

MRCGP Clinical Skills Assessment

Information on the use of iPads in the CSA

Candidates

The CSA is delivered in a paper-light format. Candidates have electronic patient lists and case notes and examiners record their marks electronically.

Each candidate's consulting room desk is equipped with an iPad, held in a frame as shown below. When candidates enter their consulting rooms, the iPad will be already be set on their patient list.



All details concerning the use of the iPads will be explained clearly in the candidate briefing before the examination starts and additionally there will be clear instructions for their use on all the desks.

In brief overview:

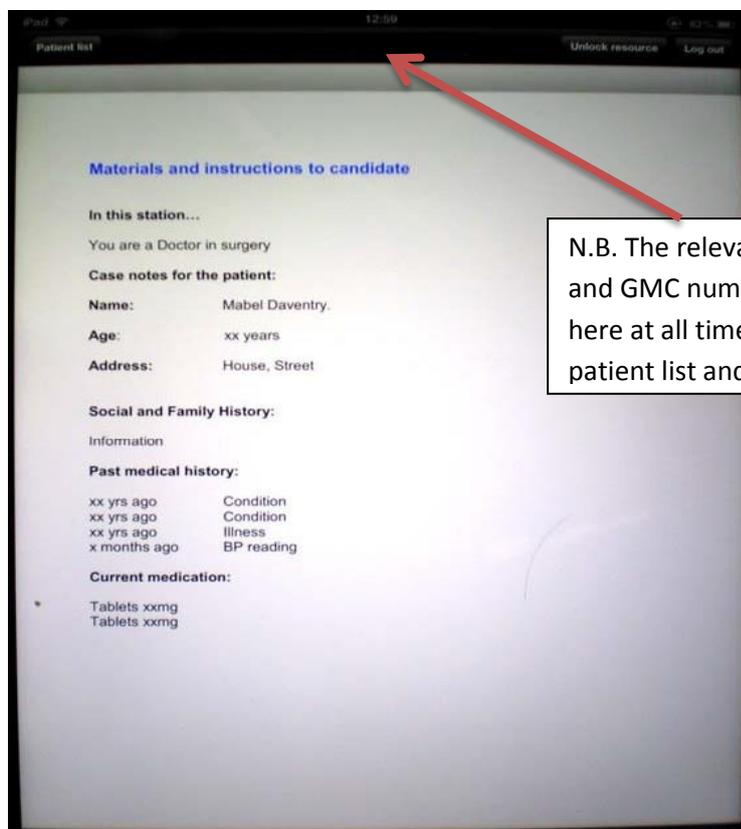
- i) iPads will have no connectivity to anything other the examination application
- ii) Candidates will only ever need to see 3 different types of screen during the exam as described below. These include the patient list screen, the case notes screen and sign-in screen which will only be seen in the eventuality of an iPad being logged out of the RCGP app.
- iii) Apart from the sign-in screen, all screens are 'read-only'. Navigation between screens is via touch-screen.

Using the iPads as a candidate:

1. Upon entering their room, each the patient list for the candidate will be displayed on the screen. Cases are still listed in the specific order for each candidate, according to their position on the circuit:



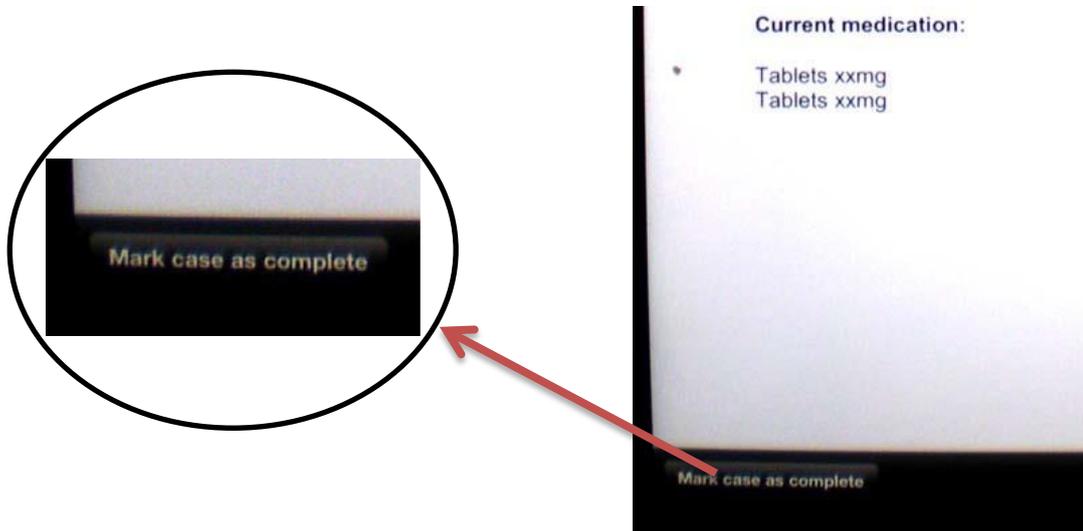
2. Case notes are accessed by tapping on the appropriate bar. i.e. tapping the bar for 'Mabel Daventry' in the shot above, would take you to the relevant case notes, displayed as follows:



N.B. Candidate iPads are kept in 'portrait' layout, as a single page of notes will fit the screen exactly. However, if test results, hospital letters etc follow, it may be necessary to scroll down – a prompt will show at the bottom of the page if this is the case.

Progression between the cases:

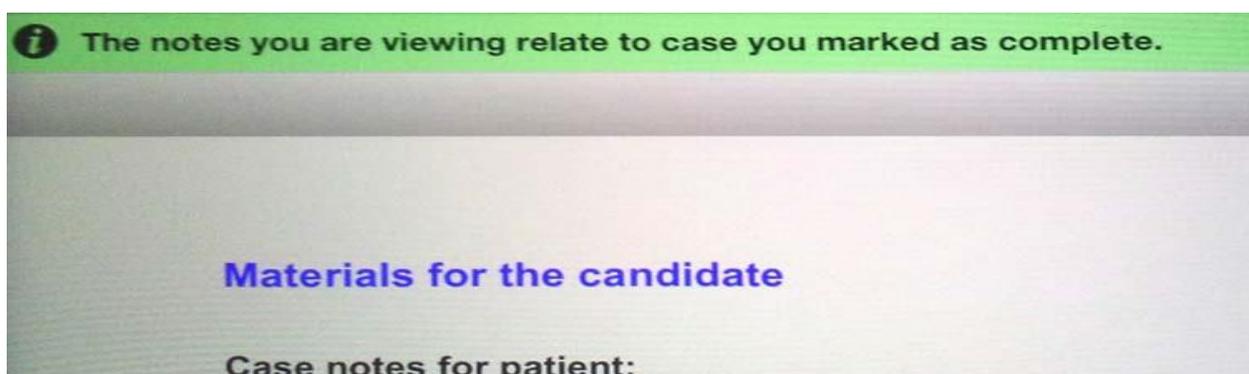
After completing each case (i.e. when the sounder marks the end of that 10 minutes), candidates should 'mark the case as complete' by tapping the button 'Mark case as complete' at the bottom left-hand corner of the patient notes screen:



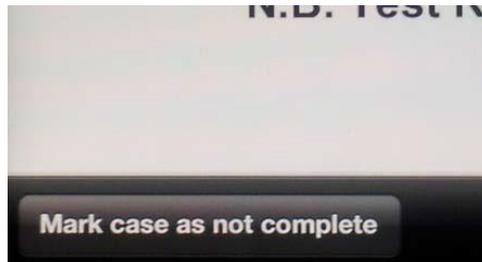
Their iPad will automatically return to the patient list where the completed cases will be highlighted in green, so it is clear that the next 'unhighlighted' case (e.g. 'Daniel Wellens' in the screenshot below) is the next patient to be seen:

Today's schedule	
1	Rob Green
2	Daniel Wellens
3	Mabel Daventry
4	Frances Arnold
5	Lucy Patterson

In this way it should be easy to be able to keep track of which case is coming next, when looking at the patient list. If a candidate goes back to the patient notes that have just been 'marked as complete' a message at the top of the screen will inform them that they are on a case that has already been 'marked as complete':



Equally, if a candidate is reading a later case in advance and accidentally marks a case as complete, this can be cleared, as the wording on the button will immediately change to the following, when 'Mark as complete' is tapped:



Simply tap this and the green shading will disappear from the patient list for that case. N.B. If on any case 'Mark as complete' is tapped before that case has ended, this will not affect any other functionality (i.e. access to patient notes, viewing/receiving resources) – this is simply a way of 'turning the page' electronically, so a candidate knows where they are on the circuit easily.

Case resources:

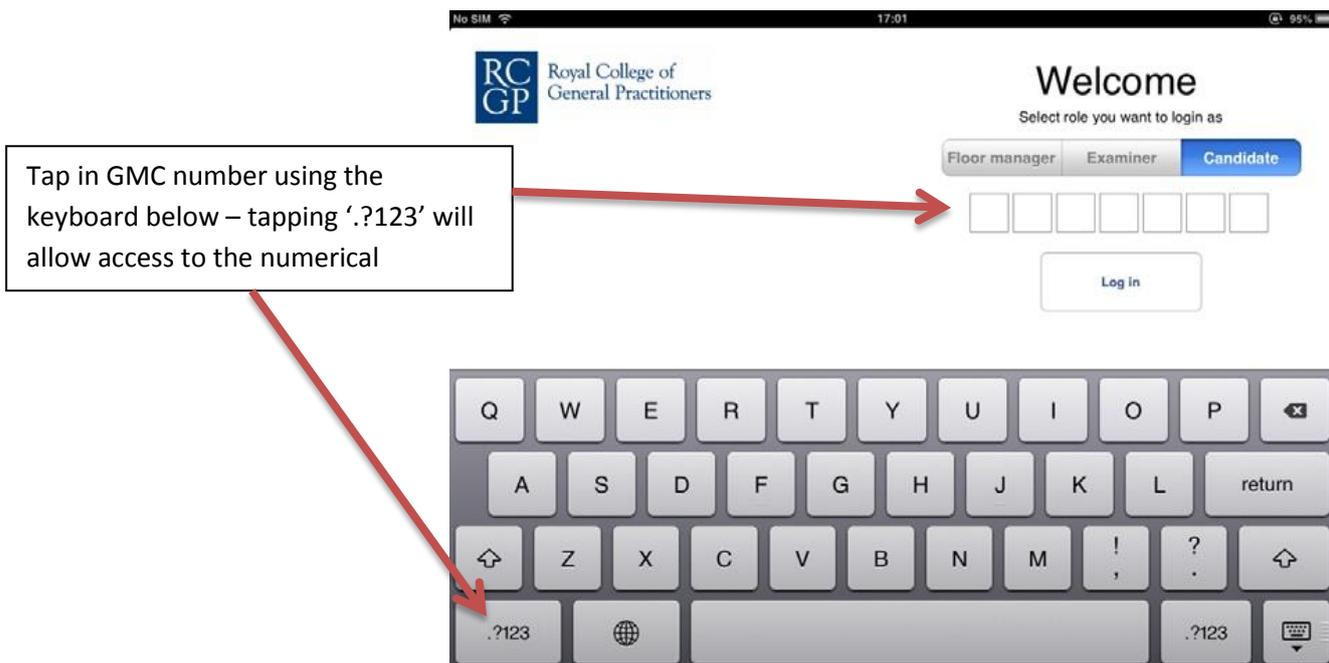
Case resources (i.e. test results, exam findings, photos etc) will all be given to candidates on card or verbally as with the old paper-based exam. None of these will be displayed on the candidate iPad.

The end of the exam:

After 13 cases, candidates are required to log out of their iPads, using the button in the top right-hand corner of the screen. They should then wait for the floor marshal or floor manager to allow them leave in the usual way.

Additional details - please take note of the following:

1. In the event of an iPad being logged out of the RCGP app, candidates can sign back into their iPad using their GMC number. Click the RCGP logo icon on the iPad home-screen and the sign-in screen will be displayed:



Once they have entered their GMC number, the candidate should tap 'Log in' and they will be returned to the patient list screen.

2. Making notes - Each candidate will have a wipe-clean whiteboard for making notes during the exam, which must be left in the room at the end of the session.

3. Technical failure - in the highly unlikely event of wi-fi failing mid-exam, candidates will still be able to access case-notes and resources on their iPads and their experience will be unaffected.

A Candidates perspective:

I used the iPad technology in December 2012 in a mock CSA exam. I thought they were great, as did everyone else I spoke to who took part in the exam. They were very easy to use and reliable, and there were lots of technicians and people available to help in case anything didn't go to plan. Using the iPads didn't add to the stress of the exam at all. If anything I think they made things easier and more life-like – after all most of us don't use Lloyd Georges anymore!

The iPads were mounted on a stand which was at eye level just like a computer monitor in a surgery. This made it easy to glance at during the consultation if ever I had to remind myself of patient information – just like in a normal surgery. All the cases for the exam were easily accessible from a home-page on the iPad like an appointment list in a surgery. You tapped on a patient name to take you to the details of the case which was much easier than having to flick through lots of pieces of paper. After you saw a patient it was highlighted on the home page, so you knew how far you were through the exam. When additional details were available during the consultation, such as examination findings, it was very easy to access by simply tapping the screen after the examiner told you.

I don't own an iPad but have used one before, however I don't think this prior knowledge helped at all. Touch-screen technology is all around us nowadays and even if you haven't used it previously, iPads are very intuitive and easy to use. I think the move to a paperless system for the CSA exam is a real step forward and confirms how innovative the RCGP examination department are.

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December 2012*