

**MRCGP[INT] DUBAI - CLINICAL AND CONSULTATION SKILLS ASSESSMENT:  
2020 – March 2022**

In the Clinical and Consultation Skills Assessment (CCSA), candidates are presented with standardized challenges in 14 Family Medicine cases portrayed by trained simulated patients. Candidates are expected to deal with the cases as they would in a real clinic, using their consultation and clinical examination skills as appropriate to the patients' presenting problems.

**The aim of the CCSA is to test candidates' ability to:**

1. **DATA GATHERING:** *Gather information*
  - a. Gather and use data to inform clinical judgements.
  - b. Make a proper choice regarding targeted clinical examination(s).
  - c. Demonstrate proficiency in performing physical examinations and use of diagnostic instruments.
  - d. Interpret investigation findings appropriately.
  
2. **CLINICAL MANAGEMENT:** *Appropriately apply their understanding of disease processes and person-centred care*
  - a. Recognise and manage common medical conditions in primary care.
  - b. Demonstrate a structured yet flexible approach to evidence-based decision making.
  - c. Demonstrate the ability to deal with multiple complaints and co-morbidities.
  
3. **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** *Communicate effectively with patients and colleagues*
  - a. Demonstrate the use of recognized communication techniques to understand the patient's illness experience.
  - b. Develop shared management planning through a person-centred approach.
  - c. Practice ethically, with respect for equality and diversity, in line with the accepted codes of professional conduct.

**Extraordinary circumstances between 2020 and March 2022:**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic stopped us running the CCSA in 2020. Safety of candidates, examiners, the simulated patients and Dubai Health Authority staff had to come first.
  
2. The CCSA was re-introduced in April 2021. Appropriate safety measures were put in place. These included social distancing, the wearing of face masks/shields and the decision that no clinical examination cases would be included in the exam (so candidates did not have to touch the simulated patients).
  
3. As many candidates based outside the UAE sit the MRCGP International exam in Dubai,

it was decided that the diagnosis, investigation and management of COVID-19 would not be tested in the CCSA and policies vary from country to country.

### **What candidates did well between 2020 and March 2022:**

1. Candidates scored better in the Data Gathering and Interpersonal Skills areas than Clinical Management.
2. Better candidates were able to confidently take more specialist histories (such as mental state assessments and sexual histories) within their data gathering.
3. Candidates gained more marks if they could demonstrate confident, skilful, targeted and time-efficient clinical examinations.

### **What candidates did less well between 2020 and March 2022:**

1. Candidates scored less well if they were unable to share management plans with the patients and/or adopted a doctor-centred approach.
2. Less good candidates made assumptions about the diagnosis and started to describe management plans before first considering a full range of differential diagnoses.
3. The inability to interpret clinical results (such as blood tests or X-rays) correctly also led to candidates losing marks by offering inappropriate management options.

### **Tips to help candidates prepare for the CCSA:**

1. The best way to prepare for the CCSA is to **see as many real patients in clinic as possible**.
2. Try to **avoid following rigid consultation models** taught on commercial preparatory courses (especially those run by colleagues with no links to the setting of the MRCGP International exam). They do not always apply in real life! Instead, be flexible and adjust your consulting style to the needs of the patient in front of you – as you would do in clinic. There is no such thing as a single RCGP 'correct consulting model'.
3. **Practice your timing.** Get used to consulting in 10 minutes. Time goes quickly in an exam. You cannot continue the consultation once the 10-minute CCSA timer has sounded. Many candidates lose marks by not leaving enough time to check the patient's understanding and arranging follow-up plans.
4. Try to **use clinical evidence** to inform your management options, then **use a patient-**

**centred approach** to share these options with your patients.

**CCSA Candidate Exit Questionnaire between 2020 and March 2022:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>40 candidates; 39 replies (98% response rate)</b>	<b>Percentage of replying candidates who 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed'</b>
1	Thinking about the cases in general, the difficulty was what I expected	74
2	The cases were representative of general practice	82
3	The role players played the role naturally	82
4	I had enough time to complete the consultation	85
5	The environment for the exam was satisfactory	87
6	The briefing notes for the case were adequate	72
7	The organisation and administration were satisfactory	92
8	I feel my skills as a GP were fairly tested	77