

Advanced Specialised Training (AST) StAMPS

ADULT INTERNAL MEDICINE | MENTAL HEALTH | PAEDIATRICS | SURGERY
ASSESSMENT PUBLIC REPORT

2020 - 2024

Purpose

This public report provides information for candidates, supervisors, and educators and is produced annually on the Advanced Specialised Training (AST) Structured Assessment using Multiple Patient Scenarios (StAMPS) exam. It describes the assessment outcome for the preceding 5 years. This rolling format has been selected due to low annual candidate numbers and to remove the possibility of identifying individual trainees. It includes information on the conduct, outcome, statistics and commentary on these exams.

Introduction

The StAMPS assessment is an oral assessment in which the candidate is presented realistic rural medicine scenarios. Candidates are asked three questions over 10 minutes for each scenario. The StAMPS assessment aims to test higher order thinking skills in a highly contextualised framework. Candidates are expected to explain how they would approach a given situation, demonstrating clinical reasoning, not only knowledge of facts.

Assessment Statistics

The pass rates are shown by AST STAMPS over last 5 years (2020 – 2024) in the table below.

AST StAMPS 2020-2024

Assessment	Failed	Passed	Total	Percentage
AST StAMPS Adult Internal Medicine	17	35	52	67.3%
AST StAMPS Mental Health	5	21	26	80.8%
AST StAMPS Paediatrics	13	25	38	65.8%
AST StAMPS Surgery	5	11	16	68.8%

Conduct of the Exam

These assessments were conducted according to the previously established processes for AST StAMPS delivery on the College's online platform.

Candidates were provided a Community Profile that described the demographics, logistics and health service availability of a simulated rural community in which the assessment is set. This ensures consistency of assessment delivery and marking for all candidates regardless of their actual practice location. The current Community Profile is published on the [ACRRM website](#) and available to view by the general public.

Candidates were provided with 10 minutes of reading time prior to the start of the first scenario to review the provided printed material. 10 minutes were scheduled between scenarios to ensure there was at least 5 minutes for reading time and a buffer to accommodate for any technical audio-visual issues and/or allow troubleshooting. Candidates remained on one continuous videoconference link throughout the assessment with an ACRRM room monitor online and a nominated invigilator on-site. Examiners moved between the virtual rooms.

Further information may be found in the [Handbook for Fellowship Assessment](#).

Quality Assurance

Each discipline has a Lead Examiner supporting the teams of examiners. Examiners are selected based on discipline expertise and their considerable experience with the StAMPS modality. All examiners undergo training and ongoing development.

Each Lead Examiner also undertook independent and concurrent scoring ensuring that each case and each examiner had paired data to assess inter-examiner variability/reliability. These Quality Assurance (QA) scores were not included in the candidates' total scores and therefore did not affect the overall outcome, serving only a QA function. All candidates' scenarios were videorecorded. These recordings are retained until reconsideration, review and appeal processes are completed and are then destroyed.

Given the revised scoring system in use, an additional QA check was performed by a team of Review Examiners of the narrowest scoring pass performances to ensure that these candidates were indeed meeting the standard to pass.

Grading and Scoring Overview

Following from its inception and implementation in Core Generalist Training (CGT) StAMPS in 2021 and Emergency Medicine (EM) StAMPS in 2022, the revised grading and scoring system was introduced to AST StAMPS Adult Internal Medicine (AIM) in 2022 and all then AST StAMPS Mental Health (MH), Paediatrics (PAEDS) and Surgery (SURG) in 2023.

Candidate performance is graded against a rubric and behaviour anchor on an 8-point linear scale. Each scenario offers the candidate the opportunity to earn up to 7 points on 6 items/domains which are scored independently.

- Management in Part 1 that incorporates relevant medical and rural contextual factors
- Management in Part 2 that incorporates relevant medical and rural contextual factors
- Management in Part 3 that incorporates relevant medical and rural contextual factors
- Problem Definition & Systematic Approach
- Communication & Professionalism
- Flexibility to changing context

In all years, these exams used a combination of new and previously used scenarios. New scenarios were written and standardised by the Discipline Lead. As a quality measure, the new scenarios in this exam undergo additional quality assurance checks and road testing.

Curriculum Blueprint

The table below provides a brief overview of the 2024 scenarios for each AST StAMPS, the domains of the curriculum assessed.

ACRRM Domains:

- Provide expert medical care in all rural contexts
- Provide primary care
- Provide secondary medical care
- Respond to medical emergencies
- Apply a population health approach
- Work with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and other culturally diverse communities to improve health and wellbeing
- Practise medicine within an ethical, intellectual, and professional framework
- Provide safe medical care while working in geographic and professional isolation

Topics covered are listed below:

AST STAMPS			
Adult Internal Medicine	Mental Health	Paediatrics	Surgery
Chronic cough/Weight loss/Refugee Health	Depression	Fever in neonate	Pilonidal abscess
Lung cancer/hypercalcaemia	Chronic Schizophrenia	Respiratory illness/Vaccination	Appendicitis
Parkinson's Ds	Self-Harm	Antalgic gait	Hernia
Liver failure/Palliative Care	Eating Disorders	Depression	Burns
Metastatic malignancy/Voluntary Assisted Dying	ADHD	Constipation	Scrotal trauma
Pneumonia/Sepsis	Anxiety	Faltering growth/Eye Infection	Dysphagia
Acute Myocardial Infarct	Behavioural disturbance	Seizure disorder	Skin malignancy
Rheumatoid Arthritis	Dementia	Bronchiolitis	Diabetic foot

Scenario Development

The 2024 AST StAMPS exams consisted of 8 scenarios aligned to the BARS format. New scenarios were written and standardised by the Lead Examiners and AST StAMPS review panels to confirm contemporary relevance and AST standard.

Previously used scenarios were reviewed, and this resulted in some amendments to ensure currency including with updated clinical guidelines, wording complexity and development of suggested 'probing questions' to be used by the examiners.

As a further quality assurance measure, all scenarios for this exam underwent review by a Delphi panel of three FACRRMs (selected to optimise diversity) who were asked to recommend changes, grade difficulty, and outline an expected satisfactory answer. Once deemed suitable, all 8 scenarios were put through a moderation process with the Lead Examiner and the examiners who delivered each scenario on the exam day.

Candidate and Educator Guidance

The following commentary is provided to assist candidates in understanding their results, future candidates in preparation for this assessment and educators who are supporting candidates. Brief individualised feedback is routinely provided, but this does not entirely capture the differences between success and non-success. Therefore, it is recommended that individual results and feedback be read in conjunction with the comments below.

Passing the AST StAMPS requires a candidate to demonstrate their ability to manage presentations as outlined below:

- Competently provide definitive medical care for patients and determine when additional support from experienced colleagues is required (which may be through distance telehealth technology).
- Interpret common investigations and be able to provide a contextualised differential diagnosis.
- Describe the technique of performing procedural skills described in the curriculum documents or Logbook.
- Provide continuity of care for patients.
- Provide collegial support and clinical advice to colleagues in more remote settings via telehealth technology.

Further information may be found in the [Advanced Specialised Training Handbooks](#). In addition to the abilities required in the CGT curriculum for each AST, doctors achieving AST in either discipline are required to be able to competently provide definitive care including common interventions for individual patients across all presentations. ACRRM has a number of preparation activities available to candidates to prepare for this assessment including a StAMPS Assessment online module that is available to all members.

Survey Feedback

Following the exam, examiners, candidates and invigilators are encouraged to provide feedback via an online survey. Feedback is reviewed and considered accordingly and may be used to drive continuous improvement and improve candidate, invigilator and examiner experience for future exams.

Based on feedback received from the 2024 cohort of candidates and invigilators, the following themes were identified:

- ACRRM staff were helpful and responded to enquiries in a professional and timely manner.
- ACRRM staff provided sufficient technical support and information to assist in setting up the online StAMPS assessment.
- The AST StAMPS information sessions provided by staff prior to the assessment were helpful.
- The AST StAMPS Community Profile is easy to understand and reflects practical experience in placement.
- The AST StAMPS assessment covered the assigned curriculum and measured the elected clinical content.
- There is strong preference for exams to be held on weekends and the ability to sit locally and virtually.

Evaluation

Led by the Assessment Committee, ACRRM undertakes a cycle of quality improvement in its suite of assessments, including the AST StAMPS. ACRRM has an ongoing commitment to improve the transparency and reliability of its assessments and to ensure its assessment systems are comprehensible to Registrars and Educators. Work is ongoing to review and update the 'Community Profile', examiner recruitment and training, professional development and to improve qualitative feedback for candidates.

Acknowledgements

ACRRM would like to thank everyone who contributed to this assessment including the other Lead Clinical team members, Scenario Writers/Delphi panel, Examiners, Examiner Team Leads (QA), Review Examiners, ACRRM staff, invigilators and organisations who provided the venues.

For 2024, a special mention must be made of the role played by the Assessment Committee and the Registrar Committee in advising, supporting and endorsing the implementation of the revised scoring system.

The College would also like to thank the Registrars who participated and the Educators who assisted in preparing them for this assessment.