

Scenario Writing Group is launched

The clinical element is one of the distinctive features of the MRCP(UK) Diploma. The Part 2 Clinical Examination (PACES) puts candidates in realistic situations where examiners can observe their diagnostic, communication and decision-making skills in action, as well as assess how well they demonstrate ethical principles.

Some parts of the examination involve assessment of patients, while others are based on interaction with 'surrogate' patients who play the role according to strictly defined clinical scenarios. Generating scenarios that test the required skills and knowledge, with clarity and accuracy, is a significant task. The challenge is growing all the time, as PACES is offered more frequently throughout the year to keep up with the demand for more places and flexible scheduling.

A new Scenario Writing Group (SWG) has been recruited, to build up the MRCP(UK) catalogue of PACES scenarios for two of the five stations in the examination:

- Station 2, which assesses history-taking
- Station 4, which assesses communication skills and ethics.

The SWG will keep a flow of fresh scenarios coming in. This work was previously undertaken by the PACES Scenario Editorial Committee (SEC), which will continue to oversee the academic quality of the material.

The SWG is based on the model of the well-established Specialty Question Groups, which generate material for the MRCP(UK) Part 1 and Part 2 Written examinations. This aims to share best practice and encourage consistency across all of the Diploma examinations.

Members of the SWG have been appointed for a term of five years. Nineteen consultant physicians have joined, along with eight trainees who will bring valuable insights into the realities and challenges that candidates encounter in their everyday practice. Two training sessions are scheduled in June, and the SWG will hold its first meeting in November. These sessions, and all activities of the group, will be

supported by staff from MRCP(UK) Central Office.

Dr Elizabeth Murphy, Consultant Rheumatologist based at Wishaw General Hospital, Lanarkshire, chairs the new group. She says: “I am delighted to have been appointed as Chair of the new MRCP(UK) PACES SWG, which is an important development and will ensure that the scenarios used at Stations 2 and 4 remain relevant to today's trainees, and that they are of a consistently high standard. I think the establishment of this group also offers us the opportunity to improve the guidance provided for the surrogates and examiners who use these scenarios.”

Dr Hadi Al-Hillawi, Chair of the SEC, also welcomed the launch. “The SEC will continue to vet, edit and select scenarios for stations 2 and 4 in the PACES exam”, he explained. “It will also have a role in directing the SWG to produce scenarios that cover the various and differing competencies and specialisms required for PACES. We are optimistic that the development of the SWG will enhance the provision of high-quality scenarios.”