

Case study 1

An anomalous pair was identified following a MRCP(UK) Part 1 examination. The two candidates were shown to have been sitting next to each other in the exam centre. Analysis of the candidates' marksheets clearly demonstrated that one candidate (Candidate A) had copied from the other without their knowledge. The allegation was put to Candidate A, who admitted that they had copied. Candidate A's admission and the documentary evidence were sent to the examining board chair, who decided that the candidate's results should be annulled and they should be barred from sitting the examination for two diets. The case was also reported to the General Medical Council, who conducted an investigation and referred the matter to a Fitness to Practise hearing. Candidate A was suspended from practice for three months.

Case study 2

MRCP(UK) received a formal report that Candidate D had visited the exam centre, Hospital Z, two days before they were scheduled to sit PACES. It was alleged that Candidate D initially approached a doctor on a ward at Hospital Z and asked if they knew of any patients that they could examine. The doctor pointed them to a patient. Candidate D was later found in the duty room, looking at a set of case notes and was reported to have said that they hoped the patient would be in their exam. Candidate D was eventually spoken to by a consultant at the hospital while examining a patient on the ward and told that the incident would be reported to MRCP(UK).

MRCP(UK) determined that there was sufficient evidence of a prima facie case to be answered, and wrote to Candidate D alleging that they had tried to gain prior knowledge of the clinical cases or scenarios used in the exam. In the written response Candidate D expressed regret at having visited the exam centre but denied that they had sought to gain prior knowledge of the exam.

A Misconduct Hearing Panel was convened. There was no suggestion that Candidate D actually gained any advantage or useful knowledge prior to the exam and the issue was whether their intention was to gain prior knowledge of the exam. Candidate D admitted that they had made a mistake visiting the hospital where they were due to sit the exam. The panel unanimously agreed:

- there was no evidence of intent by Candidate D to seek to gain knowledge of the exam
- the allegation of misconduct set out against Candidate D was not proven
- the candidate's actions did not present a risk to patient safety.

However, the panel felt strongly that Candidate D's actions had raised issues of professional conduct and requested that this be noted in the letter informing the candidate of the outcome of the hearing.

Case Study 3

The Anomaly Monitoring System identified an anomalous pair following a specialty certificate examination. There was no evidence to pursue any further investigation of one of the candidates, but CCTV from the centre showed that the other candidate (Candidate B) was wearing a 'smart' watch and appeared to consult this during the exam. It is a breach of regulations to take any unauthorised material into an exam hall, or to use this to obtain any unfair advantage. Candidate B denied this allegation and a misconduct hearing panel was convened to consider the case. The panel considered the documentary evidence and reviewed the CCTV footage. It was agreed that Candidate B had brought unauthorised material into the exam venue and had attempted to consult this. The candidate's results were annulled and they were barred from sitting the exam for one year. They were also referred to the medical regulator.

Case Study 4

MRCP(UK) received a report that a candidate (Candidate C) in a Part 2 Written Examination had ignored the instruction to stop writing at the end of the exam, and was subsequently rude to the invigilators. Candidate C explained that they had continued to write as they thought additional time had been added because of an incident during the paper. The matter was reviewed by the examining board, which decided that because of Candidate C's behaviour towards the invigilators, their results for the exam should be annulled.