



# Exam Expertise

# MRCPP Part 1

Opinion, advice and insight from the September 2018 Exam

The MRCPP Part 1 examination (2018/3) took place on 4 September 2018 and was the first to have been set with a pass mark of 540; an increase from the previous pass mark of 528.

The results were released on 5 October 2018, with 56% of Pastest customers reporting that they had passed the exam. This is **37% greater than the overall pass rates** commonly reported by MRCP(UK) (not yet disclosed for this exam).

This led candidates to believe that Paper 2 was the harder of the two papers; although this may have genuinely been the case for some, it is more likely that tiredness played a part and brought about a skewed comparison.

### Read the question in full

The time pressure candidates faced was made all the more acute by **“red herrings”** in a number of questions. These would usually crop up within questions with lengthy vignettes, leading the candidate to second-guess the answer before being taken off in another direction.

“Reading the **last line of the question first** can soften the blow of a curveball.”

Comparing MRCP Part 1 questions to Medical School Finals questions, which aren't designed to catch you out, one candidate said: **“It was quite frustrating really as you'd feel like you'd wasted your precious time reading through a very detailed vignette only to be thrown off course by the end of it. I'd certainly encourage all future candidates to read the entire question before selecting their answer.”**

**Hardest topics in Sep 2018 Exam**

**Statistics**  
**Rheumatology**  
**Pharmacology**

(According to Pastest users)

### Prepare for a marathon effort

Candidates reflecting on the exam were universal in their view that mental fatigue affected performance in the afternoon paper, due to the overall length of the exam (two, three-hour papers of 100 questions over the course of the day).

Average Qs answered by **successful candidates**

**4,445**



When reading the entire question, though, don't forget that in order to complete a paper on time candidates need to be averaging less than 108 seconds per question.

## Be "exam smart"

Looking back at their preparation, both successful and unsuccessful candidates agree that perfecting exam technique is equally as important as having strong knowledge of all specialties.

One candidate said: **"I don't think I appreciated the value of answering a high volume of questions during my revision. I read a lot of books which of course isn't a bad thing but it didn't really assist me with the practice I needed to dissect and answer a Best of Five question with confidence."**

Our usage figures support this viewpoint, with nearly 3.5m MRCP Part 1 questions answered on our website for this sitting, and over 1.6m on our free mobile app.

That equates to an average of 2,700 questions answered per user.

### Most frequently searched for terms in MyPastest

Diabetes



Hepatitis



Thyroid



**"Aim to answer 100 Qs per day, complete the bank, then start over again!"**

## Pay special attention to non-specialties

While good all-round knowledge across specialties will undoubtedly serve candidates well in the exam, spending time on areas of clinical science that may not always be experienced on a regular basis in hospital is very worthwhile.

**"I swotted up on various formulae in the run up to the exam to make sure I didn't fall down on Statistics questions,"** noted one candidate. **"I was also anxious about Immunology and Cell, Molecular and Membrane Biology so I made sure I really got to grips with them before exam day."**

## Practise Qs of various lengths

Although the majority of MRCP Part 1 questions contain a two-step approach and are lengthy enough to challenge the 108-second rule, a number of questions are short and relatively easy to answer.

**"The odd, random one-liner did crop up,"** remembered one candidate, **"these tended to be on HLAs or Basic Sciences therefore not as taxing as the longer, more complicated questions."**

Average mark of Pastest users who answered 5,000+ Qs



## Summary

- Try to re-energise yourself during the break between papers as fatigue will set in during Paper 2
- Read the question carefully and in full so you're not tripped up by a **"red herring"**
- Get through a high volume of practice questions, paying close attention to areas you may not be overly familiar with
- And perhaps most importantly... MRCP(UK) don't provide food in between exams, so don't forget your lunch!

Sign up to Pastest to maximise your chances of passing your next medical exam. [MRCP Part 1](#), [MRCP Part 2](#) and [MRCP 2 PACES](#) resources available now.

Formed in 1972, Pastest is a global provider of revision materials for undergraduate and postgraduate medical exams.