

Chair's letter - September 2017

MRCP(UK) Part 2 Clinical Examinations Report on assessment period May – August 2017

1812 candidates sat PACES in the 2017/02 assessment period from May to August 2017. 1382 of these candidates sat in UK centres, with the remaining 430 sitting at our overseas centres. The pass rate for the UK trainees was 54.0%; the overall pass rate was 43.4%. The pass rates for all of the candidate groups remain stable and in line with historical trends, taking the new pass mark into account.

Recent Developments

Time to examine

The four UK Chief Medical Officers, the chair of the GMC, and the medical director of the NHS England have written a letter to all employers in the health service. The letter asks employers to look favourably on requests from clinicians applying for time off to take part in national work for the wider benefit of the public and wider health services. This includes work with the medical royal colleges, such as examining for MRCP(UK). The letter can be found [here](#), should you wish to read it.

PACES 2020

The final PACES 2020 short life working group meeting took place in August. The final recommendations from the group will be presented for approval to the Academic Quality Management and Research Committee (AQMRC) in November and the General Medical Council in 2018. The group have agreed to recommend the introduction of 20 minute clinical consultation encounters, incorporating a comprehensive history with focused physical examination, and two ten minute communication encounters. Further information can be found on the MRCP(UK) [website](#).

Examiner equality and diversity training

The examiner equality and diversity e-learning module is in the final stages of development and will be launched in November. The module incorporates expert knowledge of how issues of equality and diversity can impact on both examiners and candidates in assessment situations. The course is scenario based, incorporating learning points from facilitated discussions with experienced examiners and trainers. Once launched, all examiners will be required to complete the module to remain compliant with our examiner eligibility criteria. More details of this will be communicated when the programme is launched.



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Hot Topics – May 2017

Feedback themes for counselling

Please ensure the PACES discussions sheets completed for candidates recommended for counselling include clear themes about areas of poor performance. These comments are included in personalised feedback letters that are sent to candidates, detailing areas of weakness and guidance on areas for improvement. Clarity on these themes of underperformance included on the PACES discussion sheets ensures that the feedback they receive is reflective of their performance, as they seek to improve in future attempts.

Attendance at post-cycle discussions

Examiners are reminded of the importance of attending the post-cycle briefing, where issues of poor performance, borderline candidates, or examination irregularities are discussed. It is important that examiners include additional time for the post cycle briefing when making travel arrangements at the end of the examining day.

Questioning examiner judgement

The post cycle discussion may highlight candidates who seem to have performed well overall, but have failed by a small margin or in a single encounter. In these circumstances, questioning examiner judgement is not considered grounds for an appeal, and candidates cannot appeal on the basis that their efforts have been undermarked. Examiners are also reminded that it is not permissible to change the academic judgement made in any encounter following discussions at the post cycle briefing. Examiners should not encourage candidates to appeal in such circumstances.

Engaging with appeals

MRCP(UK) receives a significant number of appeals from candidates undertaking this high stakes examination. These appeals are investigated by the policy team, and this investigation usually includes contacting examiners to provide additional information pertinent to the appeal. It is important for candidates that examiners reply promptly to any requests for additional information. This allows representatives from the Clinical Examining Board to make a decision on the outcome of the appeal as quickly as possible.

New calibration sheets

Skill descriptors are included on examination marksheets, but these are not used when examiners are calibrating scenarios at the beginning of the cycle. The Clinical Examining Board has agreed to implement changes to the PACES calibration sheets to include skill descriptors in the same style as the marksheets.