



Direct Observation of Communication Skills (DOCS) (AEMTP)

1. Introduction

A Direct Observation of Communication Skills (DOCS) assessment is designed to provide feedback on essential communication skills pertaining to the clinical handover and/or referral of a patient. Trainees carry out a patient referral and are assessed by the supervisor who observes the process.

The Direct Observation of Communication Skills (DOCS) must be assessed by an Approved Assessor (see assessment summary page for Approved Assessor Matrix) working at the hospital.

2. Instructions

2.1 Trainees

All trainees are required to complete this assessment to a competent standard across all criteria.

2.2 Assessor

- Use the criteria and descriptors on the assessment form, with all descriptors to be shown by the trainee for each criterion. Note: Paediatric can be indicated when the patient is under 16 years of age.
- For the Global Assessment to be assessed as 'Competent' the trainee must not have been assessed as 'Not yet competent' for any individual criteria.
- Assessment (including feedback comments) can be recorded in hard copy initially, however, it also needs to be entered and saved in the assessment area of the ACEM Educational Resources website.

3. Additional information/ Tips

- Assessor must be present for the entire handover/referral process which may occur face-to-face or via phone.
- Assessor may prompt trainee or intervene to ensure safe patient care.

Direct Observation of Communication Skills Assessment Form



NAME OF TRAINEE _____

NAME OF APPROVED ASSESSOR* _____

DATE OF MEETING _____

*See [Approved Assessor Matrix](#)

PATIENT CASE DETAILS

Patient Type

Adult

Paediatric

Brief summary of case *

COMPONENT ASSESSMENT

Select the ONE best option that describes the trainee's performance in this DOCS.	Not Yet Competent Trainee did NOT perform independently to a competent standard	Competent Trainee performed independently to a competent standard
Please rate the trainee on the following criteria, using the descriptors.		
Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Referring clinician ● Accepting clinician details (name, contact number) ● Patient details (Name, DoB, UMRN) 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<i>Rationale:</i>
Situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One phrase clinical synthesis outlining the clinical situation, the working diagnosis, concerns and reason for referral 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<i>Rationale:</i>
Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of the presenting complaint, relevant PMHx, medications, allergies 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<i>Rationale:</i>
Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessment of the current clinical state of the patient including observations, relevant examination and investigation findings, overall assessment of the clinical situation 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
		<i>Rationale:</i>

Direct Observation of Communication Skills Assessment Form



Recommendations and Readback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat the request and reason for referral Clarify and check mutual understanding Confirm agreed plan 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<i>Rationale:</i>	
Communication and Consultation with staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately convey relevant information and explanation to other health professionals Develop a shared plan of care with health professionals Accurate contemporaneous documentation of the referral conversation Exhibit honesty, integrity, compassion and respect Manage conflict appropriately, if encountered 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<i>Rationale:</i>	

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT

Select the ONE best option that describes the trainee's overall performance in this DOCS	Not Yet Competent	Competent
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Areas of strength:

Areas for development and/or agreed learning goals:

Any other Assessor comments about this assessment (optional):

Trainee comments about this assessment (optional) - entered by Assessor:

(End of assessment)