



Exam Expertise

MRCPCCH FOP/TAS

Opinion, advice and insight from the October 2018 Exam

The MRCPCCH FOP/TAS examination (2018/3) took place on 9 October 2018.

The results were released on 13 November 2018, with 71% of Pastest customers reporting that they had passed the exam. That's **21% greater than the most recent MRCPCCH FOP/TAS pass rates** reported by RCPCH (not yet disclosed for this sitting).

Hardest FOP topics in Oct 2018 Exam

Ethics & Law
Cardiology
Metabolism & Metabolic Medicine

(According to Pastest users)

Swot up on the law

Both in our post-exam survey and when speaking to customers in person, the hardest topic in the FOP exam was clear: Ethics & Law.

In part, this is due to the high number of overseas exam takers who aren't overly familiar with UK law and simply because it's not an area that doctors are exposed to on a daily basis.

However, there are only a handful of Ethics & Law questions in each exam so plan your prep time on this topic accordingly!

Keep an eye on the clock!

Each exam is 150 minutes long with 70 Best of Five (BoF) questions and 10 Extended Matching Questions (EMQs). Although this may seem like plenty of time, many candidates said the exam flew by and that they struggled to answer all the questions. The EMQs took a particularly long time to work through as they include multiple questions around the same vignette.

Take timed tests during your revision to try and get into the mindset of reading questions quickly and efficiently. Flag trickier questions to come back to later rather than letting them eat into your time.

“Time keeping was really difficult as there were often two possible answers. Be decisive, or you'll be staring at a question for minutes!”

Get the basics right in TAS

The TAS exam is notoriously tricky, with Pharmacology questions proving particularly difficult for a number of candidates.

Average Qs answered by successful candidates

3,264



One noted that: **“Very specific knowledge was required, so not just the mechanism of the action of drugs but specific receptors and cell types.”**

With lots of Basic Science being tested too, digging out your notes from medical school could well be worthwhile as you'll be less likely to get caught out on something you once knew (but have perhaps since forgotten!).

Most frequently searched for MRCPCH FOP/TAS terms in MyPastest

Head circumference



Epilepsy



Developmental milestones



More investigations than images

As per previous MRCPCH FOP/TAS exams, images were rare in the October 2018 sitting, with just an ophthalmology image and respiratory graph appearing across both papers.

The more common investigation-based questions featured tables, normally centred around blood tests. These tables were hard to decipher, according to some candidates, due to a lack of gridlines and poor formatting. Also, normal values were not always presented; when they were they were in brackets next to the results.

Hardest TAS topics in Oct 2018 Exam

Pharmacology
Cardiology
Genetics &
Dysmorphia

(According to Pastest users)

Average mark of Pastest users who answered 3,000+ Qs



Look for the clues

It goes without saying that you'll need to read the question carefully, but in the MRCPCH FOP/TAS exam in particular, there are often clues within the vignette that can steer you towards the correct answer. This might be the child's gender, age or ethnicity.

If any of these are referenced in the question, there's a good chance it will have a bearing on the correct answer.

“The common intro to a question is **age-ethnicity-gender; make sure you bear all of these in mind when selecting your answer.”**

Summary

- If you're an overseas candidate (or live in the UK for that matter) spend some time swotting up on UK Ethics & Law
- Refresh your memory on the Basic Sciences as they consistently catch candidates out
- In the run up to the exam, practise questions against the clock and pay particular attention to tables of results

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