

Chair's letter – January 2019

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

Report on assessment period September - December 2018

2507 candidates sat PACES in the 2018/03 assessment period which ran from September to December 2018. 1448 of these candidates sat in UK centres, with the remaining 1059 sitting at our overseas centres. The pass rate for candidates in UK training was 58.4%; the overall pass rate was 45.0%. The pass rates for all of the candidate groups remain stable and in line with historical trends.

PACES 2020

A major step forward for PACES 2020 has been GMC approval for the planned changes. Feedback from the GMC was positive about both the improvements to the examination, and the work undertaken in developing and piloting the changes. The approval is testament to the hard work of everyone who has been involved in the project to date.

The PACES 2020 Implementation Group continues to oversee the project, and information about training events, updated videos etc. will be available later this year.

Federation appointments

Following the departure of Professor Andrew Elder in 2018, Dr Kenneth Dagg has been appointed as Medical Director for Assessment for the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK. Dr Dagg will continue to Chair the Clinical Examining Board (CEB) pending the appointment of his replacement, with the post due to be advertised in January 2019. The Federation has also appointed Dr Donald Farquhar as International Medical Director for Assessment.

Other Federation appointments include Dr Mike Jones, Medical Director for Training and Development; Professor David Black, International Medical Director for Training; Dr Adrian Jennings, Associate Medical Director for CPD.



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Hot Topics – January 2019

Completing marksheets fully

MRCP(UK) are still receiving a small number of marksheets with missing or double marks. Please make sure that you are completing marksheets fully to ensure that candidates receive the correct marks. If recording a borderline or unsatisfactory mark ensure you record comments to justify your decision.

Patient information for examiners

Centres are reminded that examiners should not be given information about the clinical signs present in the physical examination encounters before calibration. The CEB feels that it is preferable for examiners to find signs at calibration without prompting. This also reduces the risk that the prepared information on real patients may not be correct on the day of the examination.

Neurology introductors

Host examiners are asked to ensure that the introductor for neurology patients in Station 3 gives specific guidance on the focus of the examination that the candidate should undertake, for instance, this might be lower limbs, upper limbs or cranial nerves.

Re-examining patients

A recent candidate appeal raised the issue of examiners re-examining the patient during the encounter. This should not happen, as it is distracting for candidates, may interfere with station timings and constitutes a procedural error which can be appealed. CEB acknowledges that occasionally it may be necessary to check a physical sign during the carousel, but this should only be done in the gap between candidates.

Observers in stations with a single examiner

On rare occasions, where there are only nine examiners, one station (usually Station 2) is run with a single examiner. The CEB support the inclusion, where possible, of an observer with knowledge of the examination in such stations. The observer would not mark the candidates but, with knowledge of the examination, would be able to take notes and identify if anything out of the ordinary was affecting the encounter. The observer would act as a safeguard for both the candidate and examiner, and their notes could be used to inform any appeals/ or complaints about the conduct of the station.

Positioning of marksheets

Feedback from candidates indicates that being able to see the marksheet as the examiners complete it during the encounter can be extremely distracting. Examiners are reminded to ensure that they shield the marksheet from the candidate during the encounter.