effect on your performance, you may be able to make an appeal. You cannot appeal the result; you can only appeal the process. See [Annexe 2](#) for guidance on the appeal process and form.

32. What is a complaint and how can I make one?

If you are dissatisfied with a service that the competence test centre is providing, or with the person who is providing it, you can raise the matter as a complaint. You should always try to resolve a problem as close as possible to its source. So, for example, if you have a problem with your assessor, you should speak to the lead assessor or invigilator at the time. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can make a formal complaint to the NMC. See [Annexe 3](#) for the candidate guidance on the complaint process and form.

Please note: Candidates do not have the right to see their filmed assessment. It is treated as an exam script. Once the script has been marked and moderated, the pass or fail decision is final and candidates or any sponsoring authority cannot request access to the film. An appeal will involve the investigating panel reviewing the candidate's filmed assessments, but films will not be released to candidates or their sponsors.

33. Fitness to practise during the OSCE

Your fitness to practise during the OSCE may be questioned if a member of the competence test centre staff, an assessor, a simulated patient, or another candidate expresses concerns that you are failing to maintain standards and/or that your conduct is inappropriate to your profession. Examples may include a breach of confidentiality and professional misconduct (which may call into question your honesty and integrity). If this occurs, your OSCE may be stopped and an incident form will be completed and forwarded to the NMC. If you are allowed to continue, an incident form will still be submitted, and you will be informed of this at the time of your OSCE. See [Annexe 5](#) for further guidance on how the malpractise cases are handled by the test centres and the consequences of candidates' inappropriate actions or behavior during the OSCE.

34. What happens if I am unable to attend the OSCE because of sudden illness or circumstances beyond my control?

Candidates must make every attempt to attend their booked OSCE appointment. Cancellations made at least 2 working days before the OSCE will not incur a financial penalty if there are mitigating circumstances (see [Annexe 1](#)). However, cancellations made fewer than 2 working days before the OSCE will not be refunded. Evidence of special circumstances must be provided. Neither cancellation will count as an OSCE attempt to the NMC.

35. When can you apply for mitigating circumstances to be considered?

If you are unable to attend the OSCE examination because you are ill or you have a personal issue that prevents you from attending, you should contact the relevant competence test centre by email or telephone. You must remember to include independent evidence, for example a hospital appointment letter or copy of a prescription. **Please note:** It is your responsibility to collect this evidence.

If you arrive to sit your OSCE and you do not feel well enough to proceed, or you become unwell during the exam, you must inform the invigilator and lead assessor straight away, and they will support and advise you further.

Before taking the OSCE, you will be asked to declare yourself fit to take the exam, and you will be unable to defer an assessment once you have commenced, or appeal on the grounds that you were unfit. Evidenced personal circumstances, such as sudden illness, may be permitted as reasons for re-booking the OSCE at short notice.

36. How will the OSCE be affected if I am pregnant or breastfeeding a young baby?

The competence test centre will seek to support candidates who are pregnant or have very young children. The competence test centre will be flexible to enable the candidate to take the OSCE as planned, whenever possible, except when a significant risk is identified. The competence test centre must be informed in advance. Candidates can find guidance in [Annexe 4](#).

37. I have a disability. Can the competence test centre accommodate my needs?

Our staff are committed to ensuring impartiality and equality of opportunity in the delivery of our services. Our premises are wheelchair accessible, and the competence test centre will also act on NMC guidance regarding this. Special adjustments are made for candidates with disabilities, or for those registered as dyslexic or with other additional needs. Candidates are asked to declare their needs for reasonable adjustments when booking their OSCE, for which they will be required to produce supporting evidence. The academic lead/manager will seek advice on the reasonable adjustments possible for the candidate. Simple changes such as lowering beds, accommodating the need to sit or stand, or the increased need for toilet breaks during pregnancy can easily be arranged when the competence test centre is notified in advance.

Candidates who need to access medical devices during the OSCE can be accommodated with advance notification prior to booking. The competence test centre will not allow the required level of competence to be reduced because of a disability. The standard or competence itself is not subject to a reasonable adjustment.

The request for reasonable adjustments must be made before the date of the OSCE examination, by contacting the test delivery centre. Candidates with additional needs must declare them via the reasonable adjustments form that will be emailed to candidates once the competence test centre has been notified by the candidate and a booking made. Reasonable adjustments are offered within the scope of the Equality Act 2010¹⁷.

¹⁷ The Equality Act 2010 does not apply in Northern Ireland, but there are very similar equality requirements spread across several pieces of legislation. For example, section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 also includes consideration of 'political opinion' as a protected characteristic, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 still applies to employment in Northern Ireland, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 applies in all education settings.

A reasonable adjustment will allow for a candidate to evidence during their assessment nursing associate care that:

- remains effective and does not result in altered patient care
- is accepted within professional nursing associate practices
- enables the candidate to demonstrate competence
- will not place the candidate or patient at risk of harm by injury or illness.

SECTION 4: Annexes

Please note: Blank copies of these forms are available to download on the competence test centres' websites. These annexes are for candidates' reference only.

Annexe 1: Mitigating circumstances guide and form

Mitigating circumstances guide

What are mitigating circumstances?

Mitigating circumstances are events that have significantly disrupted your OSCE.

They must be:

- serious or acute
- beyond your ability to foresee and control.

When can you apply for mitigating circumstances to be considered?

If you are unable to attend because you are ill, or if you have a personal issue that prevents you from engaging with the OSCE, you should complete and submit the [mitigating circumstances form](#) in this booklet. You must remember to include independent evidence with your application, such as a hospital appointment letter or a copy of a prescription. It is your responsibility to collect this evidence.

What outcome can you expect if you apply for mitigating circumstances?

There are a number of issues that cannot be addressed by submitting a mitigating circumstances application:

1. Under no circumstances will the grades awarded in your OSCE be changed. All OSCEs are graded upon their own merits, and no allowance will be made for mitigating circumstances. A mitigating circumstances application will not be considered for a completed OSCE.
2. Only in very exceptional cases will applications for mitigating circumstances be accepted after the deadline set for the examination has passed. If you do apply late, you must explain why.
3. A known disability is not itself a reason to submit a mitigating circumstance application, although (for example) unforeseen illness resulting from a disability may be. Reasonable adjustments to OSCE examinations will normally be made to support candidates who have a disability. Requests for such adjustments should be discussed with the academic lead and competence test centre administration team in advance of the OSCE.
4. The NMC determines the number of opportunities a candidate has to take the OSCE examination. The maximum is three opportunities within a single application. If you have successfully applied for mitigating circumstances, your attempt will not count. If you sit the OSCE and are unsuccessful in applying for mitigation, the attempt will count.

What happens if I am ill on the day of an OSCE?

If you are too ill to start the OSCE, then you need to let the competence test centre know as soon as possible. You then need to submit an application for mitigating circumstances.

If you become ill during an OSCE examination, you need to let the invigilator know straight away.

Candidates should make every effort to cancel their OSCE a minimum of 2 working days before the exam is booked. (If the exam is on a Monday, cancellation should occur on the Thursday before.) Refunds will not be given routinely if OSCEs are cancelled at short notice.

Mitigating circumstances form

Your details:			
Name:		Number:	
Tel:		Email:	
OSCE date:			

OSCE affected by mitigating circumstances:		
OSCE number		Original exam date:

Date FORM passed to AA:	Filter: 1 2 3
Chair's Action:	Date:
Decision:	Upheld Declined
Student status:	
Reason for decision:	
SAT: Log in Letter Log outcome H grade Exams/Module leader	

Your mitigating circumstances:

You must provide precise dates of any illness or other circumstances. State how your OSCE was affected and what steps you took to recover the situation.

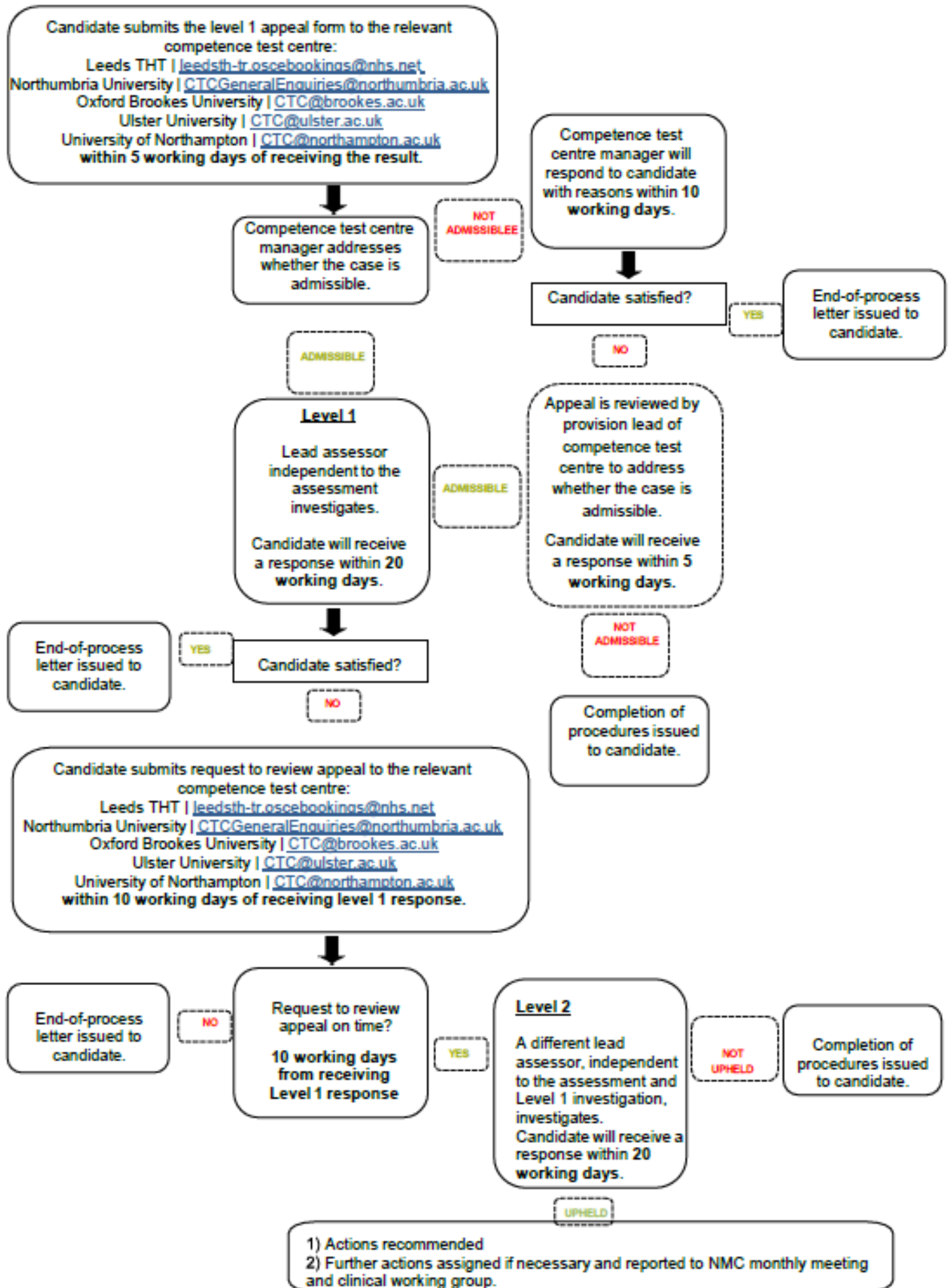
Declaration:

I declare that the details included in this application, including any appended statements, are true and that I have read and understand the foregoing mitigating circumstances guide.

Signed:

Date:

Annexe 2: Appeal process guide and form



What grounds can I use as the basis for an appeal?

If you believe that your result is incorrect, that a mistake occurred during the process of your assessment, or that an irregularity occurred in applying the assessment regulations or in the conduct of the examination, and you think that that had a direct and demonstrably detrimental effect on your performance, you may be able to make an appeal.

In which situations might an appeal be worthwhile?

The marks awarded to your work will have been through a rigorous process of moderation involving at least one internal markers and the oversight of marking standards by an external assessor, who approves all grades awarded. The university will not accept an appeal against the academic and/or professional judgements of assessors per se.

Where can I obtain advice?

If you are uncertain about any of the information contained in this guide, you should consult the relevant competence test centre administration team.

How should I appeal?

You will need to complete a level 1 appeal form, which is found on the test centres website. Once completed, please submit it to the CTC administration team within 5 working days of receiving your OSCE result.

Where should I submit the form?

Please email your appeal form to the relevant competence test centre:

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust | leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net
- Northumbria University | CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk
- Oxford Brookes University | ctc@brookes.ac.uk
- Ulster University | ctc@ulster.ac.uk
- University of Northampton | ctc@northampton.ac.uk.

How will my appeal be dealt with?

The CTC administration team will forward your appeal for review. If you make a legitimate appeal on acceptable grounds, an assessor independent to your OSCE will examine your case. The investigator will come to a conclusion, and will write to you stating either that your appeal should be upheld or that it should not. This will include the rationale for the reviewer's decision. See [Annexe 1](#) for candidate guidance on the process.

How long will it take to reach a decision?

If you make an appeal, the investigation will normally be completed within 20 working days. If you want an update on the progress of your appeal, you should contact the relevant CTC administration team:

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust | leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net | 0113 392 0764
- Northumbria University | CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk | 0191 300 2441
- Oxford Brookes University | ctc@brookes.ac.uk | 01865 488 418
- Ulster University | ctc@ulster.ac.uk | 02871 675 150
- University of Northampton | ctc@northampton.ac.uk | 01604 892 066

What outcome can I expect if I make an appeal?

Your appeal will be partially upheld, upheld or not upheld. You will be notified of this decision by email.

What should I do if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?

Once your appeal has been formally heard by the university and the level 1 outcome communicated to you, you can submit a request for your appeal to be reviewed at level 2. This request must be submitted within 10 working days of your level 1 appeal response.

A different assessor, independent to your OSCE and the level 1 investigation, will investigate. The investigation will normally be completed within 20 working days. You will receive notification of this decision by email. This concludes the university's appeal process.

The complaints procedure is outlined on the NMC website:

[https://www.nmc.org.uk/contactus/complaints-about-us.](https://www.nmc.org.uk/contactus/complaints-about-us)

Appeal form – Level 1

This form should be submitted to the CTC administration team within 5 days of receiving your OSCE result.

Name	
Candidate number	
Correspondence address	
Email address	
Date of test of competence (OSCE)	
Grounds for appeal (You should provide full details of the nature of the irregularity that you feel occurred.)	

I declare that the information given is true and that I am willing to answer further questions if necessary:

Signed:	Date:
----------------	--------------

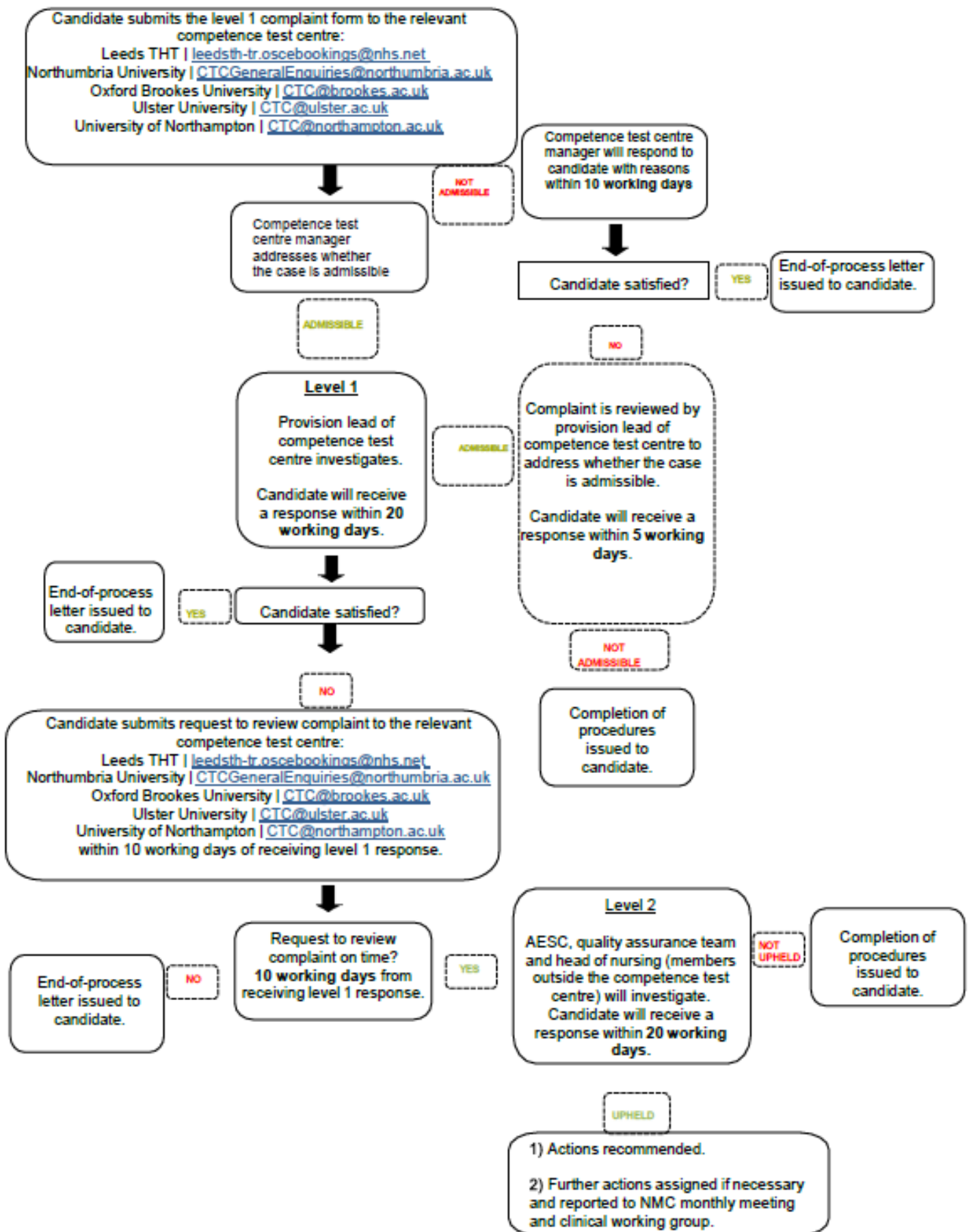
Please email your appeal form to the relevant competence test centre below:

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust | leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net
- Northumbria University | CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk
- Oxford Brookes University | ctc@brookes.ac.uk
- Ulster University | ctc@ulster.ac.uk
- University of Northampton | ctc@northampton.ac.uk.

(For official use)

Date received:	Date logged:
Date File created:	Appeal acknowledged:

Annexe 3: Complaint process guide and form



Candidate complaint guide

What is a complaint?

If you are dissatisfied with a service that the university is providing, or with the person who is providing it, you can raise the matter as a complaint.

How should I make a complaint?

You should always try to resolve a problem as close as possible to its source. So, for example, if a problem has arisen with your assessor, you should speak to the lead assessor or invigilator on the day of your OSCE.

What outcome can I expect if I make a complaint?

The university expects its entire staff to be receptive to issues raised by candidates. Complaints will be addressed initially through an informal process, involving discussions with people in the department where the difficulty has arisen.

What should I do if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?

In some cases, it may be felt that the candidate's complaint has not been resolved by the informal process. In such cases, you can progress the complaint to level 1 by completing the level 1 complaints form and submitting it by email to the relevant competence test centre. See [Annexe 2](#) for candidate guidance on the process.

What happens if I make a formal complaint?

The university will appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation into the matter(s) that you have raised and will report back to you within 20 working days. You should note that you should not submit a formal level 1 complaint unless you have already attempted to resolve your issue(s) via the informal process.

Will my assessors treat me differently if I make a complaint about them?

It is part of the university's policy that no one bringing a complaint, whether successfully or otherwise, will be treated less favourably by any member of staff than if the complaint had not been brought. If evidence to the contrary is reported, the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Where can I obtain advice?

If you are uncertain about any of the information in this booklet, you should consult the relevant CTC administration team on:

- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust | leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net | 0113 392 0764
- Northumbria University | CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk | 0191 300 2441
- Oxford Brookes University | ctc@brookes.ac.uk | 01865 488 414
- Ulster University | ctc@ulster.ac.uk | 02871 675 150
- University of Northampton | ctc@northampton.ac.uk | 01604 892 066.

What if I am dissatisfied about the level 1 complaint outcome?

You should submit a request to review the complaint via email to the relevant competence test centre within 10 working days of receiving your level 1 response. This then escalates to a level 2 complaint. Members of staff outside the competence test centre will now investigate. You will receive a response within 20 working days.

How long will it take to make a decision?

If you can resolve your issues at the informal stage, it will not take very long at all. If you make a formal complaint, the investigation may take longer, but the university aims to provide you with a response within 20 working days of receiving your complaint at either level 1 or level 2.

Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the response you have received.

Please indicate what outcome you are expecting from further action.

Please provide any documents you believe support your complaint.

I declare that the information given is true and that I am willing to answer further questions if necessary:

Signed:	Date:
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This form should be submitted to:

- Leeds THT | leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net
- Northumbria University | CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk
- Oxford Brookes University | ctc@brookes.ac.uk
- Ulster University | ctc@ulster.ac.uk
- University of Northampton | ctc@northampton.ac.uk.

Annexe 4: Pregnant candidate checklist, risk assessment and support plan and guidance

New and expectant mothers

This checklist aims to guide discussions with candidates during their pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the candidate. It is not intended that the form be completed in full at a first meeting, as initially a candidate will be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the questions raised. All information obtained will be kept in confidence.

The form should be reviewed at key stages or if the candidate's circumstances change.

Section 1 – Candidate to complete		
Contact details		
1	Candidate details	
	Name	
	Address	
	Contact number	
	Email address	
	Candidate ID	
2	Emergency contact details	
	Relationship to candidate	
	Contact number	
3	Test details	
	Title	NMC test of competence Part 2 OSCE examination
	Faculty	
	Responsible to	
	Date of OSCE	
N	First point of contact details	
	Name	NMC competence test centre administration team
	Location (tick as appropriate)	NORTHUMBRIA <input type="checkbox"/> LEEDS <input type="checkbox"/> OXFORD <input type="checkbox"/> SWINDON <input type="checkbox"/> ULSTER <input type="checkbox"/> NORTHAMPTON <input type="checkbox"/>
	Contact numbers	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust 0113 392 0764 Northumbria University 0191 300 2441 Oxford Brookes University 01865 488 418 Ulster University 02871 675 150 University of Northampton 01604 892 066

Email addresses	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust leedsth-tr.oscebookings@nhs.net Northumbria University CTCGeneralEnquiries@northumbria.ac.uk Oxford Brookes University ctc@brookes.ac.uk Ulster University ctc@ulster.ac.uk University of Northampton ctc@northampton.ac.uk
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Key dates	
5	What is the candidate's due date?
6	How many weeks pregnant will the candidate be on the OSCE date?
Communication with the candidate	
7	What is the candidate's preferred method of communication?
Further information	
8	Any other information or comments?
Extenuating circumstances	
9	Please sign and date to show that you have read and are aware of the mitigating circumstances policy in the event of your pregnancy or maternity affecting examinations and assessments.
	Please refer to the candidate handbook.
	Signature
	Date
Section 2 – Academic lead to complete	
Informing other staff	
10	Who will need to be informed of the candidate's pregnancy?
	Title
	Date
	Academic lead
	Invigilator
	Administrator
Project manager	
Health and safety risk assessment	
11	Has a health and safety risk assessment been conducted by the academic lead in consultation with the candidate, if relevant? See section 3.
	Date completed

	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring that they are implemented?	
--	---	--

Rest facilities

12	Has the candidate been informed of rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant candidates? See support plan.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	Date completed
		NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

Pregnancy-related absence

13	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the candidate's ability to undertake the OSCE? See support plan.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	Date completed
		NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

Further information

14	Any other information or comments. Candidate to provide any additional information or comments that may be relevant.	
----	--	--

Section 3 – Risk assessment – Academic lead to complete

Upon receiving notification of pregnancy, the responsible person in the competence test centre will carry out this risk assessment.

Please contact the centre of occupational health and/or wellbeing teams if specific advice is required.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Action must be taken to avoid exposure to identified risks, by using substitutions with safer substances or by making adaptations to the competence test centre to allow the OSCE to be conducted safely and without risk to health.

PHYSICAL HAZARDS

Ionising radiation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Non-ionising radiation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Manual handling	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Adverse movements and postures	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Details:

Action:	
CHEMICAL HAZARDS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details:	
Action:	

BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details:	
Action:	

OTHER HAZARDS	
Work with computers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Confined spaces	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Mental and physical fatigue	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Lone working	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Stress	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Shift work	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Working at heights	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Adverse thermal environments	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Travelling for work	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Standing for prolonged periods	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details:	
Action:	
Further comments:	

Signed (candidate)		Date	
Signed (academic lead)		Date	

Section 4 – Support plan			
Proposed flexibilities to be investigated	Timetable for agreement or decline and by whom (Date of reviews)	Date flexibility agreed or declined	Comments
Station height of bed can be adjusted, and manikins will be moved by the assessor to reduce physical stress on candidate.	On the day of the exam.		Assessors to check each station prior to commencement.
A chair is available for the candidate to rest after completing each station.	On the day of the exam.		All assessors to check each station prior to commencement.
Drinks and toilet breaks will be available.	On the day of the exam.		See risk assessment.
The candidate must declare that she is fit and well to undertake the OSCE.	On the day of the exam.		Assessors to ask the candidate whether they are fit and well before undertaking each station.
Signatures			
Agreed by academic lead			
Signature		Date	
Agreed by candidate			
Signature		Date	

New and expectant mothers' guidance

Introduction

The competence test centre recognises that being or becoming pregnant, or having a very young child should not itself be a barrier to applying for, starting, succeeding in, or completing the test of competence. The competence test centre will be as flexible as is reasonable, in accordance with university regulations and the legal framework in which the university operates.

This guide provides information and advice about the university's approach to supporting a candidate who is pregnant.

Definitions

- **Candidates:** referring to those who are pregnant or have very young children.
- **Very young children:** those under 26 weeks of age.
- **New parent:** those with children under 26 weeks of age.

The university will:

- ensure that a candidate who is pregnant, or who has given birth within the past 26 weeks, is protected from unfavourable treatment
- accommodate their needs both before and during the OSCE as far as is reasonably practicable to allow the candidate to successfully complete the OSCE
- publish this guidance and review/update as necessary, so that all members of the competence test centre community are aware of the support available and their role in providing that support
- encourage candidates to disclose a pregnancy to the competence test centre in confidence at an early stage.

When a candidate's pregnancy is disclosed, the academic lead and competence test centre administration team is expected to:

- read and follow this guidance
- treat any disclosure confidentially, and verify that a candidate has no objections to their pregnancy being discussed with other competence test centre staff
- agree a support plan and ensure that it is implemented
- complete a risk assessment.

Candidates (and applicants) are advised to:

- read this guidance to understand the university's approach to supporting candidates who are pregnant or have very young children, as defined above
- disclose their pregnancy at the earliest opportunity, to enable the consideration of any necessary support arrangements or adjustments during the OSCE
- discuss any concerns relating to their pregnancy with their own GP and competence test centre team
- ensure that they have received a copy of the completed risk assessment, if appropriate.

Guiding principles

Avoiding less favourable treatment: The university will not treat a candidate (or applicant) less favourably than other candidates.

Taking a flexible approach: The university will take a flexible approach, in line with university regulations, to facilitate the ability of the candidate to take the test of competence.

Demonstrating a non-judgemental and sensitive approach: All those involved should take an openminded and non-judgemental approach. Information provided by the candidate should be treated sensitively and only passed on to others on a need-to-know basis.

Enabling informed choices: No one should attempt to influence candidates' decisions directly or unduly. The university's role is to provide context and advice, and to explore, in consultation with the candidate and others, any flexibility that can be applied to the test of competence. The emphasis is on candidates making informed choices, based on full knowledge of the implications of those choices. However, in exceptional circumstances, where it has been identified that there is a significant risk to the health and welfare of the candidate and/or the unborn child, the university may have to advise a course of action that is not negotiable.

Notification of pregnancy

Candidates are strongly advised to inform the competence test centre of their pregnancy as soon as is practicable. This is particularly important where there may be a risk to the health and safety of the candidate and/or her unborn child.

Candidates are not obligated to inform the competence test centre if they become pregnant, decide to terminate a pregnancy, or miscarry. However, it is important to note that the university can adopt a flexible approach, provide support or make adjustments only if it is aware of the situation.

When deciding whether to notify the competence test centre, the candidate is encouraged to consider that there may be elements of the test of competence that could present a health and safety risk to her and/or her unborn child.

Process

Step 1: The candidate is strongly advised to consult her GP to discuss medical issues relating to her pregnancy prior to approaching the competence test centre.

Step 2: Candidates should inform the competence test centre of the pregnancy and/or pregnancy issues when booking the OSCE. A checklist will then be sent to the candidate to be filled in. A risk assessment is undertaken (see step 3) to ensure that all issues are discussed at an early stage and a support plan initiated (see step 4).

Step 3: Risk assessment – The academic lead should ensure that appropriate steps are taken in relation to health and safety issues. This will involve a risk assessment for the individual candidate.

Step 4: Candidate support plan – Once discussed and agreed, a candidate support plan for the test of competence will detail any specific flexibility agreed. This should be given/sent to the candidate.

Step 5: Communicating the support plan – The academic lead will communicate the agreed candidate support plan to other relevant assessors. Information should be passed on sensitively and in confidence.

Determining flexibility

The competence test centre does not have to agree to any or all requests. There may be situations in which it is not possible to agree to a particular request, such as where the consequences of agreeing to requests are likely to have a detrimental effect on the candidate. The candidate must be made fully aware of these consequences. However, the final decision of whether to sit the OSCE will rest with the candidate.

When considering declining a request, the university's equality and diversity adviser should be consulted before the decision is made. Candidates can seek bespoke advice from the university's equality and diversity adviser on what might constitute appropriate flexibility in a particular case.

If a request is declined, the reasons will be recorded, and the candidate will be informed as to why this particular request is not considered 'reasonable' in the circumstances. This will be recorded in the candidate support plan.

If deferring the OSCE means that it would take longer to complete the test of competence than normally permitted by the NMC, the competence test centre should still strive to demonstrate a flexible approach, where practicable, in relation to this deadline for completion, while ensuring that the student does not exceed the overall time limit allowed by the NMC. If, because of pregnancy, the candidate is likely to exceed the time allowed to complete the test of competence, they should contact the NMC for advice.

If a candidate is unhappy with the competence test centre's decision, they can appeal or complain (whichever is most appropriate) to the competence test centre administration team, who will refer all complaints or appeals to the appropriate person.

Occupational health adviser

If at any stage the academic lead would like some assistance in thinking through the practical implications of an individual pregnancy or would like advice on health and safety issues including risk assessments, they should contact the university's occupational health adviser. The academic lead may also wish to consult their line manager or other senior managers at the test of competence or the university.

The university will also consider flexibility for a candidate who has recently become a parent. As above, what constitutes a reasonable degree of flexibility to take account of a candidate's caring/parental responsibilities may vary for particular circumstances.

Small babies/children on campus

Small babies, children, partners and relatives are not allowed in the laboratory/examining area of the competence test centre at any time.

Candidates may be accompanied by children in general public areas, such as the restaurants and the library, provided that they are supervised at all times and are not disruptive to others. It is particularly important that children are not brought into areas where there is the possibility of a risk to health and safety. The university cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

There are no restrictions on breastfeeding on campus. If additional support is required for breastfeeding while candidates are on campus, candidates should contact the competence test centre administration team prior to their OSCE date.

Annexe 5: Assessment malpractice during the OSCE

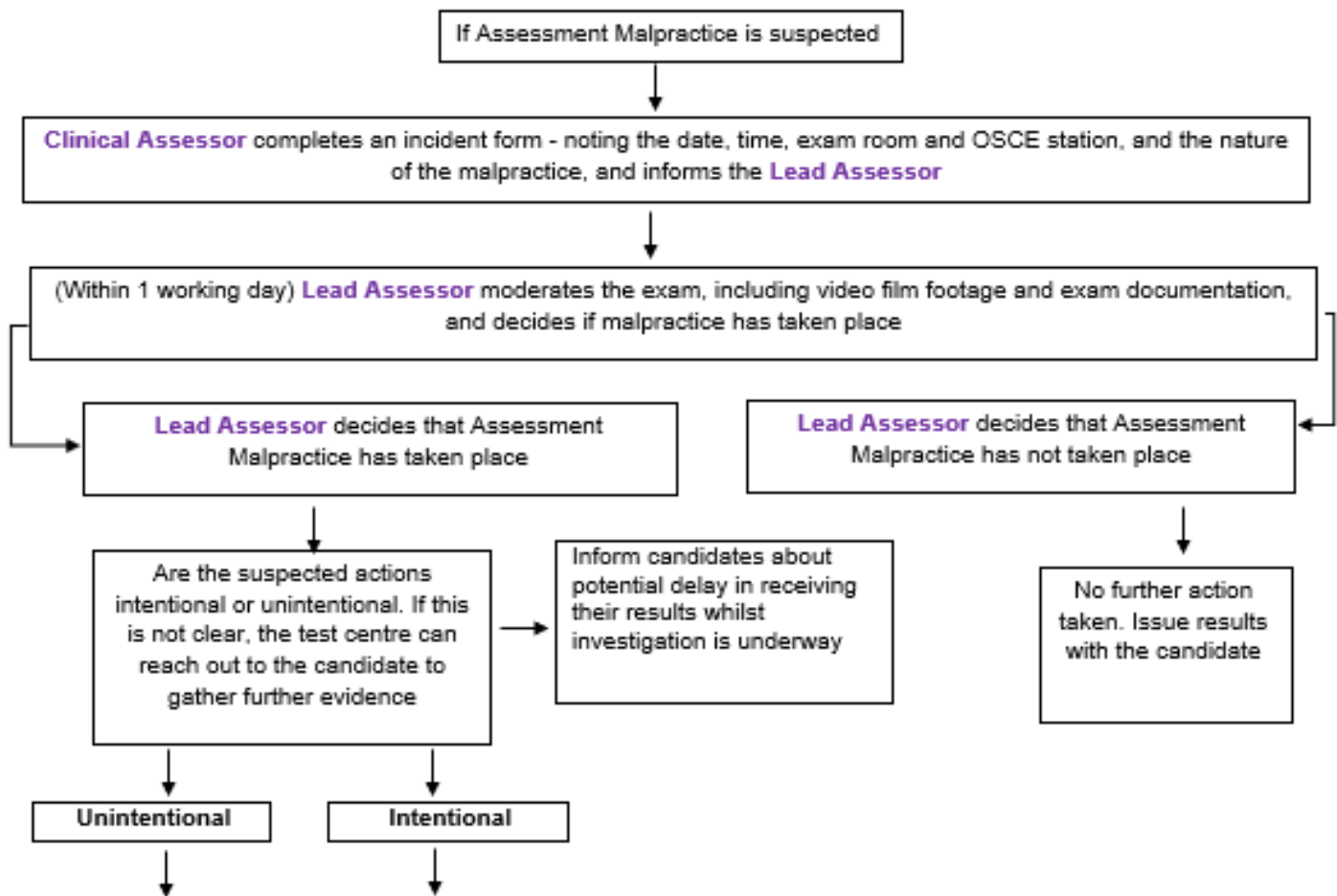
Definition of Assessment Malpractice

Any inappropriate action/ behaviour that may result in creating an unfair advantage for oneself or an unfair advantage for any other during an assessment such as the OSCE.

This includes:

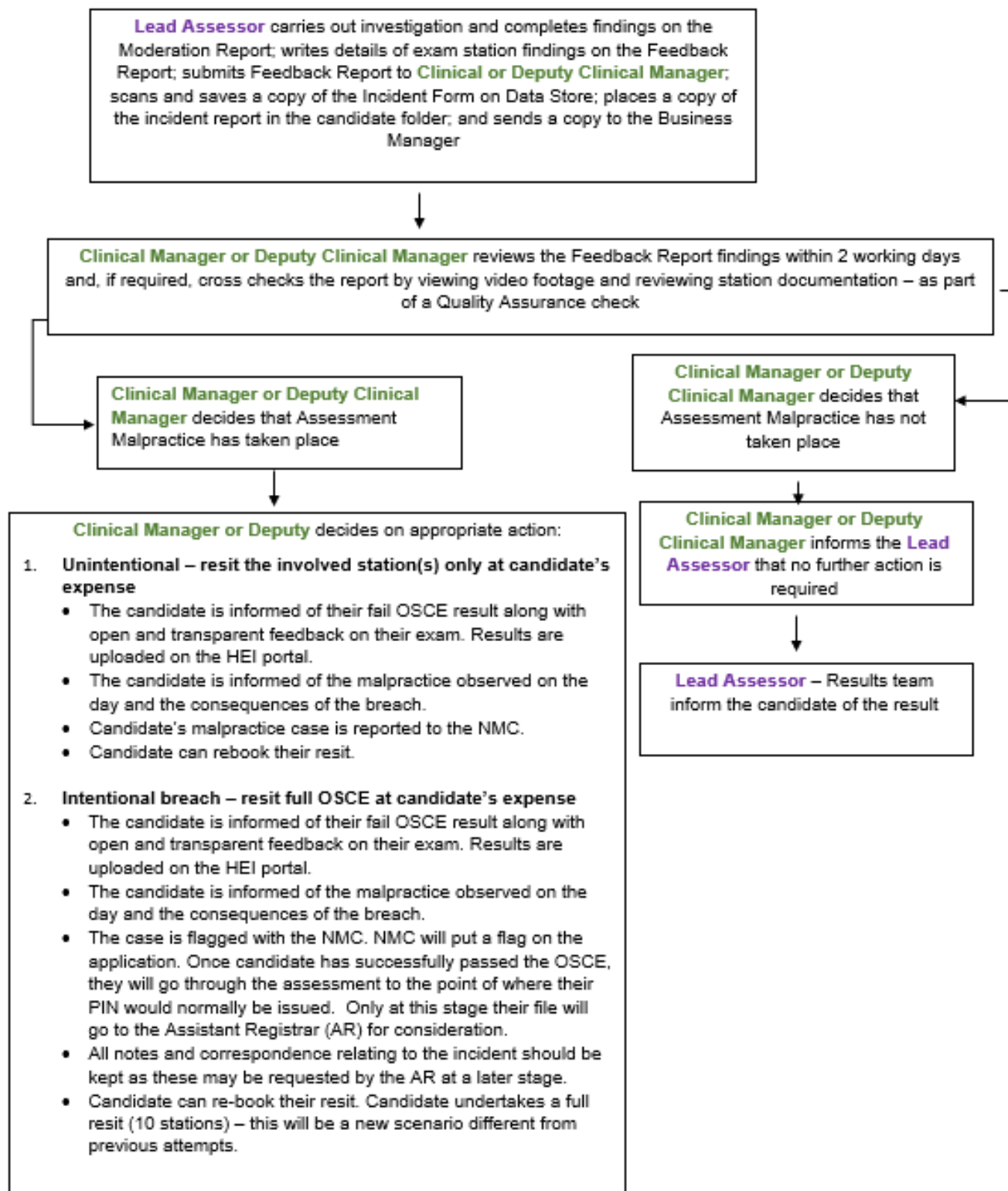
- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Collusion
- Falsification of documentation

If a case of malpractice is suspected, the OSCE won't be stopped, and the candidate should be allowed to complete their exam. The case will be reviewed upon the OSCE finalisation.



<p>Unintentional breach is where a candidate has taken an inappropriate action but has not attempted to conceal that action and may have believed the action was permitted.</p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not completing documentation within station allocated time and continue writing despite assessor instructions. • Openly altering documentation from previous stations (either using the same or different colour pen) without obvious intention to conceal the action. 	<p>Intentional breach is where a candidate has taken deliberate action and attempted to conceal that action (i.e. they are aware what they are doing is wrong).</p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of documentation (candidate bringing external material such as papers, notes, recording equipment, mobile phones, or any prohibited items to the OSCE). • Covertly altering documentation from previous stations (either using the same or different colour pen) with obvious intention to conceal the action
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When reviewing this, consider if the exam instructions were explicit or not and noted on the report



Last updated: November 2023