

## Clinical Examining Board Chair's letter – April 2023

### MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

#### **PACES 23 Update**

Federation and college clinical officers and staff are working collaboratively on plans for the implementation of PACES 23 later this year. Guidance documents and information for candidates, examiners, hosts and chairs is being finalised, and will be made available in advance of the 2023.3 diet. A new examiner training package is in development. In addition, Dr Ken Dagg, MRCP(UK) Medical Director, and I will be attending college examiner briefing sessions over the next two months, to provide updates on the changes to the examination. Keep an eye on the [PACES23](#) page on the MRCP(UK) website for more information.

#### **New Medical Secretary to the MRCP(UK) Clinical Examining Board**

I would like to congratulate Professor Hasan Tahir, who has recently been appointed as the new Medical Secretary to the MRCP(UK) Clinical Examining Board. Hasan has taken over this role from Dr Tanzeem Raza who was recently appointed as Federation International Medical Director for PACES. Hasan is a Rheumatologist at Royal Free London NHS Trust and an Honorary Clinical Professor at UCL and has been an examiner both in the UK and internationally for nearly 15 years.

#### **Errors in results in the 2022/3 diet**

Most of you will be aware that some candidates sitting in the 2022.3 diet were affected by errors in results processing, following the news item published on the [MRCP\(UK\) website](#). A technical failure in the equipment used for scanning marksheets meant that the data from these had to be entered manually and unfortunately some errors occurred during the transcription process. The pass/fail classification changed for eleven candidates (eight from pass to fail, three from fail to pass). These candidates were contacted directly by Dr Ken Dagg and I to provide support in this difficult situation. The failing candidates were provided with places to sit at the next opportunity and all eleven were given a full refund of their fees. In addition, errors were identified in the marksheets for a further 271 candidates that did not affect their overall result.

MRCP(UK) has conducted a thorough investigation into this issue and the Federation Board has accepted the recommendations made to ensure that this does not happen again. New scanning software and hardware have been procured and was used to process results for the 2023.1 diet.

#### **2022/3 and 2023/1 diets**

The 2022.3 diet ran from October to December. A total of 2601 candidates sat the examination (1107 in UK centres and 1507 internationally), with an overall pass rate of 48.8% (50% in the UK and 47.2% internationally).

The 2023.1 diet finished in early April, and a total of 2566 places were available (1380 in the UK and 1186 internationally). The overall results are being calculated and will be reported to the CEB in June.

#### **2023/2 diet**

The 2023.2 diet starts on 2 June, and a total of 1956 candidates have places to sit the examination (1380 in the UK, 576 internationally). Due to the large numbers of applications, it was necessary to use [prioritisation criteria](#) when allocating places.

#### **Industrial action**

One centre was cancelled during the first round of industrial action by trainee doctors in England, due to the impact on examiner availability. Candidates affected by this were provided with alternative spaces during

the diet or prioritised for the next diet. I would like to thank the PACES team at the RCP for their hard work in ensuring that the impact on candidates was minimised by continuing to run centres where possible. We will continue to monitor the situation and will ensure that candidates are kept informed if scheduled centres are affected by future action.

### Hot Topics – April 2023

- ❖ **Calibration.** Examiners are reminded that calibration needs to consider the signs that candidates may report, even if these are incorrect.
- ❖ **Regulations.** The regulations will be amended to state that examiners will calibrate using standard equipment. This will emphasise to candidates that it is not necessary to use specialised equipment (e.g., specialised stethoscopes) to detect the agreed signs. If a candidate wishes to use non-standard equipment, they should notify the exam team on their arrival at the PACES centre to allow examiners to assess patients with it.
- ❖ **Nine examiners.** In the event that it is necessary to run a centre with nine examiners, hosts and chairs must explain this to candidates prior to the examination starting. It is important to emphasise that this is a normal procedure that has been agreed by the examining board, but candidates who wish to withdraw from the examination at this stage can do so and will receive a full refund of their fees. It should also be explained that no appeals will be accepted on the grounds of only nine examiners being present if they choose to proceed with the examination.
- ❖ **Trainee examiners.** If trainee examiners are observing encounters, this should be explained to candidates prior to the encounter starting. Remind candidates that this is a standard procedure.
- ❖ **Appeals.** Examiners may be contacted for their comments on appeals. It is one of the duties of examiners to respond to any requests for further information from Central Office. This allows us to deal with appeals in a fair and consistent manner.



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