

Briefing candidates for PACES: notes for the organising registrar

- 1 Remind candidates that at Stations 1 and 3 they have six minutes to complete their physical examination, leaving four minutes for questioning by the examiners. They will be told after five minutes that there is one minute remaining. ***This is a change from the previous timing, and although candidates have been informed please stress this point to them.***
- 2 Each candidate should be identified using a photograph on an official document, such as a passport or identity card, and their examination number should be checked. If a candidate does not have photo ID, they should complete a candidate ID form.

Sensitivity may be required for cultural reasons in the visual identification of veiled women. This should be done by a female member of staff, in a private room.

- 3 Any mobile phones or other electronic communication devices (eg palmtop computers) should be handed to the registrar for safe-keeping. Candidates may not take books or notes into the exam.
- 4 Candidates who provide equipment such as an electronic stethoscope or magnifying ophthalmoscope may use it in the exam, even if it is not being used to compensate for a disability. However, they must inform the centre as soon as they arrive that they wish to use the equipment, so the examiners have time to assess patients using it should they wish to do so. If the candidate fails to declare their intention upon arrival, the Host or NVE may rule that the equipment may not be used, and inform the candidate of the reason.

However, if the instrument is being used to compensate for a disability, as part of an accommodation previously agreed with the MRCP(UK) Central Office, the candidate must always be allowed to use it.

- 5 Candidates should be shown a clear plan of the carousel and reminded to go the correct way around, and to ask for directions if lost or in doubt.
- 6 The mark-sheets (two copies of each) should be arranged in order with the starting Station on top (ie, a different starting Station for each candidate) and attached to a clipboard.
- 7 The candidates should fill in their name, exam number and the centre number on each of the 14 mark-sheets with the 2B pencil provided. This may take 5 minutes. Erasers should also be provided. Advise candidates that any three-digit numbers should be written with a leading zero (eg centre number '245' should be entered as '0245').
- 8 Explain that the candidates should have the relevant mark-sheets ready on arrival at each Station. The examiners collect the mark-sheets before the candidates enter

the Station – this is so the examiners can enter their own details before assessing the candidate.

- 9 Explain that at Stations 2 and 4 the information about the task, and some paper for notes, will be outside the Station. The candidate should have read the information during the 5-minute interval and be ready to enter the examination room when the bell goes. Remind the candidate to take the information sheet into the Station. Candidates may make notes on the rough paper provided, but should not write on the scenario as it may be used by other candidates. Examiners will not read any rough notes made by the candidates.
- 10 Explain that at Stations 1, 3 and 5 the candidate should read the introductory note about the case carefully and follow the instructions given, as failure to do so may adversely affect their score.
- 11 Remind candidates to treat each task as a new opportunity and not to carry worries from one task/Station to the next.
- 12 Remind candidates to wash their hands between seeing patients, using the alcohol gel or wash-hand basins. If the hospital has a ‘bare-below-the-elbow’ policy, tell candidates to roll up their sleeves and remove their wrist-watches etc. Tell them about any changes in timing made to accommodate hand-washing with soap and water.
- 13 Answer any questions and calm nerves.
- 14 Wish the candidates ‘good luck’ as they go to their Stations.

The candidates should be in position outside their first Station 5 minutes before the start of the exam. This is important, because at Stations 2 and 4 the candidates use the 5 minutes to study the scenario before their assessment. Before the start of the exam, make it clear when the candidates at Stations 2 and 4 can start studying the scenario.