

MRCP(UK) Part 1 Written Examination – October 2017 Standard Setting Exercise

The MRCP(UK) Part 1 Written Examination Standard Setting Group met in October 2017 to consider whether the pass mark (of 528) derived from test equating was still appropriate. The group included a trainee representative. The MRCP(UK) Research Unit provided assistance. The Group's discussions and recommendations are summarised below:

- The standard was set using the Angoff method. Members reviewed the 2017/3 examination to consider the proportion of borderline candidates they felt should correctly answer each question. The reference group for the process was UK core medical trainees working in the NHS.
- The group had to consider the minimum and maximum pass rates acceptable for all candidates, UK graduates, and UK trainees, to define the boundaries of acceptable pass rates in the Hofstee method. This ensures that actual candidate performance will modify the judgement of the group, and increases confidence in any recommended change to the pass mark.
- After discussions the group agreed that a small rise in the standard required to pass the exam is desirable at this time. The group agreed that the pass mark should be increased an equated score of 540. This represented an increase of three items or 1.6%.
- This would result in up to a 6% decrease in the pass rate for UK trainees, from 48.2% to 42.1%.
- The pass mark change should take effect from the 2018/3 diet.

The recommendation was ratified at the March 2018 meeting of the Academic, Quality Management and Research Committee (AQMRC). It was noted that the correct standard setting process had been followed and that careful analysis had been undertaken. The group had discussed the matter in detail before making a recommendation. The Committee considered the equality impact analysis, and agreed to support the recommendation to change the pass mark.

The impact of the change will be monitored by the MRCP(UK) Part 1 Examining Board and AQMRC.

MRCP(UK)
May 2018