



## StAMPS 2010 Practice Examination: Introductory Notes

The examination is run in an 'open release' format in order to minimise ambiguity between the candidate and examiners about the setting in which the clinical cases encountered in the examination are taking place, as well as provide some indication of the type of patients that may be encountered during the examination. On the day prior to the examination, each candidate is able to access the 'appointment book' through a secure internet portal. This lists the 15+ patients who have made an 'appointment' for a consultation with the candidate, details key logistical issues about the location where the examination is set, and an indicator of other relevant community factors that would suggest other more possible emergent presentations, e.g. gastroenteritis epidemic, high prevalence of asthma, rodeo in town, roads closed, hospital staffing problems, etc.

The examination is conducted by videoconference with each candidate in his/her home region and all examiners at the one examination centre. The candidates have one continuous videoconference connection, with examiners rotating between candidates so that each candidate has a range of examiners. The candidates are provided with written documentation detailing the background information for each scenario at the start of the 10 minute reading time which precedes the first scenario. Each examination comprises eight scenarios of 10 minutes duration, with five minutes between scenarios during which time the candidate can read the material for the next scenario. Each candidate's performance is digitally recorded to assist in the marking process and for quality assurance purposes.

Each scenario is framed around an assessment target or goal. The scenario and questions are unfolding in nature allowing information to be progressively revealed. One or two of the scenarios are in the 'simulated' format where the candidate interacts with a simulated patient, parent, colleague, nurse, etc. The remainder of the scenarios are in the viva voce format, where the candidate discusses the scenario directly with the examiner and no simulation is performed. The candidate may be asked to clarify their answers when these are unclear and to expand on answers when there is insufficient detail.

**Please note:** This examination is not a traditional OSCE. The viva voce questions are specifically designed to measure the candidate's understanding of core and general principles, rather than necessarily applying them to a specific nominated patient. In particular, diagnostic dilemmas are not the focus of these scenarios matching real life where often the clinical management is required to proceed prior to a definitive diagnosis being made. Being a viva voce examination, there is ample opportunity for the candidate to explain the rationale behind their thinking, as well as an opportunity for the examiner to explore issues in greater depth than is possible in a written paper.

Although the examination is designed to measure content, it is in each candidate's best interest to be thoroughly familiar with the style and process of the examination. This includes being careful to place their answers in the context of the location where the examination is set.