

MRCP(UK) PACES Clinical Examination

Information for patients and surrogates at Station 5

Thank you for taking part in this examination in which you have agreed to play the part of a patient or relative.

Your name:

Where the exam is taking place (please note this may be in a different part of the hospital from the areas you have previously attended):

When (day, date and time):

Name and contact number of the examination organiser:

If for any reason you are unable to help on the agreed day, it is important that you let the organiser know as soon as possible, so alternative arrangements can be made for the examination.

General information about the exam

Doctors in training take the MRCP(UK) exam two or more years after qualifying as a doctor. Those who pass become Members of the Royal College of Physicians and can continue training to become a consultant.

The exam is taken in several parts at different times. This part of the exam is called Practical Assessment of Clinical Examination Skills (PACES), where the ability of doctors to communicate effectively and examine patients is tested. The doctors (referred to here as candidates) taking this exam rotate around a number of different testing areas (known as stations) within the examination centre. You have kindly agreed to help with station 5.

What will happen before the exam?

- You will be contacted by the exam organiser who will explain what is involved.
- You will be given written details of the medical details you will be expected to discuss with the candidate. For patients, the medical details will be similar to your own, but some aspects may have been modified for the purposes of the exam. For example you may be asked to pretend you do not have some of the medical conditions that you actually do have and your list of medications may be different. You may even be asked to pretend that you do not know what is wrong with you. For surrogates, the written details will represent a clinical condition as if you were a patient with that condition. The written advice will include details of the physical examination the doctors will be expected to undertake and also some questions for you to ask the candidate.
- Remember to keep this confidential before and after the exam.
- You will be told how many candidates you will be asked to see (usually 10 for a morning session, 5 for an afternoon session).
- You will have the opportunity to clarify with the organiser anything you are unsure about before the exam.

What happens on the day?

You will be told the time and place beforehand. Read the information carefully. The exam may not be held in the place you attend for hospital appointments.

- Arrive in plenty of time and you must switch off your mobile phone or activate 'aeroplane mode'.
- Be prepared to be physically examined as advised in your scenario. Please wear clothes that make it easy for the candidates to access the relevant part or parts of your body.
- You will meet the two examiners, both senior doctors, who will check that you understand how much of your medical history will be covered during the testing of each candidate. They will explain what the candidates will do and what the physical examination involves. If you are unsure about anything, ask before or after the exam but not while it is taking place.
- The examiners will examine you to agree what the candidate should find.

What happens during the exam?

- Several minutes before coming into the consulting room, the candidate is given some brief information to read about your medical symptoms or your situation. They will not know all the detail that you know.
- Each candidate is given a limited time (8 minutes) to ask you questions, examine you, make a diagnosis, explain what should be done and answer the questions you have. Please be ready to be seen as soon as they arrive. The examiners don't usually talk to you or the candidate during this 8 minute period.
- You can usually ask the specified questions at any point that seems natural, but if you have not had the opportunity to do this by the time the examiners warn the candidate that they have only 2 minutes left, please ask them at this point.
- Candidates should be gentle and considerate with you.
- Candidates and examiners will maintain your privacy.
- The examiners will start questioning each candidate at 8 minutes, this continues for 2 minutes.
- You may have a gap of about 10 minutes between candidates. You may wish to bring something to read or a personal MP3 player. You will need to be quiet during the examination period when not interacting with the candidates or examiners so please switch your mobile off or activate 'aeroplane mode'. This is very important because any buzzing or other noises might distract the candidate.

What else should I know?

- Occasionally trainee examiners or observers may be present for part of the exam. They will be introduced to you and their role explained.
- Do not be alarmed by anything you hear from the candidates. Their comments may not relate to your case, or may be completely wrong!
- Candidates may be asked about other clinical matters such as tests or possible complications. Again, anything they say may not apply to you and may be wrong.
- If you are worried about anything, please ask the examiners when no candidates are present.
- Nurses are available if you need help with dressing or undressing, going to the toilet, taking medication or if you have other problems.
- If you are going to have your eyes examined, and you intend to drive home, please ask whether you will be given eye drops. You will need to wait for the effect of the drops to wear off before driving.
- Refreshments will be provided. Please let us know beforehand if you have any special physical or dietary needs.
- We will refund any reasonable travel expenses. The organiser will advise you further about this.
- Please let us know if you'd like us to book transport or arrange parking.
- Please let us know in advance if you would like a large print version of the scenario or if you would like a chaperone to be present.

Thank you again for taking part in this important exam. We hope you have an interesting and enjoyable day.

We are interested in your feedback in order to improve future examinations so if you would complete the questions below (or speak to the organiser) that would be very helpful.

1. Did you have enough information about the exam, and the part you are playing in it, beforehand?

Yes / No

If no, or if you have other comments related to the information you received, please write below:

2. Were your questions or concerns addressed sufficiently well on the day of the exam?

Yes / No

If no, or if you have any other comments relating to help and information given on the day of the exam, **especially anything you did not understand**, please write below:

3. Finally, if you have any other comments, perhaps relating to aspects that you enjoyed, or found difficult, please note them here: