

Chair's letter – January 2020

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

Firstly, I am pleased to welcome Dr Tanzeem Raza OBE back to the Clinical Examining Board in the role of Medical Secretary. Many of you will know Tanzeem, who is a consultant in Acute Medicine at Royal Bournemouth Hospital, and was formerly the Senior Examiner (PACES) for the Royal College of Physicians of London.

I would also like to welcome Dr John Kurian as the new Chair of the Scenario Writing Group.

Report on assessment period September - December 2019

2698 candidates attempted PACES in the 2019/03 assessment period. 1534 of these candidates sat in UK centres, with the remaining 1164 sitting at our international centres. The pass rate for candidates in UK training was 60.2%; the overall pass rate was 46.6%. The pass rates for all candidate groups remain stable and in line with historical trends.

PACES 2020

During the next few months you will begin to receive information about examiner training in preparation for PACES 2020. This will include videos explaining the new format, and examples of the new style communication and consultation scenarios, written resources and a webinar aimed at examiners.

The webinar will take place in the Spring, and will include an introduction to the changes, and a Q&A session. If you are unable to join the webinar live, it will be available to view after the event, and will form part of the mandatory training for examiners.

In order to ensure that all examiners are fully prepared for the changes, you will also be asked to take a short online quiz to demonstrate your knowledge of the changes.

Colleges will continue to offer briefing events, and we also plan to make full use of social media in informing both candidates and examiners about the changes.

Thanks again for your time and efforts supporting PACES.



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Hot Topics – January 2020

Candidate photographs

After much careful consideration, the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK has reluctantly taken the decision that the practice of taking photographs of candidates attending PACES examinations, in the UK and internationally, should cease, effective from 1 January 2020.

This decision has been made as we have a legal requirement to comply with the current General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We recognise that discontinuing this practice may cause some difficulties for examiners, but we have a duty to safeguard candidate confidentiality during and after the examination. We are investigating whether or not there might be any alternative solutions that would not compromise our compliance with GDPR.

For further information on GDPR, please see [Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) | ICO](#)

Examiner commitment

There have recently been occasions where more than one examiner has dropped out of the examination at short notice. Colleges endeavour to ensure that there is always an 11th examiner to safeguard the examination, and to step in, on such occasions. However if this has not been possible or if multiple examiners drop out, this can result in the examination being cancelled on the day. Please do consider your commitment to examining as you would for any other professional engagement, and give as much notice as possible if you are unable to attend.

Post cycle discussion

As you will be aware, the post cycle examiner meeting should include discussion on candidate performance to ensure that the comments on the marksheets provide constructive feedback to candidates where they have received an Unsatisfactory or Borderline mark. We have previously requested heightened scrutiny of mark sheets for candidates who have narrowly failed, as these candidates often appeal. This is to ensure that any such appeals can be assessed with appropriate documentation of the awarded marks. This should not be viewed as an opportunity to reconsider or change the marks awarded.

Changes to the mark sheets must not be made other than to correct missing or duplicate marks or to add comments which justify dropped marks. **On no account should any marks be changed** or retrospective comments supporting a change in the mark be written on mark sheets. Remember candidates can see their mark sheets.

Marksheet completion

We continue to receive marksheets that are not completed fully or correctly. Many of these occur in Station 5 (Skill D in particular) and we would appreciate you taking a couple of seconds to ensure that your marksheet is fully completed before submitting it.

11th examiner

Examiners undertaking the 11th examiner role are reminded to ensure that they are fully aware of their role, in particular with regard to checking that marksheets are fully completed and accurately transcribed onto the eCPS. The 11th examiner checklist (which can be found in the examiner omnibus) is reproduced below.

Checklists: 11th Examiner

It is suggested that the Host examiner carry out this role for at least the first cycle on the first day. The 11th Examiner must be prepared to fill in at short notice for any examiner who is late or temporarily indisposed, or for any examiner who feels unable to provide a totally impartial assessment of a candidate who is known to them.

11th Examiner: during the cycle

- Supervise the arrangements for accurate timekeeping.
- Ensure that:
 - at Stations 2, 4 and 5, the candidate receives the correct instructions to read outside the exam in the preceding five minutes.
 - blank paper is available for the candidate to take notes.
 - the candidate instructions are not removed from the Station.
- If there is an unresolved procedural or administrative query during the examination, following consultation with the Chair of Examiners and Host Examiner, the 11th Examiner should telephone the Examinations Department/Clinical Co-ordinator of the organising College.
- Check the marksheets from the Stations as the cycle progresses.
- Correct or enter any missing candidate information (the candidates should have filled this in before the cycle). Check the correct marksheets have been used for the encounter examined.
- Check the examiner name, signature and number. Check that individual skills are all marked.
- Check that comments are provided for Unsatisfactory and Borderline judgements or recommendations for counselling, and that they are legible.
- In the five minute interval between candidates, or at the post-cycle meeting, return any sheets to examiners if they need to add to, or correct, what they have written.
- Complete the electronic Candidate Performance Summary for each candidate and present to the Chair of Examiners for each post-cycle briefing.

11th Examiner: at the post-cycle meeting

- Inform the meeting of any errors or omissions on the marksheets so they can be corrected.
- Inform the meeting of any procedural errors so they can be discussed and recorded on the Centre Audit Form by the Chair of Examiners.
- Inform the examiners of each candidate's scores and any recommendations for counselling.
- Remind examiners that the exam results are confidential and that examiners should not disclose them.