

Clinical Examining Board Chair's letter – January 2024

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

PACES23

I start this newsletter with the very welcome news that the first diet of PACES23 ran smoothly with generally positive feedback from examiners. A standard setting group reviewed the marks of 90% of the UK sitting candidates and the pass marks for the 2023:3 diet were confirmed as:

Skill A 16/24 (unchanged from previous carousel)

Skill B 14/24 (unchanged)

Skill C 11/16 (unchanged)

Skill D 15/24 (reduced from 17/28)

Skill E 20/32 (increased from 19/32)

Skill F 10/16 (unchanged)

Skill G 28/32 (unchanged)

Minimum overall passing score – 126/168 (down from 130)

2023/2 diet

The 2023.2 diet ran from June to August; a total of 1876 candidates sat (1285 in the UK, 591 internationally). The overall pass rate was 49%, with 63.7% for UK graduates and 54.5% for UK trainees. These, and other performance trends, were in line with those identified previously.

2023/3 diet

The first diet of the new examination format ran until early December 2023. Over 2700 spaces were available, delivered in 60 UK and 23 international centres. Prioritisation criteria were used for candidates applying in the UK due to the large number of applications received. The nPACES format of the examination was delivered in Singapore to comply with local requirements, and the new format will be adopted there in the 2024/01 diet.

2024

All centres in 2024 will be running the new PACES23 format. In 2024.1 the total number of spaces is expected to be 1230 in the UK and 1300 internationally. Due to anticipated large number of applications in the UK, it has been agreed to use prioritisation [criteria](#) as publicised.

Results processing and release for 2024/1 and 2024/2

MRCP(UK) is committed to ensuring the reliability of the PACES examination, ensuring that no candidate is unfairly either advantaged or disadvantaged by the new examination format. Ensuring the reliability of our examination is both a patient safety issue and a commitment to our candidates and our regulator the GMC.

In order to deliver on this commitment and ensure comparable outcomes for candidates with the new exam format as far as we possibly can, we need to monitor the first 3 diets of the new format (2023/3, 2024/1 and 2024/2) very carefully. This means we will need to analyse a significantly greater number of the total candidate results than normal and use additional standard setting methodologies and statistical analysis in

our quality assurance processes. For the 2023.3 diet we analysed 90% of UK Trainee results before releasing the final results on 5 December 2023.

We encouraged candidates to submit a provisional application for PACES 2024.1 and will be doing the same for 2024.2. Candidates will not be charged at the point of application, but will need to pay once a place is confirmed and they have been allocated a slot in a centre.

We are aware that many candidates will need to have obtained full MRCP(UK) in order to accept a higher specialty post offer in April 2024. We will be working closely with the three Colleges and national bodies to provide results within the required deadlines for recruitment.

PACES Champions Awards 2023

A total of 17 nominations were received for the PACES champions awards (13 from the UK and 4 international). Following review by a judging panel a total of 5 awards were made from the UK and 2 awards from International. The details of the award winners will be published on the MRCP(UK) website and also featured a future copy of The Examiner.

PACES plaques

MRCP(UK) has been working with the college examinations teams to collate details of centres eligible for plaques and these will be distributed in early 2024.

Thank you

Finally, the Federation would again like to express its thanks to all who have participated in the PACES examination over the last three years, allowing us to continue offering trainees the opportunity to complete this important assessment and move onto the next stage in their career. We recognise the extreme pressures examiners are experiencing in the workplace, and are enormously grateful for your continued support to enable us to assess both UK trainees, and others working in the NHS and worldwide, who in time will become the next generation of consultants and PACES examiners!



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Hot Topics – January 2024

- ❖ **Station 3:** It is permissible for examiners to read out the instructions for candidates in Station 3.
- ❖ **Chairs of Examiners** are asked to remind candidates of the following during the pre examination briefing: On occasion, an examiner may interrupt a candidate in order to help them to demonstrate their competence in the skills assessed during the time available.