

Clinical Examining Board Chair's letter – September 2020

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

We are always grateful to you all for your commitment to the PACES examination, but at this point in time we are especially grateful to those who have stepped up to host and examine the upcoming diet of PACES (2020/3)/

This has been a year like no other, and the pressures on health services internationally have been (to use the overworked word) unprecedented.

PACES 2020

Firstly, as you will know, the plans to introduce the new version of PACES, PACES 2020, have now been put on hold until 2022 at the earliest. Ahead of this we will be reviewing our plans to ensure they are still appropriate for the new world we will find ourselves in.

Restarting PACES

Over the last few months a group of senior MRCP(UK) PACES examiners have met weekly, along with College examination leads, to work out how we can best continue to offer the assessment that trainees need in these challenging times, and we are pleased to say that we will be running PACES again, albeit at a reduced capacity, this autumn.

The work has been exhausting, and challenging, and we have had to seek GMC approval for the changes, but we have come up with a model that allows us to minimise the risk to patients, examiners, candidates and helpers, whilst maintaining the standard, reliability and validity of the assessment.

In the UK, the existing PACES format will be modified to run as two parallel mini carousels, use of PPE and social distancing, with stations 2 and 4 being conducted via video. More details, and links to further information, are given in the Hot Topics below. Internationally, the existing carousel PACES will be run with PPE and social distancing in line with local infection control policies.

Thanks again for your time and efforts supporting PACES.



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Chair
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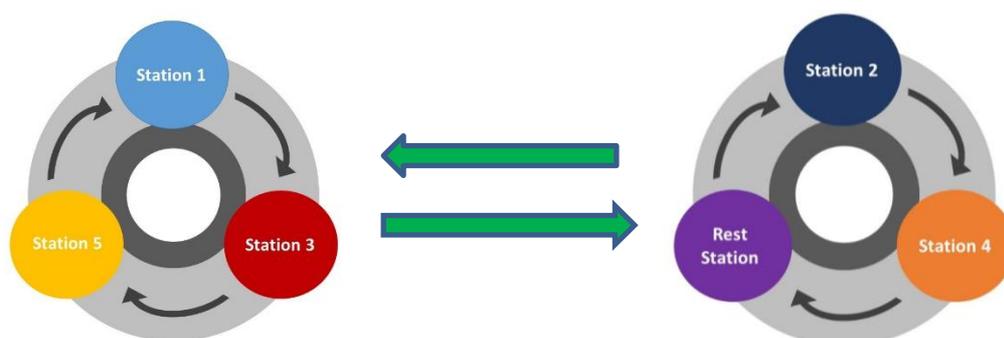
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Hot Topics – September 2020

PACES carousel adaptations for the UK

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, PACES examinations have been adapted to ensure the safety of patients, candidates, examiners, staff, and helpers. These changes were proposed by a working group which has met weekly since May 2020 and have been approved by the Federation Board. The main points agreed are:

- The usual 5 station carousel is replaced by two mini carousels consisting of three candidates each. There will be a mini carousel involving stations 1,3 and 5 and a separate mini carousel comprising stations 2,4 and a rest station.
- Stations 1, 3 and 5 will run as normal but there will only be 1 patient for each body system and no spare patients. Examiners will remain in the same station all day.
- The format of these stations will be modified to manage the infection risk by appropriate patient selection, achieving adequate physical separation, the use of PPE, and ensuring that the number of contacts between individuals is kept to an absolute minimum.
- Patients, examiners, and candidates must wear recommended PPE
- Additional time will be allocated for donning and doffing of PPE
- A parallel mini cycle with three candidates will run for stations 2, 4 and a rest station.
- Stations 2 and 4 will be run as virtual stations using MS Teams with only the candidate in the exam centre while the surrogate and examiners will participate from a separate location (such as their home or workplace).
- Detailed Standard Operating Procedures for these stations have been provided.
- All patients/surrogates risk assessed before exam day (ie. completion of a health questionnaire/temperature checks on arrival).
- The mini carousels will run as follows:



Mini Carousel 1:

Station 1	A	C	B	15 min break	D	F	E
Station 3	B	A	C		E	D	F
Station 5	C	B	A		F	E	D

Mini Carousel 2:

Station 2	D	F	E	15 min break	A	C	B
Station 4	E	D	F		B	A	C
Rest	F	E	D		C	B	A

Please ensure you have viewed the COVID 19 PACES section of the MRCPUK website before attending the exam. This webpage contains further information including video presentations, and detail on how the stations will be organised.

<https://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/paces/uk-paces-covid-19>