

January 2016

## Chair's letter

### **MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examinations (PACES) Report on assessment period September – December 2015**

2090 candidates sat PACES in the 2015/3 assessment period from September to December 2015. 1267 of these candidates sat in UK centres, with the remaining 823 sitting at our overseas centres. The pass rate for the UK graduates in their first attempt was 63.3%; the overall pass rate was 42.6%. The pass rates for all of the candidate groups remain stable and in line with historical trends.

## Recent developments

### *New Chair of Scenario Writing Committee*

Dr Elizabeth Murphy has been appointed as the new Chair of the Scenario Editorial Committee (SEC). Dr Murphy is already a member of the SEC and has been the Chair of the Scenario Writing Group since 2013. She has considerable experience of PACES and we look forward to working closely with her to continue delivering high quality scenarios for stations 2 and 4.

### *PACES 2020*

MRCP(UK) is continually looking at improving the academic quality of its assessments.. We aim to ensure that our examinations continue to assess the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of physicians in training, are fair and fit for purpose. The Clinical Examinations Board (CEB) has been formally asked by the MRCP(UK) Management Board to review the structure and content of the PACESA working group is being established to begin work on reviewing the clinical examination and will report to the CEB and Academic Quality Management and Research Committee in 2017. The terms of reference for the new PACES 2020 group will be ratified by the CEB in February. We are keen to hear the views of as many examiners as possible. Any thoughts could be emailed to Alan Patrick or myself at the email addresses below.

### *Examiner equality and diversity training*

MRCP(UK) is currently developing a bespoke online training package for examiners that will raise awareness of issues around equality and diversity training that are relevant to our physician examinations. The development of this training package is being led by clinicians, to ensure that the training it provides is appropriate and relevant. The new online module will be scenario based and we would welcome the input of our examiners. If you have any ideas or would like to share your experiences while examining that could inspire realistic scenarios, please email Anique Liiv ([anique.liiv@mrcpuk.org](mailto:anique.liiv@mrcpuk.org))



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## Hot Topics – January 2016

### No ID – No Entry

Candidates cannot be admitted to any MRCP(UK) examinations unless they are able to produce identification that is in line with MRCP(UK) regulations. This is to prevent fraud by ensuring candidates are who they say they are. The relevant regulations are emailed to the Chair of Examiners prior to the examination. This guide lists the types of identification that are acceptable. If there are any questions on the day Hosts and Chairs are encouraged to contact their own College Examinations office or Central Office for advice.

### Criteria for referring a candidate for counselling

Candidates displaying inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour which includes rudeness, failing to respect the patient or relative's situation or feelings, and/or physical roughness during the clinical examination, which causes obvious discomfort, should be assessed within skill G. Examiners should mark the candidate throughout the encounter without consulting each other. At the end of the encounter, if either examiner has awarded Unsatisfactory for skill G, they must discuss this with their fellow examiner when the candidate leaves.

If the examiners agree that an Unsatisfactory award is warranted, they should record this on the marksheet with appropriate supporting comments, recommend the candidate for counselling and raise the issues at the post cycle briefing where a discussion sheet should be completed. . If examiners do not agree that the candidate has displayed significantly unprofessional behaviour, and then each examiner should record their own individual mark with appropriate comments, complete the counselling box and discuss the candidate at the post cycle briefing. A PACES discussion sheet should be completed if appropriate

All candidates with a score of 28 on skill G as a result of two unsatisfactory judgements at one encounter, and the other marks indicate that the candidate would pass the examination should have a PACES discussion sheet completed and examiners must recommend a pass or fail. All candidates receiving less than 28 for skill G must have a discussion sheet completed.

Further guidance can be found in the Examiners' Omnibus 2016 on the [MRCP\(UK\) website](#)

### International centres - Communicating instructions to patients in Stations 1 and 3

The occasional use of local language in Station 1 and 3 is permitted when giving simple instructions to patients who are being examined. For example, it is acceptable for candidates to ask patients to change position or hold their breath. Non-verbal communication is also an acceptable way for candidates to communicate with patients. Local examiners may also translate simple instructions from candidates to patients. Station 5 is conducted in English although patients with real clinical signs who cannot speak English will be accompanied by a surrogate, relative or companion who will provide the history and answer any relevant questions. Such a person will not at any time communicate directly with the patient. Station 2 and 4 must be conducted in English without exception.

### Examiners changing marks

One of the great strengths of PACES is examiners marking all skills independently of their fellow examiners. Only an award for skill G can be discussed by examiners once a candidate has finished the station. Once an examiner has made an award and the candidate has completed the encounter it is not permissible for any examiner to change the award made. This ensures that candidates are marked fairly and consistently across the board. Where concerns are subsequently raised about an award that has been made the Chair of Examiners should record the circumstances and the number of the affected candidate in the centre audit form for review at the CEB. It is likely that examiners would be contacted for additional information at this point.

### **Advice from Central Office**

Exceptional situations may arise from time to time at a PACES centre when the Chair may be unsure how to proceed. In such circumstances Chairs are encouraged to contact their local college examination office or Central Office for advice. The Examiner Omnibus has contact details for the examinations offices of the three colleges. Please follow the instructions of the office to ensure uniform delivery of PACES across the whole of MRCP(UK).

### **Completing marksheets**

It is important that candidates are provided with their marksheets before entering the examination carousel. They should be allowed sufficient time to fill in their name and candidate number as well as the centre number before they start their first station. This ensures that they are given the full 5 minutes before their encounter to read any written material.