Candidate Information Booklet

Nursing Midwifery Council’s (NMC) Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) Test of Competence Part 2
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SECTION 1: Before the OSCE

01. Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) introduced a Test of Competence for internationally registered nurses and midwives in October 2014. The Test of Competence measures candidates against the current UK pre-registration standards\(^1\). Nursing in the UK comprises of separate and distinct fields of practice, each requiring three years of pre-registration undergraduate education.

The distinct nursing fields of practice are:

- Adult nursing
- Children’s nursing
- Learning disabilities nursing
- Mental health nursing

In the UK, midwifery is a separate and distinct profession, also requiring three years of pre-registration undergraduate education.

The Test of Competence is specific to a field of nursing or midwifery practice and consists of two parts. This information booklet provides information about Part 2 of the Test of Competence. Test information is available on Ulster University’s website and the NMC’s website with links to online resources, which will help you prepare for the Test of Competence. More detailed information is available after you have paid for the OSCE.

02. What is the UK like?

The UK reflects a multi-cultural, multi-faith society where all service users must have their culture, faith and human rights respected by all health care professionals. Furthermore, all service users must be treated equally and not subject to discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010\(^2\).

The UK may be very different from the last country you practiced in and you should spend time finding out about the population, health and social care, and other aspects of life.

03. Becoming familiar with nursing or midwifery practice in the UK

You must familiarise yourself with the ethical and professional standards expected of registered nurses and midwives as outlined in the NMC (2015) The Code\(^3\).

These are the required standards, which underpin professional nursing and midwifery practice.

All healthcare professionals must work in partnership with service users, obtaining their consent and respecting their dignity and privacy. It is unacceptable for your words or actions to imply or express disapproval of any service user’s lifestyle. You must not discriminate in any way against

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1 Nursing Midwifery Council (2010) Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Education. London: NMC.
those in your care. Service users and the public expect high standards of professional practice from nurses and midwives.

Nurses and midwives work in partnership with other healthcare professionals. Nurses and midwives are expected to both contribute and lead in areas of care where they have expertise. Many organisations are recruiting nurses, using the 6Cs and you should be familiar with these and be able to demonstrate throughout the Part 2 of the Test of Competence.

04. Applying for OSCE Part 2

Part 2 is a nursing or midwifery Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). The OSCE can only be undertaken after you have successfully passed Part 1 and only the NMC can authorise you to undertake Part 2.

Once you have received confirmation from the NMC of a successful pass in Part 1, you will be directed to Ulster University’s Test Centre webpage to begin the application process for Part 2. If you have a disability requiring any reasonable adjustments notify the Test Centre separately after booking your OSCE by emailing us using the ‘Contact’ area on the website.

You may be entitled to extra time in the stations if you have learning support needs. Evidence must be provided from professional reports at time of booking to verify the learning support needs adjustments prior to undertaking the OSCE. Student Support Services at Ulster University will review the report and provide advice on an individual basis.

05. How do I prepare for the OSCE?

The OSCE is designed to assess your ability to competently apply your professional nursing or midwifery knowledge and skills in the UK. The level expected is that of a nurse or midwife as they enter the profession at the point of registration. This means that you must show that you are capable of applying knowledge and skills to the care of service users at the level expected of a newly registered nurse or midwife.

The examination is testing your ability to apply knowledge and skills to the care of service users rather than 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 and not according to local arrangements.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Remember that you will have undertaken many of these nursing or midwifery skills several times before. You are being assessed at UK point of registration level. No advanced nursing or midwifery skills are required to pass this examination.

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Once payment has been received by Ulster University for your OSCE examination, you will be enrolled onto our online learning platform, Blackboard Learn, and login details will be sent to you. On this site you will find useful information including examples of documentation used in the examination process, and a comprehensive reading list. However, you are also advised to access the following:


*The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures*\(^5\) is available online through Ulster University’s Blackboard Learn site once you have paid and booked your OSCE.

### TIP FOR SUCCESS:
Example examination paperwork is available on Blackboard Learn. We recommend a minimum of 14 days to review the content of Blackboard Learn but many candidates have highlighted more time is needed. We recommend that you make the most of the resources available on the Blackboard Learn site.

### Please note:
We have become aware that some organisations and consultancies are offering OSCE preparation training sessions for candidates undertaking Part 2 of the Test of Competence. These sessions are **NOT** endorsed or approved by Ulster University or the NMC.

#### 06. Overview of OSCE

Your ability to apply your knowledge has already been tested in Part 1 of the Test of Competence. In the OSCE you will be tested on your clinical and communication skills. In other words, you will demonstrate how you apply holistic person-centred nursing or midwifery care and apply key clinical skills.

Everything you see in the OSCE comes from the NMC ‘Registering as a Nurse or Midwife in the UK’ ‘For applicants trained outside the European Union and European Economic Area’ which is available at: https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/trained-outside-the-eueea/adult-general-nursing/

This document sets out the scope and content of the OSCE in terms of the topics, skills and procedures that a newly registered nurse or midwife would need to know and to perform competently.

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As an example a scenario involving a vulnerable adult or child with a non-accidental injury, you would be expected to know that the person or child may need to be removed from those suspected of causing the injury. You would also be expected to know how to raise concerns, know to alert the relevant safe guarding team and be able to share information appropriately with relevant care teams. We do not expect you to have detailed information about local procedures or local policies.

We cannot test everything during the OSCE, but we will test in the OSCE common nursing or midwifery scenarios and clinical skills that UK nurses or midwives will encounter.

07. Evidence base for nursing and midwifery practice

You can find evidence-based guidelines in nursing journals and texts, and from professional organisations such as the Royal College of Nursing and Royal College of Midwives. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Scottish Intercollegiate, and Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network are useful resources. Links to some of these resources are available in Ulster University’s NMC Competence Test Centre’s site ‘Supporting Documentation’ area.

08. What will I be tested on?

The OSCE comprises six stations, each lasting between 10-17 minutes. Four stations will be scenario based and relate to four stages of the nursing and midwifery care process:

1. **Assessment- holistic person-centred**
2. **Planning**
3. **Implementation**
4. **Evaluation**

These four stations will enable you to follow one service user’s journey from assessment through to evaluation.

**Assessment (A):**

You will be given 5 minutes reading time prior to entering the assessment station to read through the scenario you are about to be examined on. Make sure that you read the station instructions carefully. Take the opportunity to look at them again if you are unsure. You will not be penalised for this.

During the 15 minute assessment station, your verbal and non-verbal communication will be examined together with your ability to establish a rapport with the service user. An actor will undertake the role of service user in this station. The pre-filled admission form can provide you with a structure and systematic approach to the assessment. You will need to take clinical observations of the service user and record them on a National Early Warning Score (NEWS) or Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) chart prior to the assessment finishing. It is important to complete and record all observations before the time has run out in order to pass.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS:** Ensure you are familiar with the requirements for undertaking and completing NEWS and GCS charts.
Planning (P):

This is a silent writing station and an examiner will monitor you. You will have 15 minutes to write two care needs including any relevant self-care. Focus on the task and follow the requirements set out in the instruction booklet. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the template provided on Blackboard Learn. Please note that you will be required to complete this form in a black pen, which will be provided.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Ensure you are familiar with the guidelines on records and record keeping as outlined with the NMC (2015) The Code.

Implementation (I):

In this station you will be implementing care such as, for example, medication administration. The service user will be a manikin and the examiner will respond to you as though they are the service user from a script. Please remember that your verbal and non-verbal communication will be assessed in this station. Communicate with the manikin as you would with a real person.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Ensure you are familiar with the NMC (2010) Standards for Medicines Management.

Evaluation (E):

This station is a silent writing bay and an examiner will monitor you. You will have 15 minutes to write a transfer/discharge or other form of nursing evaluation. Focus on the task and follow the requirements set out in the instruction booklet. You will have access to all your previous written notes from the assessment, planning and implementation stations to help you. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the template provided on Blackboard Learn. Please note, you will be required to complete this form in a blue pen (not black) and this will be provided for you.

TIP FOR SUCCESS: Make sure your writing is clear, legible and that you answer the question. If we cannot read it or understand it, we cannot assess it.

Two further stations will test practical clinical skills. Please remember that you will have already carried out many of these nursing or midwifery skills in your practice. Make sure that you read the station instructions and scenarios carefully.

Common skills which may be tested either on their own or within a nursing/midwifery scenario include:

- Hand hygiene;
- Clinical observations;
- Medication administration including calculations;
- Subcutaneous injections;
- Intramuscular injections;
- Safe disposal of sharps;
- Wound management;
- Peak expiratory flow;

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- Urinary catheterisation and care;
- Basic Life Support - cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (adult, child, baby);
- Abdominal palpation (Midwifery);
- Auscultation of fetal heart (Midwifery);
- Examination of the new born (Midwifery);

09. Communication skills

Communication is central to nursing and midwifery 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 you and an actor or manikin representing a service user. Your nursing or midwifery documentation will also be assessed in various stations.

The examiner will assess your approach to the service user throughout the examination, and will assess your communication skills such as:

- Clearly explaining care, diagnosis, investigations and/or treatments;
- Involving the service user in decision-making;
- Communicating with relatives and health care 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 which meets current NMC The Code;
- Professional behaviour;
- Professional attitude.

You should speak to the service user as you would any person you are meeting for the first time. **If you are being assessed using an actor/manikin, remember to verbalise your actions and reasons for actions in the same way that you would with a real person.** The examiner will answer any question you might pose to the manikin.

A. Approaching the service user

- Introduce yourself and explain or clarify the purpose of the nursing or midwifery encounter;
- Check what the service user wants you to call them;
- Be polite, respectful, non-judgemental and maintain the service user’s dignity;
- Be empathic and acknowledge the service user’s emotions or concerns and show sensitivity to any discomfort;
- Ensure you gain consent from the service user 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 service user.
B. **Explaining and advising**
- Establish what the service user already knows and/or wants to know;
- Explain clearly what you are going to do and why, so that the service user can understand;
- Remember to always check if the service user has any questions and understands;
- Offer appropriate reassurance;
- Do not alarm the service user but you must be able to explain the need for urgent action if it is required;
- Do not routinely over-simplify 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 service user’s understanding, check and alter your communication to meet their individual needs;
- Treat the manikin as you would a real person.

C. **Involving service user in their care**
- Respect the service user’s autonomy and help them to make a decision based on available evidence-based information;
- Explain information and its implications so that the service user can make an informed choice about their care;
- Check the service user’s understanding and feelings about the proposed nursing or midwifery interventions. They may not always agree with your proposed plan of care;
- Treat the manikin as you would a real person.

D. **Nursing or midwifery assessment**
You should be able to undertake an accurate nursing or midwifery assessment and develop a plan of care.
- Identify the service user's nursing or midwifery care needs accurately;
- Listen attentively to the service user's problems and concerns;
- Use clear language and question at a comfortable pace;
- Clarify and check information and summarise understanding;
- Be able to plan safe and effective person-centred care based on your nursing or midwifery assessment and evidence-based best practice.

10. **Common mistakes/errors**
These are some common mistakes/errors that candidates often forget or miss during the OSCE:
- Not reading the scenarios or instructions accurately;
- Not introducing themselves to the service user;
- Touching the service user before conducting hand hygiene techniques;
- Not demonstrating verbal and non-verbal communication when interacting with the manikin;
- Not checking service user identity;
- Not checking for allergies;
- Not checking medication expiry dates;
- Administering incorrect dosage of medication;
- Contamination of sterile field;
- Not maintaining airway and/or inadequate chest compressions;
- Not completing all sections of the required paperwork.

**TIP FOR SUCCESS:** Remember that the OSCE is ultimately about maintaining the **safety** of the service user.
SECTION 2: The OSCE Day

11. General Information about the Test Centre

Location details for Ulster University School of Nursing Competence Test Centre can be found within the ‘Location Area’ in Blackboard Learn.

Remember to allow plenty of time to travel to the Competence Test Centre bearing in mind that travelling distance to and potential traffic congestion at the Magee campus site.

If you arrive late, you may not be able to take the OSCE.

A full refund will be given only if more than three weeks’ notice is given of a cancellation or re-schedule. The following refund rates apply:

- Over three weeks of cancellation notice: full refund;
- Less than three weeks cancellation notice: 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, we will check the documents that you are required to bring. Once all your documents have been checked, your photograph will be taken and stored on our database. We store your photograph so that we can prove that you are the person we saw in case of identity theft. You must wear the photographic ID produced at all times in the Test Centre. You will be asked to store your belongings in a small locker before moving to the waiting rooms, so please avoid bringing bulky clothing;
- Unfortunately, we do not have room to allow friends or family, including children, to wait for you while you are taking the OSCE. Do not bring large suitcases to the assessment centre as we have no storage space for anything other than for small handbags/rucksack;
- Smoking is illegal in enclosed public spaces and workplaces in the UK. There is no smoking in or at the Test Centre. Once you have entered the Test Centre you will not be allowed to leave until the OSCE is finished.

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 (Appendix 1).

It is acknowledged that if you have a declared disability you may require reasonable adjustments in order to undertake the OSCE. The request for reasonable adjustments must be made before the date of the OSCE by contacting us on the ‘Contact’ area on our website. A reasonable adjustment will allow you to undertake nursing or midwifery care which:

- Remains effective and does not result in altered care;
- Is accepted within professional nursing or midwifery practices;
- Enables you to demonstrate competency;
- Will not place you or the service user at risk of harm by injury or illness.
A reasonable adjustment will not allow the required standard of competence to be reduced because of a disability.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to assess how you demonstrate that you have met a competency. The competency itself is not subject to a reasonable adjustment. If you have a health condition we strongly advise you to disclose it because it means that the Test Centre can give you information about support that may be available to you and, if necessary, make any special arrangements.

13. Fire alarm

If there is a fire alarm, follow the directions of the Test Centre staff to the fire exit. If the fire alarm sounds during the OSCE, you should remain with your examiner at all times. Staff will direct you to an assembly point and will conduct a roll call to make sure that all examiners, 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 Test Centre and given instructions about resuming the OSCE.

14. Identification

We will check your identity at the Test Centre and we will only accept a valid passport. If the name on your passport is different from the email/letter from the NMC authorising you to undertake the OSCE, you must provide original evidence that you are the person named in that email/letter. We will accept the following evidence:

1. Your marriage certificate;
2. A declaration from the awarding body, which granted your nursing or midwifery qualification, stating that both names relate to you.

You must also bring your authorisation to undertake the OSCE email/letter from the NMC bearing your candidate number.

If you do not bring the documents listed above, or if the passport is not valid or current, you will not be allowed to take the OSCE. This would result in you having to go through the booking process again.

In addition, you must bring the documents required by the NMC to complete their identification checks. You must produce the original versions of the documents you previously sent photocopies of to the NMC. Final checks on your previous registration will be conducted and a photograph taken for NMC records. The NMC will not issue a Personal Identification Number (PIN) or place you on the register until you have satisfied the requirements of this check. If you are unable to provide original documents, you will have to attend in person at the NMC’s London office.

15. What can I expect at the OSCE?

You will be welcomed and briefed prior to commencing the OSCE process. You will then be directed to the stations. There are six stations in which you are assessed. An additional “pilot station” may be included but will not contribute to your result. Pilot stations are used to test if they are suitable for use in future OSCEs. You will not know which station is a pilot station.
Each station has a camera and sound system installed to allow observation, reducing the need for observers to enter and sit in stations. **Built in cameras will record the OSCE and will be used to review the examination afterwards for quality assurance purposes.** This is not optional but part of the process so you will be asked, at the point of booking, to consent that you understand video recording will take place throughout the OSCE. These recordings are used for examination and reviewing purposes only by University and NMC staff.

You will also be asked to confirm at each station your name, identification and fitness to undertake the OSCE. Each station lasts between 10-17 minutes. The stations are clearly named and staff will be there to help you move from station to station.

A Lead Examiner will be overseeing the test day, with an examiner based at each station who will assess the OSCE. It is important to note that the examiner will observe you but will not intervene.

In stations which involve demonstrating a practical skill, you will find an actor/manikin or other piece of equipment. In stations that require you to complete a nursing or midwifery assessment a prepared actor will play the role of a service user. You must treat the manikin as you would a real person.

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

You will be asked to undertake a nursing or midwifery assessment or carry out a practical skill. Each station will have written candidate instructions which will also give relevant information about the service user, such as their name, age and health problems.

**Please note: You do not have right to see the recorded assessment as it is treated as an examination script.** Once the script has been assessed and moderated the pass or fail decision is final and you or any sponsoring authority cannot request access to the recording. An appeal or complaint may involve the Lead Examiners reviewing your recorded assessments but recordings will not be released to you or your 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 nurses and midwives must be dressed professionally, maintain a high standard of infection control and ensure the health and safety of themselves and the service user. The guidelines below are based on the expected standards for pre-registration healthcare students at Ulster University. They reflect the professional standards required of all healthcare professionals in the UK. Nurses and midwives in the UK frequently wear dark plain trousers and plain polo shirts/tunics and where possible you should be dressed in a similar manner. If you wish to wear alternatives, for example, because of cultural or maternity requirements, you are required to this with the Test Centre **before** arriving for the OSCE.

**Hair:** Must be off the face and secured above the collar. Hair should be tied up with simple hair bands. Hair decorations should not be worn. Hair should be a natural shade and extremes of styles are not acceptable. Beards and moustaches should be kept clean, trimmed and tidy.

**Nails:** Must be kept short and unvarnished with no extensions or decorations.

**Makeup:** Must be kept to a minimum and be discreet and natural.
Jewellery: Only single plain “ball” ear studs are permitted with a maximum of one per ear. A single plain band ring is allowed, that is, wedding or commitment ring. No other jewellery, including tongue piercing or body jewellery, is permitted.

Wristwatches: Are not to be worn.

Head Veil/Turban: Can be worn on religious grounds. They must be appropriate in colour and plain black or navy is recommended. They must be tucked into the collar of your tunic/polo shirt. It is important that service users feel able to build trust and are able to communicate freely. Some may find that a face veil worn by a nurse or midwife presents an obstacle to communication. Nurses and midwives must respond to a service user’s individual needs and take steps to overcome potential obstacles to communication.

Shoes: Must be plain flat black and rubber soled, enclosing the whole foot and not made of porous or absorbent material in order to protect the foot from bodily fluids and equipment.

Socks and Tights: Flesh coloured/black tights or dark blue/black socks with trousers.

Candidates must not wear neck ties, jeans, shorts or sandals.

17. What conduct is expected during the OSCE?

The OSCE is a formal examination and you are required to behave appropriately and in accordance with Ulster University’s regulations and policies. You are already a professional nurse or midwife and are expected to behave in a professional manner at all time while at the Test Centre.

18. Test Centre rules

All personal items must be placed in a small locker provided at the Test Centre. The 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 Test Centre:

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials;
- Personal items, including mobile phones, hand-held computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), pagers, watches or other electronic devices;
- Weapons of any kind.

Mobile phones, pagers or other electronic devices must be turned off before storing them in the locker.

During your stay at the Test Centre you are not allowed to access personal items other than medication or foods which are required at a specific time and you must have arranged this in advance with the Test Centre. If you require access to medical devices or aides during the OSCE please inform centre staff when booking your OSCE examination.
19. Confidentiality

As a registered nurse or midwife you are required to adhere to the NMC (2015) The Code. Any cheating, misconduct or breaching confidentiality before, during or after the OSCE may bring your profession into disrepute and may raise doubts about your fitness to practice. Such incidents will be reported to the NMC by the Lead Examiner/s 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 or discuss with anyone, including instructors, information about the OSCEs. This also includes posting or discussing scenarios or skills using the internet or any form of social media, such as Twitter or Facebook.

20. Taking the OSCE

The results of the OSCE must be an accurate reflection of your knowledge and professional skills as a nurse or midwife.

- 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 Test Centre or when taking the OSCE.

21. Grounds for dismissal or cancellation of OSCE results

You must comply fully with the Test Centre staff’s instructions and/or the Test Centre rules and regulations or you will risk having your OSCE results withheld, dismissed or cancelled. If you do not comply with the Test Centre staff’s instructions or Test Centre’s rules and regulations, you may be asked to leave the Test Centre and your fees will not be refunded. Such incidents will be reported by the Lead Examiner/s and investigated. Your OSCE result may be withheld during an investigation.

Ulster University will always report such incidents to the NMC.

22. How is the OSCE assessed?

Ulster University has robust quality assurance processes, which are adhered to. These are also independently verified and validated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) to deliver the Test of Competence Part 2.

Each OSCE station has a unique 20 criterion based assessment sheet which is matched to the scenario or skill being assessed. Examiners score each criteria. The 20 criteria are mapped against the NMC (2010) Standards for Pre-Registration Nursing Education and the NMC (2015) The Code.

The following is an example of a Planning station criterion:

Handwriting is clear and legible - Failing to write clear and legible will result in a fail in this station as it is important that other staff are able to read your care plan to continue to provide safe and effective person-centred care.

The following are the scores and descriptions indicating candidate performance for each criterion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAIL 1</td>
<td>The candidate is unable to demonstrate competence or has omitted key aspects/components of the competency/skill. This level of practice would be insufficient and may cause patient harm by act or omission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIL 2</td>
<td>The candidate has demonstrated familiarity with the nursing competency/skill but essentially, it is misapplied or applied inconsistently during assessment. This may lead to patients receiving poor levels of care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS 3</td>
<td>The candidate has demonstrated safe and effective competence/skill in line with NMC requirements at the point of entry to the register. This candidate has provided safe acceptable standard of care during the OSCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD PASS 4</td>
<td>The candidate has consistently and confidently demonstrated safe and effective competence/skills in line with NMC requirements. This candidate has provided a good standard of care which is safe, effective care in a consistent and confident manner during the OSCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent 5</td>
<td>The candidate has consistently and confidently demonstrated very good, safe, effective care in a fluid, professional manner during the OSCE. Consistently demonstrating competence/skills above the point of entry requirements set by the NMC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. **The passing standard**

To PASS the OSCE, you must achieve a pass score on every criterion. This is then moderated by a panel of examiners before the final result is awarded for the station.

*Can I have my OSCE re-scored?*

All OSCEs are recorded and all OSCEs deemed a fail will ALWAYS be reviewed by the panel of examiners on the day of the OSCE. Failed OSCEs are automatically moderated as part of the Quality Assurance process.

The Test Centre Manager will coordinate any reasonable adjustments, fitness to practice issues, appeals and complaints. He/she will refer such matters to the Test Panel for investigation and reporting to the NMC.
Unsafe Practice and Cessation of Assessment
In the event that you demonstrate unsafe practice which may place you, service user or examiner at risk then a U score (unsafe practice) must be awarded. A U score denotes an OSCE station fail.

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

The NMC will inform you of the result of the OSCE. Please do not ask the examiners or Test Centre staff.

25. What are the potential results?

Pass = Candidates who pass all four scenarios and two skills stations at the first attempt.

Partial Fail (APIE) = Candidates fail a SINGLE scenario but pass the two skills stations. This will require a partial re-sit at 50% of the cost. You will need to re-sit all the APIE scenario stations using an entirely new scenario.

Partial Fail (Skills) = Candidates pass all scenario stations but fail one or more of the skills station. This will require a partial re-sit at 50% of the cost. You will need to sit two skills stations. You will be required to re-sit a skills station that you failed to show competence, plus another from the list of skills in this Information Booklet.

Full Fail (1st attempt) = Candidates who fail more than one scenario or skills station. This will require a full re-sit at full cost. You will need to re-sit all APIE and two skills stations.

Full Fail (Re-sit) = Candidates who fail either or both APIE or skills on their re-sit attempt will require six months to elapse before again undertaking the OSCE. The OSCE must be undertaken in its entirety by way of a reapplication to the NMC. This will be at full cost. Re-sit results are always a Pass or a Full Fail and the next OSCE attempt always requires a full re-sit.

26. What form will the feedback come in?

You can expect to receive feedback on the 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 Test Centre is not allowed to teach you how to pass the examination, so the feedback will be short and factual.

For example, if a candidate failed Aseptic Non-Touch Technique (ANTT) for contaminating the sterile field when setting up the equipment, the feedback would read as follows:

“ANTT: You failed to show competence in this station. You contaminated the sterile field by placing a soiled dressing in the area. This is a service user safety risk resulting in a fail.”

27. What happens if I pass?

The NMC will contact you and begin the process of registering you as a nurse or midwife in the UK.
28. Can I have more than one attempt if I fail the OSCE?

You are permitted two attempts as part of one application (an initial sit and a full or partial re-sit). The NMC require a **minimum of 10 working days** between the initial sit and the re-sit. Please note that **if you appeal the process, you will have to wait for the investigation to be completed before you can book a re-sit in the event of your appeal not being upheld**.

If you fail the re-sit, your NMC application will close, and you are not permitted to sit the examination for a minimum of six months.

You may start your re-application earlier than six months – please contact overseas.reapplication@nmc-uk.org to start this process.

You should use the time to ensure that you are adequately prepared for the OSCE.
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 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.

29. Can I appeal my result?

What grounds can be used as the basis for an appeal?

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 then you may be able to make an appeal.

You cannot appeal the result; you can only appeal the process. See Appendix 2.

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

If you are dissatisfied with a service that Ulster University provides, or with the person who is providing it, then 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 examiner you should speak to the Lead Examiner at the time. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you can make a formal complaint to the NMC. Please refer to Guidance on Candidate Complaints and Form (Appendix 3).

31. May fitness to practice be considered during the OSCE?

Your fitness to practice during the OSCE may be considered if a member of the Test Centre staff, for example, an examiner, an actor 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 the 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 the OSCE.

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

You must make every attempt to attend the booked OSCE appointment. Cancellations before 48 hours of the OSCE will not incur a financial penalty nor will they count as an attempt for the NMC. However, cancellations made less than 48 hours before the OSCE will not be refunded and they will not count as an NMC attempt.

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

If you are unable to attend the OSCE examination because you are ill, or if you have a personal issue which prevents you from attending, you should contact the Test Centre by emailing us by using the ‘contact’ area on the website. You must remember to include independent evidence, for example, a hospital appointment letter or a copy of a prescription with your application. It is your
responsibility to collect this evidence. If you arrive to undertake the OSCE and you do not feel well enough to proceed or you become unwell during the examination, you must inform the Examiner and Lead Examiner. They will support you to complete a Guidance on Mitigating Circumstances and Form (Appendix 4). This will defer your assessment and allow you to re-book the OSCE. By taking the OSCE you are declaring that you are fit and well to undertake the examination. You will be unable to defer the OSCE once you have started or appeal that you were not fit and well. Evidenced personal circumstances, such as sudden illness, may be permitted as reasons for rebooking the OSCE at short notice. Simply being late for the OSCE or changing your mind about taking the OSCE less than 48 hours before the booked time will mean that you will have to pay in full again.

34. **How will the OSCE be affected if I am pregnant or breast feeding a young baby?**

Ulster University recognises that being or becoming pregnant, or having a young baby should not, in itself, be a barrier to applying for, starting, succeeding in, or completing the OSCE. The university will seek to support you if you are pregnant or breastfeeding a young baby. The Test Centre will endeavour to be flexible and enable you to undertake the OSCE as planned, except when a significant risk is identified. You are advised to:

- Disclose your pregnancy or requirement to breastfeed, together with supporting evidence, when booking the OSCE to enable the consideration of any necessary support arrangements or adjustments during the examination;
- Discuss any concerns you have relating to your pregnancy or breastfeeding requirements with the Test Centre Manager.

We will treat any disclosure confidentially and verify that you have no objections to your pregnancy or breastfeeding requirements being disclosed to other Test Centre staff.

35. **Can the Test Centre accommodate my needs if I have a disability?**

Our staff at the Test Centre are committed to ensuring impartiality and equality of opportunity in the delivery of our services. Our premises are accessible. In addition, simple changes such as lowering beds, accommodating your need to sit or stand, or the increased need for toilet breaks during pregnancy can be easily arranged when the Test Centre is notified in advance. You are required to declare your evidenced needs for reasonable adjustments when booking the OSCE and you will be required to produce supporting evidence. The Test Centre Manager will seek advice on the reasonable adjustment which is possible for the candidate.

Access to your medical devices during the OSCE can be accommodated with advance notification prior to booking.

The Test Centre will not allow the required level of competence to be reduced because of a disability. You must declare additional needs on the health declaration form that will be emailed to you at point of booking and confirmation of test date.
36. General tips for success

1. Access and **read, read and read** all relevant resources to prepare you for the OSCE in a timely manner;

2. Familiarise yourself with the stations that you will be examined on, including relevant paperwork;

3. Adopt strategies to manage anxiety and stress - try not to be nervous and stay calm;

4. Plan your travel well in advance;

5. Arrive in plenty of time to allow for traffic. It is recommended that you give yourself at least 30 minutes before the examination time to find the Test Centre and relax;

6. Make sure you have eaten before your OSCE. You will be in the test centre for at least 3 hours. Once you are registered, you are not allowed to go outside of the Test Centre;

7. You do not need to bring anything with you for the examination, apart from your passport and the required documentation for your ID check with the NMC. You will be provided with pens (blue and black);

8. Dress in a manner which is appropriate for a clinical environment. This includes: no jewellery, long hair tied up, no nail polish, flat shoes and short sleeves. You can arrive to the Test Centre in your work tunic/scrubs if you wish;

9. Water is available in the Test Centre if needed;

10. If you do not have a fob watch or forget to bring one, do not worry as we have spares at the Test Centre, which you can use;

11. Communicate with the actor/manikin as you would a real person/service user. Communication is a vital component of the OSCE;

12. Under no circumstances are you to communicate with other candidates before, during and/or after the OSCE;

13. Log on to Blackboard Learn at regular intervals as this is where you will be able to see any announcements, updates or changes to our guidance;

14. Make sure you prepare for your OSCE at the appropriate level. Remember the OSCE is set at the level expected of nurses and midwives as they enter the profession.
Appendix 1 - Confidentiality Agreement and Declaration - Competence Test Centre

This sheet must be completed and returned to Reception on day of your OSCE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name (Print):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of OSCE:</td>
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**CANDIDATE DECLARATION**

(Please read and initial each point to confirm the following) **I hereby agree:**

1. That I will not communicate or discuss any elements of the NMC’s Part 2 OSCE examination, facilitated by Ulster University to a third party, except my OSCE feedback, which I am permitted to share with my employer, sponsor or my educational supervisor.

2. That I will not share, or have not shared, my log in details to any other party to give access to Ulster University information that relates to the NMC’s Part 2 OSCE examination.

3. That I will not forward any examination material or information about the examination from the Ulster University to a third party.

4. That I will act in a professional manner at all times and seek advice from Test Centre staff when on University property, if a query arises.

5. That I am fit and well to undertake the OSCE and have declared (if appropriate) any request(s) for reasonable adjustment prior to my OSCE examination.

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

| Candidate’s Signature: | Date: |

**OPTIONAL:** The Test Centre/Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) may want to contact applicants for additional feedback/information in relation to the Overseas Registration/OSCE process. Please sign if you agree to be contacted.

I hereby agree for the Test Centre/Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) to contact me for additional feedback/information in relation to the Overseas Registration/OSCE process.

| Candidate’s Signature: | Date: |

Email address (Print):
Appendix 2 - Guidance on Appeals and Form

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

If you believe that the process was compromised during the exam or that an irregularity has occurred in the conduct of the examination, and you think that this has had a direct and demonstrably detrimental effect on your performance, then you may be able to make an appeal. The process refers to any concerns you may have in relation to how the examination was conducted. The Test of Competence has been designed to be current, authentic, valid and reliable. If you feel your performance was adversely affected by how you were briefed about the test or instructed during the assessment process, you may have grounds for appeal.

The result awarded to you will have been through a rigorous process of moderation involving at least two examiners and the oversight of assessment standards by an external examiner.

In summary, Ulster University will not accept an appeal against the academic and/or professional judgments of examiners per se. Therefore, you cannot appeal the result of your examination; you can only appeal on the process. An appeal will only be considered if it meets the grounds listed above.

38. Where can I obtain advice?

If you have any uncertainties about the information contained in this section, you should consult the Test Centre Manager.

39. How should I appeal?

You will need to complete the accompanying form and submit it to the Test Centre Manager within five days of receiving your OSCE result.

40. Where should I submit the form?

The completed form should be returned to the Test Centre Manager. Seal the form in an envelope, mark it Private and Confidential, and address it to the:

Test Centre Manager, Competence Test Centre
Ulster University, Magee Campus, Rm MG208, Northland Road
Derry/Londonderry, County Londonderry, BT48 7JL, Northern Ireland

Alternatively, you can email us using the ‘contact’ area on the website addressing it as Private and Confidential to the Test Centre Manager.

41. How will my appeal be dealt with?

The Test Centre Manager will oversee the appeal process. If you make a legitimate appeal on acceptable grounds, the Test Centre Manager will appoint an investigator to examine your case. The investigator will come to a conclusion and will inform the Test Centre Manager of the outcome.
42. **How long will it take to reach a decision?**

   If you make an appeal, then the *investigation will normally be completed within four weeks*. However, if you appeal you will have to wait for the investigation to be completed before you can book a re-sit (if your appeal is not upheld).

43. **What outcome can I expect if I make an appeal?**

   The investigator will decide whether or not to uphold your appeal. You will be notified of this decision by email and in writing.

   Once your appeal has been formally investigated and the outcome communicated to you, this concludes Ulster University’s Test Centre appeals process.

   If your appeal does not meet the criteria as stated above, you will be advised of your next course of action.

   If you wish to complain, the complaints procedure as outlined in Appendix 3 of this Information Booklet.
Academic Appeal Form

This form must be submitted to the Test Centre Manager within **five** days of receiving your OSCE result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name (Print):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence address:</td>
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<td>Email address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of OSCE:</td>
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**Grounds for Appeal**
(You should provide full details of the nature of the irregularity that you feel has occurred).

**CANDIDATE DECLARATION**
I declare that the information given is true and that I am willing to answer further questions if necessary.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Candidate's Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This form should be submitted to Test Centre Manager, NMC Competence Test Centre, Rm MG208, Ulster University, Magee Campus, Northland Road, Derry/Londonderry, County Londonderry, BT48 7JL, Northern Ireland in a sealed envelope or e-mailed to: ctc@ulster.ac.uk. It will be then forwarded for review.

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

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<th>Date received:</th>
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<th>Appeal acknowledged:</th>
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Appendix 3 - Guidance on Complaints and Form

44. What is a complaint and how should I make a complaint?
   
   If you are dissatisfied with a service that Ulster University is providing, or with the person who is providing it, then you can raise the matter as a complaint.

45. 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 you have a problem with your Examiner you should speak to the Lead Examiner.

46. What outcome can you expect if you make a complaint?
   
   Ulster 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 staff in the Test Centre.

47. What should I do if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?
   
   In some cases, you may feel that your complaint has not been resolved by the informal process. In such cases you can progress the complaint to a higher level by completing and submitting the accompanying Complaints Form to the NMC.

48. What happens if I make a formal complaint?
   
   Often the NMC will appoint an investigator to carry out an investigation into the matter(s) that you have raised and to report back to you. You should not submit a formal complaint unless you have already attempted to resolve your issue(s) via the informal process.

49. Will my examiners treat me differently if I make a complaint about them?
   
   It is part of Ulster 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, then the member of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

50. Where can I obtain advice?
   
   If you have any uncertainties about the information contained in this Guidance you should consult the Test Centre Manager.

51. Where should I submit the form?
   
   You should submit the form to the NMC within ten days of the event. Please place the completed form in a sealed envelope, marked Private and Confidential, and address it to the Complaints Manager at Nursing and Midwifery Council, 23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ. Alternatively, you can email the completed form to: complaints@nmc-uk.org Your complaint will then be referred to an investigator.
52. How long will it take to make a decision?

Issues may be resolved in an expedient manner using the informal process. If you make a formal complaint then the investigation may take longer, but the NMC would hope to resolve the matter within four weeks of receiving the complaint.
Complaint Form

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<td>Candidate number:</td>
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<td>Email address:</td>
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Please give a brief outline of your complaint.

Explain what steps you have taken to resolve your complaint with the relevant Test Centre using the informal process.

Continued on next page
Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the response you have received.

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<th>Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting.</th>
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**CANDIDATE DECLARATION**

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

| Candidate’s Signature: | Date: |

Please provide any documents you believe may support your complaint.

This form should be submitted to: Complaints Manager, Nursing and Midwifery Council, 23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ.
Appendix 4 - Guidance on Mitigating Circumstances and Form

53. 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.

54. 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 which prevents you from engaging with the OSCE, you should complete and submit the accompanying form. You must remember to include independent evidence, for example, a hospital appointment letter or a copy of a prescription with your application. 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 through the submission of a mitigating circumstances application form:

1. Under no circumstances will the result awarded to your OSCE be changed. All OSCEs are assessed on their own merits and no allowance will be made for mitigating circumstances. A mitigating circumstances application form for a completed OSCE will not be considered.

2. Only in very exceptional cases will applications be accepted for mitigating circumstances after the scheduled examination date has passed. If you do apply late you must explain why.

3. A known disability is not, per se, a reason to submit a mitigating circumstances application form. Nevertheless, an unforeseen illness resulting from a disability may constitute mitigation.

4. Reasonable adjustments to OSCE examinations will normally be made as required supporting candidates with a disability. Requests for such adjustments should be discussed with the Test Centre Manager in advance of the OSCE examination.

5. The NMC determines the number of opportunities a candidate has to take the OSCE examinations.

If you do not undertake the OSCE as scheduled and have successfully applied for mitigating circumstances, this opportunity will not count.

If you undertake the OSCE and are unsuccessful in applying for mitigation, the attempt will count.

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

If you are too ill to start the OSCE examination, then you need to let the Test Centre know as soon as possible. You should make every effort to cancel the OSCE a minimum of 48 hours before the examination is scheduled to take place. You then need to submit an application for mitigating circumstances. Refunds will not be given routinely if OSCEs are cancelled at short notice.
If you become ill during an OSCE examination, then you need to let the Examiner know so that it can be included in the report. If you are subsequently successful in applying for mitigation, this attempt will not count.
# Mitigating Circumstances Form

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<th>Candidate name (Print):</th>
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<th>Telephone number:</th>
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## OSCE Affected by Mitigating Circumstances:

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<th>Letter ☐</th>
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**Your Mitigating Circumstances** (You must provide precise dates of any illness or other circumstances and state how your OSCE was affected and what steps you took to recover the situation).

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<th>Please list supporting evidence submitted with this form:</th>
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**CANDIDATE DECLARATION**
I declare that the details included in this application, including any supporting evidence, are true and that I have read and understand the foregoing Guidance on Mitigating Circumstances.

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<tr>
<th>Candidate’s Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This form should be submitted to Test Centre Manager, NMC Competence Test Centre, Rm MG208, Ulster University, Magee Campus, Northland Road, Derry/Londonderry, County Londonderry, BT48 7JL, Northern Ireland in a sealed envelope or e-mailed to: ctc@ulster.ac.uk. It will be then forwarded for review.