

Clinical Examining Board Chair's letter – January 2022

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

The Federation continues to be extremely grateful to all who have participated in the PACES examination since it restarted in October 2020.

At the time of writing the NHS continues to be under severe pressure, but we are hopeful that the 2022/1 diet will run as planned and the Federation is carefully considering when it may be possible to consider reverting to the usual PACES format, albeit with PPE, in the UK.

2021/2 and 2021/3 diets

In the UK the 2021/2 and 2021/3 diets continued to run in the modified format introduced in 2020/3 for the UK.

The 2021/2 diet ran from early June – mid August, and the Clinical Examining Board (CEB) reviewed this diet at its meeting in October 2021. A total of 811 candidates (723 in the UK, 88 internationally) attempted the examination, with an overall pass rate of 55.4% (53.3% in the UK, 72.7% internationally). The high international pass rate was consistent with historically high pass rates in those international centres which were able to run in 2021/2.

The 2021/3 diet ran from early October until December, offering just over 900 examination spaces in the UK and we were pleased to be able to offer 690 spaces internationally, a significant increase on numbers in recent diets. Full results from this diet are not yet available.

2022/1

For 2022/1, we have experienced a surge in demand, and despite offering nearly 1000 places, will need to keep a number of candidates on a waiting list for places. Candidates on waiting list are offered a place if one becomes available but in practice it has been extremely difficult for College teams to fill any spaces at short notice.

Candidates' training status will again be important in allocating spaces, with IMY3/ST3/ACCS 3 trainees given the highest priority, followed by IMY2/ACCS 2. Also in category 2 will be candidates who are not in a recognised UK training programme, but are applying for Higher Specialty Training jobs starting in 2022.

The [amended format](#) will continue to run in the UK, with the communication mini cycle utilising remote examiners and surrogates. Any hosts who are unable to run this exact format should discuss this with their respective College and get any proposed modification formally approved well in advance of the examination in order to ensure that approval can be obtained and the candidates informed in advance.

Wherever you are examining in 2022/1 please ensure you are familiar with the format and have viewed the COVID 19 PACES section of the [MRCPUK website](#).

Hot Topics – January 2022

- ❖ Examiners who are attending an exam centre for stations 1,3 and 5 MUST complete the health questionnaire. They must also now perform a lateral flow test on each day before arriving at the

exam centre. We also advise performing a lateral flow test 2 days before the exam especially if travelling. This will allow advance planning and the option to find substitute examiners in the event of an examiner testing positive.

- ❖ Examiners are reminded that it is **essential** that candidates demonstrate competence in skill A and B by physically examining patients in stations 1, 3 and 5, even if surrogates without physical signs are being used.
- ❖ Existing [Infection Control guidance](#) will remain in place for 2022/1, so please continue to ensure that you, and the candidates, continue to follow this.
- ❖ Please ensure **report any incident or issue, however minor**, to the Chair of Examiners on the day. This is **especially important at Stations 2 and 4** where the candidate may report an incident that is not apparent to the examiners.
- ❖ Please ensure you check that marksheets are fully and correctly completed before handing them in. Even minor mistakes are picked up by the optical scanner and cause delays in results processing and release.
- ❖ If you are examining remotely in the communication stations please ensure that **you return your completed marksheets to the college securely and as soon as possible** after the examination. Any delay in submitting the marksheets results in a delay in the college being able to forward the marksheets to MRCP(UK) for processing, making it difficult to process results within the advertised timeline. Further information on results processing can be found on the [MRCP\(UK\) website](#).
- ❖ Please ensure that all copies of scenarios are **securely destroyed at the end of the examination**. Copies must not be retained in any format, nor should they be shared, even with other examiners.
- ❖ Please **do not share any information about the content of the examination**, with any other person or on social media.
- ❖ On rare occasions a candidate will score 28 in **Skill G** by being marked unsatisfactory in this skill by both examiners at a single encounter. In such cases the examiners must discuss this at the post cycle meeting and issue a recommendation to the CEB as to whether the candidate's performance in this element was so concerning as to result in them failing the examination. The discussion and recommendation should be recorded on the [PACES Discussion Sheet](#) which must be submitted with the marksheet. All such cases are reviewed by representatives of the CEB before results are finalised.

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