



# Exam Expertise

# MRCP 2 PACES

Opinion, advice and insight from the 2018/3 exam period

The MRCP 2 PACES examination period (2018/3) took place between 29 September and 2 December 2018.

58% of Pastest customers have reported passing the exam. That's **9% greater than the most recent MRCP 2 PACES pass rate** disclosed by MRCP(UK).

## Most common cases

Station 1: Respiratory  
**Bronchiectasis**

Station 1: Abdominal  
**Renal Transplant**

Station 2: History Taking  
**Chest Pain**

Station 3: Cardiovascular  
**Aortic Valve Replacement**

Station 3: Neurology  
**Mixed Motor & Sensory Polyneuropathy**

Station 4: Communication Skills  
**Angry Family Member**

Station 5  
**Rheumatoid Arthritis**

(According to Pastest users)

## Research your exam centre

Pastest customers have had very different experiences from one exam centre to the next. For example, Middlesbrough was described as **“very formal and overwhelming”**, Liverpool a **“nice centre but very stressful”** (with three exams running at once) and Whitecross (London) the **“best organised centre attended”**.

**“My centre [Cambridge] had patients in different rooms instead of being separated by screens. This really ate into my examination time!”**

By familiarising yourself with your exam centre before the big day - either by talking to fellow candidates in your hospital or reading online forums - you can potentially avoid any nasty surprises and unwanted distractions from the assessment itself.

## Check your ‘one-minute warning’

Similarly inconsistent is the occurrence (or lack of) a one-minute warning towards the end of each Station. It has been noted that some centres provide a warning, while some don't.

This is something that has been particularly irritating for repeat takers such as this customer:

**“For my first attempt at the exam I was consistently advised I had one minute left, however on the first Station of my second attempt this warning never arrived so I ran out of time! I'd highly recommend quickly asking the examiner whether a one-minute warning will be provided before your exam begins.”**



## Examiners can have a big impact

While Pastest videos show the ideal structure of a case, the real thing can often be disrupted by an examiner. Depending on their own style, an examiner can interrupt conversations in a helpful (and sometimes not so helpful) way, which can really throw you off track. Try and stay focused!

**Easiest Station**  
**Station 1: Abdominal**  
**Hardest Station**  
**Station 4: Communication Skills & Ethics**

(Based on the number of Pastest users who passed/failed each Station)

## Prioritise spotting those signs...

...and plan what to do when there aren't any! That's right, cases can crop up where patients have no clinical signs so formulate a strategy should this happen in your exam. Be confident; waffling and head-scratching won't get you anywhere!

Of course, it is more likely that there will be signs - encounter as many as you can on the wards and supplement with the wide variety available in the Pastest resource.

## Be equally prepared for each Station

You may well feel comfortable with Cardiology or relaxed about Respiratory, but don't let that go to your head: it's a tough exam and there may just be a tricky Case with your name on it! Don't be over-confident about Station 4 (Communication Skills & Ethics) either as it has been known to trip up even the most proficient and linguistically able doctor!

## Most watched Cases in Pastest PACES Online

Aortic Stenosis



VATS Lobectomy



Polycystic Kidney Disease



## PACES 2020 update

MRCP(UK) are planning to roll out a new format for the PACES exam in the first sitting of 2020:

### Station 1

Communication (10 mins)  
 Respiratory (10 mins)

### Station 2

Clinical Consultation (20 mins)

### Station 3

Cardiovascular (10 mins)  
 Neurology (10 mins)

### Station 4

Communication (10 mins)  
 Abdominal (10 mins)

### Station 5

Clinical Consultation (20 mins)

At Pastest we are busy building a resource ready for candidates preparing for the new format. In the process, we've been gathering insights from junior doctors who participated in the PACES 2020 trial this summer. Here are some of their views:

**"The proposed changes felt very sensible and more based on what actually happens on a ward."**

**"I much prefer the new timings per Station as you feel less rushed and have more time to consider your diagnosis."**

**"My advice to candidates taking the exam in the new format is take your time so you're able to undertake a thorough examination and spot all the signs."**

**"I had a Parkinson's case where the history was taken from a surrogate, who was an actor playing the granddaughter of the patient. I felt this was very natural and as it would happen in normal practice."**

Look out for more Pastest PACES 2020 insights and sample cases in the run up to the official launch of the exam update.

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