



FACULTY OF PAIN MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Anaesthetists

Report of the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FFPMRCA) Examination

January/April 2019

The fourteenth sitting of the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists examinations has now occurred. The MCQ took place on 30 January 2019, 15 candidates attended this sitting of the exam; this is higher than August 2018 when 11 candidates attended but lower than January 18 when 20 candidates attended. The pass mark was 69.29%, equal to a raw score of 264 or above out of 381. The core group removed some questions from the total, before the pass mark was calculated due to reasons of error or ambiguity in the question content. No candidates were disadvantaged in this process. After adjustment, the maximum scores available were: 197 in MTF (3 stem removed), 92 in SBA (2 SBAs removed) and 92 in EMQ (2 EMQs removed). The pass mark was agreed by summing the Angoff-based individual sections using the same method as previously described. The pass rate of 10/15 (67%) was lower than the last two pass rates for the MCQ which were 82% and 90% in August and January 2018 respectively.

Prior to the SOE examination, the court of examiners carried out a paper checking exercise to assess the relevance and difficulty of the questions in line with other exams and the examiners' expectations. The court of examiners assessed the question set used at the April 2019 SOE exam to be at an acceptable level of difficulty and relevance, similar in overall difficulty to previous examinations. The SOE examinations took place on Tuesday 2 April 2019; 13 candidates attended. 9/13 candidates passed the FFPMRCA examinations giving a 69% pass rate which is in the normal range for this exam and a reflection of the high calibre of candidates attending the exams at these sittings.

As part of the standard setting process borderline regression and Hofstee calculations were plotted against the exam data after the exam. The statistical analysis was discussed by the court of the FPM examiners and the data obtained were used as a starting point in agreeing the pass mark. The final pass mark of 32/40 was reached through a combination of statistical analysis and expert judgment and this is in line with pass marks set for previous exams. The range of candidate scores were 24 - 40, one candidate scored 32, one candidate scored 31 and three scored 33. The performance of all borderline candidates was discussed at length by the court of examiners and it was agreed that their results should stand and the pass mark remained at 32. 11 candidates were on their first attempt. Two candidates were on their second attempt and both passed at this sitting.

One candidate scored a maximum score of 40/40 and met the criteria for the prize at the April 2019 sitting and Dr Hoi Wong, was sent the chair's commendation letter. As this was the final exam of academic year 2018-2019, all candidates who met the criteria from the October 2018 and April 2019 sittings of the exam were considered as possible prize winners. After due consideration the court of examiners agreed that Dr Sangram Patil and Dr Hoi Wong both achieved the highest level of distinction from the commendations made during this academic year. Both candidates were ranked first in their respective MCQ sittings achieving similar scores and both attained a score of 40/40 in the SOE at their first attempts. Therefore, a recommendation

has been made to the board for their approval for Dr Patil and Dr Wong to be awarded the FFPMRCA Prize for academic year 2018-2019.

The majority of examiners took part in this examination with those who were unable to attend giving good reason and sufficient notice regarding their non-attendance. Core group meetings were held on the day of the exam with examiners writing new questions and setting exam papers for the autumn 2019 sitting.

Examiners were audited during the exam through video observation undertaken by Dr Mike O'Connor and Dr Karen Simpson of the audit and feedback team. Feedback on performance was given using the video footage collected. Examiner practice was found to be of a uniformly high standard, with advice given to further improvement.

One visitor attended on the day, Professor Connail McCrory of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland. Professor McCrory felt the standard was set appropriately and gave positive feedback. Professor McCrory signed a confidentiality agreement.

The Chair and Vice Chair would like to thank Graham Clissett and the examinations team for a polished and professional examination.

Dr Nick Plunkett,
Chair, FFPMRCA Examinations

Dr Tony Davies,
Vice- Chair, FFPMRCA Examinations

9 April 2019