



DGM Clinical Examination

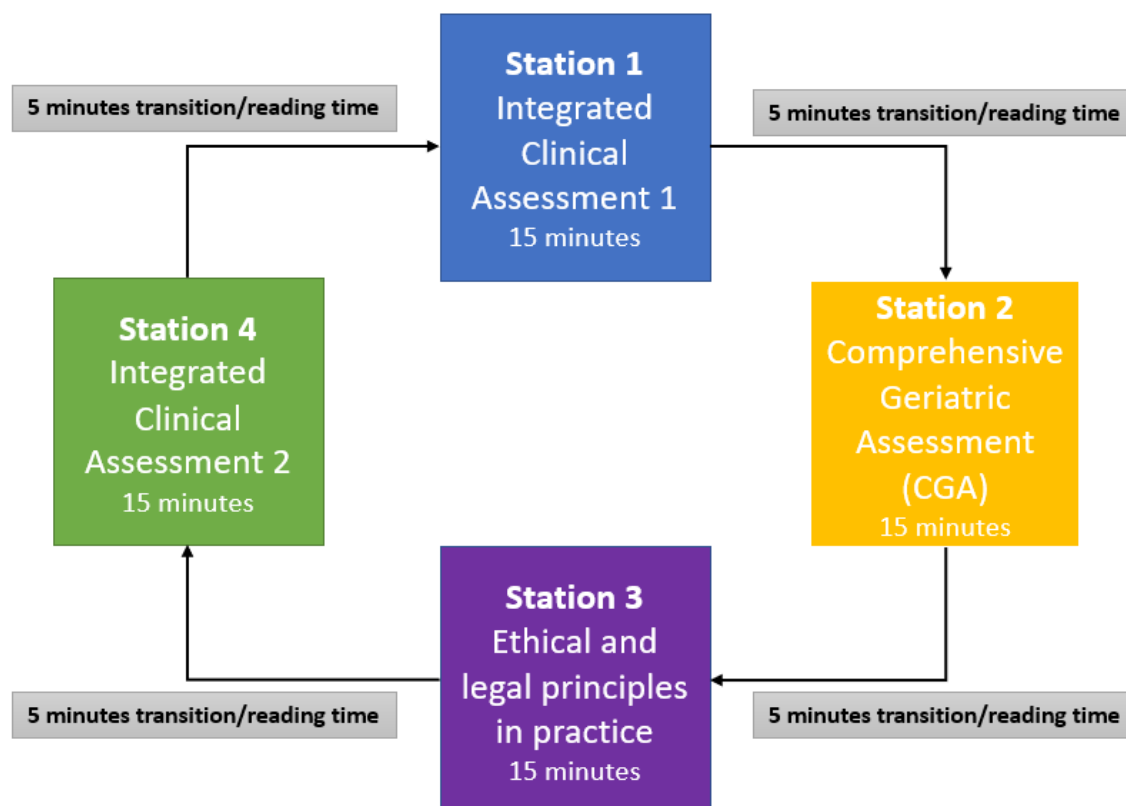
Candidate Guidance

The Diploma in Geriatric Medicine (DGM) is developed by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) in collaboration with the British Geriatrics Society and is designed for individuals who want to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise in the healthcare of older people in primary and secondary care settings. It consists of one online knowledge-based assessment (KBA) and one clinical exam.

From November 2024, the format of the DGM clinical exam is changing, with the aim of better reflecting how healthcare of older people in primary and secondary care settings is now delivered across the four nations of the United Kingdom. This document outlines the new format of the clinical exam and provides guidance as to what candidates can expect on the day of their exam.

The DGM knowledge-based assessment (KBA) remains unaltered. Candidates must still pass the DGM KBA before they can apply for the DGM clinical exam.

DGM clinical examination structure



- > The DGM clinical examination comprises four stations, each lasting 15 minutes:
 1. Integrated Clinical Assessment 1
 2. Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA)
 3. Ethical and legal principles in practice
 4. Integrated Clinical Assessment 2
- > Candidates have 5 minutes outside each station to read the candidate instructions, which outline the background to the scenario and the tasks required.
- > Candidates then have 15 minutes inside each station. A two-minute warning is given after 13 minutes of each station.
- > The exam is 80 minutes in duration.
- > Each station features two examiners, who work in pairs to set the standard for each scenario ('calibration') but mark each candidate individually, without conferring.
- > The exam will still draw from areas of the DGM [syllabus](#), which remains unchanged.
- > No station is mandated to focus on a specific healthcare setting. Instead, each exam will feature scenarios that span a range of settings and have a balance between urgent and planned/anticipatory care.

Station 1 and Station 4 – Integrated Clinical Assessment (ICA)

Each of the two integrated clinical assessment stations aim to assess the way in which you approach a clinical scenario in the care of older people in a cohesive and inclusive manner, involving history-taking, examination, and communication with a patient.

You will need to:

1. Take a relevant history from the patient.
2. Conduct a focused physical examination of the patient.
3. Interpret your findings.
4. Communicate your findings to the patient and discuss a management plan with them.
5. Discuss your findings and management plan with the examiners.

You will spend 13 minutes on steps 1-4, followed by 2 minutes discussion of your findings and plan with the examiners.

Station 2 – Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA)

A CGA is a valuable tool and a core skill in the assessment of the frail older person. Within this station you will be tested on your ability to conduct and utilise a CGA (initial details of which are provided as part of the candidate instructions), as well as management of a patient with one or more common clinical syndromes:

- Confusion
- Continence problems
- Deteriorating mobility
- Falls
- Frailty
- Palliative care
- Sensory impairment.

The primary aim of this station is not to make a diagnosis. You are instead expected to gather any missing information necessary to developing a coherent management plan; provide a full review of the scenario; prioritise the issues faced by the patient and display understanding of how the patient's management will be undertaken, both individually and as part of a wider multi-disciplinary team.

This station does not utilise any patients, all interaction is between the candidate and examiner. You have up to five minutes gathering any missing information required, via questions asked to examiners, to develop an appropriate assessment and management plan, before 10 minutes of discussion and questions from examiners.

Station 3 – Ethical and legal principles in practice

This station assesses your ability to undertake a complex conversation with a patient or a patient's representative, drawing upon relevant ethical principles and legal frameworks to provide clinical guidance and

support in a sensitive and professional manner. Legal frameworks are based upon those utilised across the four nations of the United Kingdom.

You will interact with the patient or the patient’s representative for 10 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of discussion with examiners.

Summary of timings

Station	Patient interaction (minutes)	Information gathering (minutes)	Examiner interaction (minutes)
1. Integrated Clinical Assessment 1	13		2
2. Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment		5	10
3. Ethical and legal principles in practice	10		5
4. Integrated Clinical Assessment 2	13		2

A two-minute warning will be given after 13 minutes of each station to support the best use of your time during each scenario.

Scenarios and candidate instructions

The candidate instructions, which are available inside and outside every station, outline the clinical background to the scenario, and the associated tasks that you will be expected to undertake. They may also outline tasks that you are not expected to undertake, to help guide you as to how to manage your time within a station.

You have five minutes before each station commences to read each scenario and to make any notes you feel are appropriate. Any notes made can be taken into a station to be referred to as required but must be left with the examiners at the end of the station.

Examiners

Each station features two examiners. They work in pairs to set the standard for their station prior to the exam beginning, but then mark you individually, without conferring, once the exam begins.

After greeting you and confirming your candidate number, examiners will direct you to the patient or the patient’s representative.

Examiners will not interrupt or direct you during the interaction with the patient, unless it is evident that you need guidance on how to proceed (in which case examiners will refer you back to the candidate instructions), or you are causing the patient discomfort during a physical examination. If you are causing a patient discomfort, the physical examination will be stopped, and you will be advised to either modify your technique or move on to other aspects of the station.

Only when the appropriate timing point is reached will examiners begin their discussion and questioning with you. If you finish your interaction with the patient (stations 1, 3 & 4) or information gathering (station 2) before the

early, examiners will advise you that there is still time remaining to interact further with the patient or to read the information provided, should you wish to do so.

When the end of each station is announced, you must exit the station immediately. Any task(s) you undertake after the station has ended will not be considered during an examiner's assessment of your performance.

You may also encounter trainee examiners inside a station. They are there to observe the station and will not interact with you or contribute in any way to the marks you are awarded.

Marking

You will be marked by examiners electronically. When you enter a station, you should present your candidate badge to examiners, who will verify your details on their electronic marking system.

Sample marksheets are available on the DGM [website](#) to help you understand how the clinical exam is marked.