

## Marking of the MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES)

The purpose of this short document is to explain how PACES is marked and what information you will receive following the examination.

### Marking PACES

Ten examiners will independently assess you during the examination. There are two examiners at each of five Stations, and at each Station there are either one or two different 'encounters,' providing a total of eight different encounters at which you are assessed (see table). At every encounter, each examiner completes a marksheet. A total of 16 marksheets are completed by these examiners over the eight encounters. All marksheets are completed independently without examiners conferring, unless they feel a candidate has been unduly rough with a patient.

Station	Encounter	Examiners
1	Respiratory Abdominal	A+B
2	History Taking	C+D
3	Cardiovascular Neurological	E+F
4	Communication Skills	G+H
5	Brief Clinical Encounter 1 Brief Clinical Encounter 2	I+J

Seven skills are assessed in the examination and you are awarded separate marks for between four and seven of these skills at each encounter. By the end of the examination, your performance in each of the skills will have been independently assessed between eight and 16 times.

Examiners judge your performance for each skill using a three-point grading system detailed on the PACES marksheets. The grades are:

- Unsatisfactory
- Borderline
- Satisfactory

These grades are converted to numeric values of 0–2 (unsatisfactory=0, borderline=1, satisfactory=2).

The onus is on the candidate to demonstrate each of the skills noted on the marksheet for each encounter; in the event any one examiner decides a skill was not demonstrated by a candidate in any one particular task, an unsatisfactory mark (U) will be awarded for this skill.

Your mark for each skill will be the total of the marks awarded by all examiners assessing that skill. Similarly, your mark for each encounter will be the total of the marks awarded by the two examiners at that encounter.

To pass the PACES you will be required to:

- Attain a minimum standard in each of the seven skills assessed,  
AND ALSO
- Attain a minimum total score across the whole assessment.

For 2017 the pass marks will be as follows.

	Skill	Pass Mark/Total Marks Available
A	Physical Examination	16 /24
B	Identifying Physical Signs	14 /24
C	Clinical Communication	11/16
D	Differential Diagnosis	17/28
E	Clinical Judgment	19/32
F	Managing Patient Concerns	10/16
G	Maintaining Patient Welfare	28/32
Total Test Score	All encounters and skills	130/172

PACES may be failed in the following ways:

- A candidate does not achieve the pass mark on one or more skills,
- A candidate does not achieve the overall minimum total score.

In addition, any candidate who receives a mark of 28 for Skill G (Maintaining Patient Welfare) will have their overall performance reviewed by the Clinical Examining Board and may fail the examination, irrespective of total test score.

Note it is necessary to attain minimum standards for each skill and in the assessment overall, but there is no minimum standard for each encounter.

### Examiners' judgement

Examiners discuss marking criteria and review the cases in detail before candidates are seen, taking into account the degree of difficulty of each case.

The Examiners conduct your assessment entirely independently, do not consult each other (unless they feel a candidate has been unduly rough with a patient) and are therefore unaware of other marks awarded to you by either their co-examiner at that Station, or the examiners at other Stations.

The use of paired independent assessments at every encounter increases the reliability of the assessment considerably and ensures the assessment process is fair and robust. As each assessment is conducted entirely independently, it is possible the grades awarded by each examiner at one encounter may be different, but such an occurrence does not represent a procedural error in the examination. Therefore, appeals will not be considered on the grounds a candidate claims one or more examiners have not awarded sufficient marks.

### Feedback on your performance

After the examination, you will receive a detailed breakdown of your marks, for each skill and each encounter. This provides enough feedback to allow you to understand which skills you failed to demonstrate satisfactorily, and how you performed at each encounter.

In addition, some candidates will be identified as requiring extra feedback (known as 'counselling'), either from their College of entry or, occasionally, the Clinical Examining Board. This may be provided automatically but, if not, candidates are advised to take up any offer of counselling from their College of Entry. Colleges can insist the counselling process is completed before a further attempt at the examination is permitted. Counselling will normally take the form of written feedback but, occasionally, a meeting with a nominated individual (usually the Candidate's Proposer or a College Tutor/Regional Advisor) may be arranged.

Further details of the assessment of PACES are set out in the MRCP(UK) Examination Regulations.