Circ. MRCP(UK) PACES examiners 15 September 2026

Dear colleague

Changes to the eligibility criteria for MRCP(UK) PACES examiners

We are writing to thank you all for your ongoing commitment to examining the MRCP(UK) PACES examination. Thanks to your collective efforts and goodwill we are offering more exam places than ever before and have effectively eliminated the issue of oversubscription in the UK and as well as in the majority of centres internationally.

We would like to highlight some important changes to the eligibility criteria for MRCP(UK) PACES examiners that will come into effect in the first diet of 2027 which commences in January. The changes which apply equally to prospective and existing examiners have been extensively discussed by the Clinical Examining Board (CEB) with significant input from resident doctors and lay representatives and were ratified at its most recent meeting in June.

Whilst most of the criteria remain unchanged, there are some important changes around the maintenance of regular clinical practice, involvement with doctors in training and the completion of Fair Assessment training. We hope that you will agree these are important changes to maintain the quality and reputation of the examination.

The revised criteria will apply to all examiners wishing to examine in both UK and International Centres, irrespective of their usual country of practice, including those on the International Chair List.

The revised essential criteria which remain subject to formal ratification by the Federation Board are as follows:

- Maintain a connection to one of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK as
    - Either a Fellow in good standing
    - Or as a Collegiate Member on the GMC Specialist Register in a current substantive consultant post in the United Kingdom
- Be registered with the GMC and in good standing with a licence to practise, or the regulatory equivalent in the country of practice
- Be working in clinical practice as a physician in a recognised medical speciality in an institution in which doctors in training are employed, or have done so within the past two years.
- Doctors with a GMC licence to practise - Participate in revalidation, including annual appraisal covering the totality of their practice, and adhere to CPD requirements
- To have completed at least one module of the bespoke on line *Fair Assessment* training within the past three years
- Undertake to examine a minimum of 4 cycles of PACES per year measured over a rolling two year period

Whilst being involved with doctors in training and implicitly the maintenance of some clinical practice has always been a requirement, it has not been clearly defined leading to the interpretation and application of the criterion in a variety of different ways.

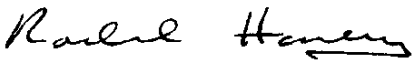
The CEB has removed the requirement for routine Equality and Diversity training, although many examiners will continue to access this routinely as part of their work in the UK. The Board prefers to focus on the bespoke training developed by Federation which is specific to helping eliminate potential bias within the clinical examination setting. This represents a major change for Examiners based outside the UK, who have not previously had access to the Fair Assessment on line training, and will ensure uniformity of training in this important aspect of examining across the worldwide examiner pool.

Whilst compliance with the essential criteria will remain largely self-declared the Clinical Examining Board has asked the College and Federation teams to be rigorous about their application and verification through a process of periodic audit.

Most current active examiners will be unaffected by the revision to the criteria. However we do realise that there are a small number of experienced and loyal examiners who have not been in regular clinical practice in institutions in which doctors in training are employed within the past two years. As a result it likely that they will no longer be eligible to examine. On behalf of the whole Clinical Examining Board we would like to sincerely thank all of these examiners for their exceptional contribution and dedication to examining for MRCP(UK) PACES over the years.

If you think that you no longer meet the criteria to continue as an examiner, are unsure, or wish to discuss this further, please contact your College Assessment team, or for examiners based outside the UK your local Federation Lead in the first instance.

Yours sincerely





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