

TESTING

Preface to the testing material

This section contains the material that is necessary to run the testing stations that are used as a final assessment of provider skills on the course. The range of tests has been designed to assess knowledge, key practical skills, and ability to perform in clinical situations.

The testing station guides included in this section are:

1. Written
2. Basic Life Support
3. Airway
4. Defibrillation
5. Scenarios

Each guide is laid out in the same way. First the Testing Objectives are given; these indicate the area that the test is designed to assess. Next a comprehensive list of the equipment required to run the test is given. Under "Environment" some suggestions about the layout of the testing area are made. These suggestions are designed to reduce the extraneous stresses and to ease the running of the test. Finally the standards required for success as a provider are given along with a copy of the relevant testing form.

The aim of the course is to teach the candidates advanced paediatric life support skills, and the tests are designed to determine if this aim has been met. Candidates can only successfully complete the course as providers by attending all parts of the course, by correctly carrying out each skill in the practical stations, and by reaching the required standards in the testing stations.

Continuous assessment is carried out throughout the course. This has several aims. First it is used to identify candidates who are having trouble with any aspect of the course, allowing remedial action to be taken by the faculty. Next it is used in the practical stations to ensure that each candidate has correctly carried out each of the skills. Finally candidates who have instructor potential are identified in this way, allowing the faculty to assign teaching tasks to them to further assess this.

Final assessment is carried out in the testing stations that have been designed to assess knowledge ("knowing" and "knowing how"), practical skills ("showing how") and the actual application of knowledge and practical skills in the clinical setting ("doing").

Written tests are designed to test the core knowledge given during the course and have been compiled so that they are consistent with the manual.

Each practical test has been assessed for validity and reliability and, within the constraints of manikin design, fulfils the requirement for fidelity to the actual clinical situation. However the tests are not conducted in real clinical situations, and instructors therefore have a major part to play in achieving fidelity. Each station must be carefully set up with this in mind, and each candidate should be fully briefed before entering the testing area.

The scenario test represents the final stage of testing in that it goes some way towards assessing the fourth level of learning ("doing"). Instructor preparation and briefing of candidates for testing are vitally important if the test is to fulfil this purpose. Poor instructor preparation (such as failing to understand the scenario, failing to brief the assistant, and failing to learn how to operate the manikin) will reduce both the validity and fidelity of the test. Reliability is achieved by including a minimum standard (the key treatment points) that must be achieved by the candidate.

In summary the tests have been designed to assess all four levels of learning, and to be as valid, reliable and relevant as possible. Instructors who are conducting the tests have a vital role to play in ensuring that these aims are met.