

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Health



Health Professionals' Competency
Assessment and Licensure Directorate

Examiner Manual

March 2019

Message from the Director

As compared to the WHO standard of health professionals to population ratio for developing countries, Ethiopia has wide gap yet and the government has been working to increase the number of health professionals by increasing the intake of health science colleges and by opening new institutions.

While this helped to reduce the gap we have compared to the standard, the quality of the teaching and learning process hence, the service provided by the professionals became an issue for different stakeholders and the government as well. For this reason and since licensure exams are widely practiced internationally in different countries to insure the quality of health service, the federal ministry of health took the initiative to launch licensure exam initiative within human resource directorate since July 2015. Since then two round pilot tests given and reports discussed with different stakeholders.

The initiative currently led by a directorate established for this purpose, which is composed of three case teams and has been doing different activities to strengthen the system and capacitate the directorate to implement the exam in wider range with a much better organization and quality. As part of this, different documents were prepared to help facilitate the exam process and create transparency and sustainability of the program.

In the preparation of this document and other manuals, different examining institutions and countries experiences were reviewed, highly valued experts from different higher teaching institutions and Jhpiego- Ethiopia were involved for whom my deep appreciation goes for and for the high commitment and hardworking of the staffs at the federal ministry of health.

To this end, I would like to call for a collaborative work of all stakeholders in the health sector to this initiative, which indeed has high contribution to quality assurance of the health service delivery and yet cannot be effective unless all relevant bodies put their hands together for its implementation and continuity.



Dr. Ruth Nigatu

Health Professionals' competency
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A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light purple rectangular background. The signature appears to read "Ruth Nigatu".

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Abbreviations

FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
MCQ	Multiple Choice Questions
NBE	National Board of Examinations
OSCE	Objectively Structured Clinical Examination

Definition of Terms

- **Accountability:** is an assurance that an examiner will be evaluated based on the performance or behavior related to the examination process for which they are responsible
- **Assessor:** is a skillful and knowledgeable examiner to assess clinical competence using Objectively Structured Clinical Examination and certified by the Federal Ministry of Health.
- **Candidate:** is a health professional that has completed his/her required courses and has senate evidence as a graduating class from his/her college. For those who has completed their course in abroad and interested to take licensure exam, equivalent learning periods or first degree required and can considered as a candidate by their personal registration.
- **Code of conduct:** is a set of rules outlining the social norms, responsibilities and proper practices of an individual in an organization.
- **Directorate:** is Health professionals' Licensing Examination Directorate in the Federal Ministry of Health
- **Examination:** a formal test of a person's knowledge or proficiency in a particular subject or skill.
- **Examiner Certification:** is a process of confirmation and empowering a professional's level of competency in conducting an objective examination
- **Examiner:** is a professional who is certified by the directorate to carry out licensure examination. Examiner includes MCQ invigilator and OSCE assessor.
- **Guideline:** is a set of advice, rules, and regulations that determine the examination process.
- **Health Professional:** is an individual who is qualified in health discipline by education, training and performs professional services with his/her scope of practice.
- **Invigilator:** is an examiner who is certified by the directorate to carry out multiple choice question type during licensure examination.
- **License:** is permission granted by the Directorate to practice a healthcare profession.
- **Licensing:** is a process of granting a legally protected professional title.

- **Simulated patient:** is a standardized patient/ a sample patient, a patient instructor or doll that acts as a real patient during OSCE.
- **Licensure Examination:** Is an examination provided to grant a license for a candidate to practice in a profession.
- **Orientation:** is information provided for introducing a new situation or environment
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** are duties, tasks, and functions that are set as a part of a job.
- **Supervisor:** is a health professional who is a responsive, qualified representative of the directorate to oversee the whole examination process at the assessment center.

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Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) asserted that no matter how many individuals are educated and deployed; health professionals cannot transform population health unless they have the necessary competencies. Hence, the WHO recommended changes in regulations including certification and licensing of graduates. It is also known that many countries around the world including those in North America, Europe and Africa verify competence and fitness to practice of health professionals by administering standard qualification or licensure examinations.

The Government of Ethiopia recognizes that healthcare is one of the crucial components of basic social services with direct linkage to growth and development of the country as well as to the welfare of the society. The quality of health care delivered in a country has an immediate and long-term impact on the quality of life, livelihood, morbidity and mortality of its citizens and on the nation's economy and its national security. Accordingly, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is committed to reduce morbidity, mortality and disability and to improve the health status of Ethiopian people by providing and regulating health services. Health professionals' competency assessment is among the approaches of regulating health service; hence MOH designed health professional Competency assessment and licensure examination.

The sole purpose of competency assessment is to identify health professionals who possess the minimum basic knowledge and experience necessary to perform tasks on the job safely and competently, but not to select the "top" candidates. It is also to validate safe and effective medical practice, job-related skills and knowledge to provide an independent assessment and documentation of competency. Therefore, competency assessment is very different from academic or employment examination.

To guide the assessment process, the directorate has prepared different manuals and guidelines one of which is the examiner manual. The examiner manual is developed to provide all the required guidance to the examiner while conducting the health professionals' competency assessment and licensure examination. This manual covers examiner related issues ranging from the roles and responsibilities to the ethical and professional code of conduct. An examiner will take the required training and orientation before conducting the competency assessment. There

are two types of examiners in competency assessment, namely written exam invigilator and OSCE assessor. Written exam invigilator is responsible to examine and evaluate candidates taking MCQ examinations, whereas OSCE Assessor delivers a reliable and fair skill assessment.

Objective

The objective of this manual is to provide effective guidance to the examiner while conducting the competency assessment of health professionals.

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Examiner

1.1. Roles and Responsibilities: Written exam/MCQ/ Invigilator

1.1.1. Before examination

- Sign the security and contractual agreement
- Count and collect all the required materials for the examination and sign on the request form
- Arrive at the examination center a day before the commencement of the examination
- Check the examination room to ensure suitability of the accommodation, proper ventilation, illumination and seating arrangement (as per the standard)
- Ensure the security of the examination papers
- Introducing self, co-examiner/s and observers to the candidates prior to the commencement of the examination to create a non-stressful environment.
- Check the candidates' registration number and identification card at the entry.
- Ensure that there is a signpost that states 'examination is on processes' on the door of the examination room.
- Confirm that each candidate doesn't hold any communication equipment or any electronic devices
- Ensure that each candidate has signed the attendance sheet.
- Confirm that all teaching and learning aids (wall posters, diagrams, and charts) are totally covered or removed.
- Ensure required arrangement for examinee that have an approved special need.
- Make sure that candidates are familiar with instructions, procedures, and regulations for the examination
- Examiner's communication devices should be switched off

- Make sure that installed software is properly functional for computer-based examination.
- Ensure that the room has sufficient space for sitting arrangement
- Ensure that 10% of the replaceable computer is available for the computer-based
- exam

1.1.2. During Examination

- Announce the start and end of the exam time verbally and by writing on the board)
- Open the packets of examination papers in front of the candidates in the examination room before distribution
- Make sure that each candidate does not enter in with any pieces of paper papers
- Don't allow the candidates who come 30 minutes after the examination has started to enter the examination room.
- Aware the candidate about the remaining time in the middle, 30 and 5 minutes before the end of the exam time.
- Don't allow the candidate to leave the examination room before one hour.
- Respond to candidate's emergencies (illness, visiting restroom, etc ...) appropriately
- Remain in the examination room throughout the period of examination
- Document and report any incident to the supervisor
- Do not attempt to clarify a question, to provide a clue or an answer to the exam questions
- In case of cheating, take appropriate action then collect evidence and report to supervisor immediately
- Be aware that any attempt to cheat in the exam hall will automatically cancel the results.

1.1.3. After Examination

- Count, collect and hand over a signed attendant sheet, question papers and answer sheets to the supervisor and sign on a request form
- Ensure the security of the completed answer sheets
- Submit a written report to the supervisor immediately after the examination, either individually or jointly with co-examiner
- The examiner should not discuss questions with candidates.
- Actively participate in ensuring the examinations are of the highest standards through the provision of feedback on the delivery of examination
- Participate in the appeal process if any

1.2. Roles and responsibilities: OSCE Assessor

1.2.1. Before assessment

- Sign the security and contractual agreement
- Make sure that the examination center is ready a day before (location, space, and arrangement)
- Check the examination room to ensure suitability of the accommodation, proper ventilation, illumination and seating arrangement as per OSCE standard
- Make sure that station is prepared in accordance with the checklist.
- Be available in the OSCE hall at least an hour before the commencement of the assessment.
- Collect candidate list and skill assessment tool/ checklist

1.2.2. During assessment

- Greet and welcome candidates
- Be attentive to candidates as soon as he/she enters o the station
- Remind students to read the instructions
- Provide or post the case scenario or opening statement on the wall
- Stay at the assessment area during the entire duration of the assessment

- Respond to candidate's emergencies (illness, visiting restroom, etc ...) appropriately
- Observe and measure each step of the student performance based on the checklist.
- Remind the candidate where the next station is
- Complete the checklist and prepare to receive the next candidate within 5 min gap in between.
- Report any problem in his/her station to the supervisor
- Refrain from providing any clue during the assessment.
- Communicate with the candidate if only it is indicated in the checklist
- If unwanted behavior is exercised by the candidate, take appropriate action then inform to the supervisors immediately
- Do not provide feedback on the student performance

1.2.3. After assessment

- Submit the completed assessment results to the supervisor immediately
- Submit the case scenario/ opening statements papers and unused checklists of the station to the supervisor
- Report any documented & undocumented case of irregularity and inconvenience to the supervisor
- Participate in the appeal process if any
- Attend the assessment result review team meeting
- Submit a comprehensive report or feedback to the concerned bodies

2. Examiners' code of conduct

The examiner is expected to exercise the following ethically and professionally accepted behaviors

- Be punctual for exam orientation, exam delivery, and exam submission)
- Follow professional dressing code
- signed consent or agreement before the exam
- abide by the rules and regulation of the examination process
- Treat all candidates equally and fairly with dignity and respect
- Respect dignity and modesty of simulated patient
- Evaluate candidates based on their performances
- Disclose conflict of interest (e.g. reporting candidate from family member to supervisor)
- Ensure the security of all scenarios & OSCE information
- Avoid discussing examination related information before, during and after the exam (e.g. not exposing information in workshops, training, organized by the third body)
- Showing a willingness to participate in teamwork.
- Maintain confidentiality of the candidate's exam result
- Follow transparent recording and reporting procedures

3. Accountability of the Examiner

An examiner who breaches the above-listed roles and responsibilities and code of conduct shall be accountable based on the degree of violation. Following formal procedures, the measures taken by the Directorate or the supervisory team range from an oral warning to liability legal actions.

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