How assessment papers are created and marked

Creating assessment questions

- Question writers, who are all pharmacists create questions covering all topics in the registration assessment framework.
- All new questions are reviewed by other writers and by the GPhC before being accepted into our question bank.

Creating a paper

- The GPhC create a draft assessment paper mapped to the assessment framework.
- The draft paper is reviewed by the board of assessors. The Board of Assessors review all of the questions and answers and evaluate the paper as a whole, including to check that it covers the framework topics appropriately.
- The standard setting panel use their judgement to set the standard of each question- that is, they estimate what proportion of barely passing candidates would correctly answer the question. They may consider the number of steps required to calculate an answer, frequency of encountering a topic in practice, the degree of judgment and application of knowledge required to answer and the complexity of information in the question. Panel members all have current experience of working with recently qualified and/or preregistration trainee pharmacists. Members work in all sectors of pharmacy and are based in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and receive comprehensive training before contributing to a panel.

Marking the answers

- The answers inputted by candidates are collected digitally and passed to a marking contractor. Data about how candidates answered is collated for each question.
- The board of assessors considers requests for nullification, without knowing the candidates’ marks or the number of times they have sat the assessment. If a request is granted, the candidate’s data will be removed from the answer data.
- The board consider how the questions have performed, and to consider any issues raised about particular questions. If there is valid reason and/or statistical evidence for doing so, the board may agree to remove a question, accept more than one answer for a question, remove question or adjust its difficulty score. The board review the reliability data for the paper as a whole.
• The board agree a pass mark for each paper, taking into account the performance of the questions, and considering the sitting conditions. The board must be satisfied that the passing score is at the required performance standard.

• The board of assessors use Item Response Theory to ensure that the standard was maintained in the online assessment.

• The Board of Assessors set the passing standard, not the percentage of candidates who pass the assessment. For clarity, this means that candidates are not being measured against each other or selected to pass or fail according to where they sit in the cohort of all candidates. The final pass mark is agreed.

• The results for each candidate are finalised, and this data is checked and uploaded into the GPhC’s CRM database, and checked again. The results notification process is initiated in myGPhC.