

# CANDIDATE GUIDANCE NOTES

## MRCS PART A (MCQ)

### Pearson Vue Test Centre Delivery

September 2022

# MRCs PART A (MCQ) EXAMINATION

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## MRCS PART A (MCQ)

# CANDIDATE GUIDANCE NOTES – PEARSON VUE

### 1. General information - Intercollegiate MRCS

Part A is a five-hour MCQ examination consisting of a three-hour paper (Applied Basic Science) followed by a two-hour paper (Principles of Surgery in General), taken on the same day. There is a scheduled one-hour candidate break between the two papers.

The marks for both papers are combined to give a total mark for Part A.

The two examination papers cover generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, including the core knowledge required in all nine specialties as follows:

Paper 1. Applied Basic Sciences – 3 hours

Paper 2. Principles of Surgery in General – 2 hours

To achieve a pass in Part A, the candidate will be required to demonstrate a minimum level of competence in each of the two papers in addition to achieving or exceeding the pass mark set for the combined total mark for Part A.

Candidates may attempt to pass Part A of the MRCS examination six times.

### 2. Examination Procedure

Candidates will need to book and attend a Pearson Vue test centre to sit their MRCS Part A examination. The test centre booking process is explained on the following [Pearson Vue website](#).

Candidates are required to arrive at a Pearson Vue test centre **30 minutes** before their scheduled examination start time. This is to allow adequate time to complete the necessary sign-in procedures. If candidates arrive more than **15 minutes** late after the scheduled examination start time, they may be refused admission.

No personal items may be taken into the testing room. This includes all bags, books, notes, phones, pagers, watches and wallets as well as any drinks or food. All candidates will be required to follow the Pearson Vue [test centre rules agreement](#).

Candidates who finish Paper 1 early will be required to remain at their stations for the remainder of the scheduled examination time before starting the 60-minute break. Toilet breaks will be allowed at all times. Candidates who finish Paper 2 early will be allowed to leave the test centre once they have finished the examination.

Candidates will be permitted to leave the premises of a Pearson Vue test centre during the one hour scheduled break between Paper 1 and Paper 2. If candidates fail to return

to their test centre more than **15 minutes** late after the scheduled one hour break, they may be refused admission to sit Paper 2.

Candidates are required to obey the instructions of the Pearson Vue test centre staff and invigilators at all times. Failure or refusal to do so may lead to candidates being suspended from the examination, with their results being withheld pending investigation. It is Pearson Vue's duty to prevent any behaviour likely to cause disturbance to other candidates.

### **3. Admittance to the examination**

On arrival at a Pearson Vue test centre, candidates will be required to present one form of original (no photocopies), valid (unexpired) ID that includes their name, photograph, and signature. The first and last name that a candidate used to register must match **exactly** the first and last name on the ID that is presented on test day. All IDs required must be issued by the country in which a candidate is testing. If a candidate does not have the qualifying ID issued from the country they are testing in, a passport from their country of citizenship is required. If you have any questions or concerns about the ID you are required to bring with you to the testing center for admittance for your examination please contact [Pearson VUE customer service](#).

Full ID policy is available [here](#).

For the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting the examination will be required to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, the candidate's face. Pearson Vue will observe sensitivity and, in specific circumstances, privacy in the visual identification of candidates. All candidates will be required to follow the Pearson Vue [test centre rules agreement](#).

### **4. Guidance**

Candidates must follow all Pearson Vue invigilator(s) instructions during the examination, including when to start the examination. Examination will be delivered on-screen using a computer. Before commencing with the examination, all candidates will be presented with a tutorial on how to use the computer equipment and interact with the Pearson Vue on-screen examination system. Pearson Vue staff and invigilator(s) will be available to provide any assistance in regards to this.

Candidates will be given an erasable whiteboard and pen to do any calculations. No calculators will be allowed. Questions will be presented in a randomised order for all candidates.

Candidates shall not give or receive any assistance or communicate by any means with one another or any person, other than the Pearson Vue invigilator(s), at any time during the examination period. Any candidate acting in breach of this regulation or misbehaving in any other way that may disrupt the examination may, at the discretion of Pearson Vue invigilator, be suspended from the examination, or have their results withheld pending investigation.

Any candidate who wishes to go to the toilet during the examination, must ask the permission of a Pearson Vue invigilator and be supervised at all times. Candidates will not be allowed extra examination time on such occasions. Candidates are allowed to take an unscheduled comfort break at any time during the examination time to access any drinks or food stored in their secure cupboard at a Pearson Vue test centre. Candidates will be supervised by a Pearson Vue invigilator at all times during such breaks, and the examination time will not be stopped.

Candidates who have any questions or comments on the content of the examination should report these to the Pearson Vue invigilator. All such comments will be noted and considered at the adjudication stage. No clarification will be given by the invigilator. All candidates will be required to follow the Pearson Vue [test centre rules agreement](#).

Any candidate who contravenes any of these instructions will be liable to penalties that may include expulsion from the examination, annulment of results and referral to the appropriate registration body. The Malpractice Regulations that the Colleges adhere to are available [here](#). It is the candidate's responsibility to be familiar with these before they attend the examination. Candidates should note that the copyright on the content of the papers is held by the three Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and that unauthorised use of any of the questions is prohibited. In the event of contravention of this copyright, legal action may be taken. Any candidate found making notes on the content of examination questions will be disqualified. Candidates will be required to complete a non-disclosure agreement at a Pearson Vue test centre to be allowed to commence the examination.

## **5. Results**

Results will be available within approximately one month from the examination date. Each of the Colleges will notify their candidates directly once the results are available and how to access them.

## Appendix 1 - Pearson Vue Test Centre Booking Portal

The following screenshots represent the indicative test centre booking portal interface.

The dashboard shows a user profile for 'Demoable1 Demoable1' with ID 'DEMOABLE1001'. A notification states: 'You have successfully created a web profile.' The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and contains three sections: 'Schedule an exam' with an 'Exam catalog' and a 'View exams' button; a section asking 'Do you have a private access code?' with a 'What is this?' link; and 'View an upcoming test center appointment' which states 'You do not have any appointments scheduled.' On the right, a 'My Account' section lists links for 'My Profile', 'Account Sign In', 'Preferences', 'Exam History', and 'View Score Reports'. The footer includes the Pearson | VUE logo and copyright information: 'Copyright © 1996-2020 Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s). All rights reserved. Terms | Privacy | Contact'.

The 'Find a test center' page shows a search for 'VUE-OP: VUE OP test' at '3 Bala Plaza West, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, 19004, United States'. A message states: 'You can select up to three test centers to compare availability.' Below this is a 'Helpful hints' section with two bullet points: 'The test center information link may provide directions, parking, wheelchair support or other physical access considerations.' and 'Distance (mi/km) is a straight line calculated from the center point of your search criteria and does not reflect driving distance.' A table lists three test centers with their addresses and distances:

Test Center	Distance
<input type="checkbox"/> zTest Lab - Config 242 - Erik 3 Bala Plz W Ste 300 Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004 United States <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	0.0 mi
<input type="checkbox"/> Berkeley Computer Training 2 Bala Plaza Suite 405 Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004 United States <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	0.2 mi
<input type="checkbox"/> Career Vision 1617 JFK Blvd Suite 1780 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 United States <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	4.3 mi

To the right of the table is a map of Philadelphia showing the locations of the test centers. A 'Next' button is located at the bottom right of the page.



## You are booked!

Order #: 0000-1146-6078

An email confirmation has been sent to: testing@gmail.com

[Return to Dashboard](#)

Description	Details	Order Information
<b>Exam</b> VUE-OP: VUE OP test Language: English Exam Length: 60 minutes	<b>Appointment</b> Wednesday, June 30, 2021 Start time: 12:30 PM CDT  <b>Location</b> Berkeley Computer Training <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	<b>Order Number/Invoice</b> 0000-1146-6078 <b>Registration ID</b> 210474459 <b>Status</b> Scheduled

VUE Testing Policies  
[Admission Policy](#)

## Appendix 2 - Pearson Vue Examination Delivery System

The following screenshots represent the indicative examination paper delivery system interface.

This screenshot shows the top of the examination interface. A blue header bar contains 'Demo Exam - Candidate Name' on the left, a clock icon and 'Time Remaining 119:31' on the right, and '7 of 14' with a flag icon and 'Flag for Review' below it. The main content area contains a question: 'A 67-year-old man is admitted to hospital for investigation of an irregular heartbeat. The 'conducting system' of the heart includes which one of the following anatomical structures?' followed by five multiple-choice options (A-E). A green arrow points to the question text, and an orange arrow points to the header information.

Time remaining  
Question number (of total)  
Review flag

Question

This screenshot shows a blue navigation bar with 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons. A yellow arrow points to these buttons, which are labeled 'Question navigation'.

Question navigation

This screenshot shows a clinical case question. The header bar is identical to the previous screenshot. The question text reads: 'A 63-year-old woman presents to her General Practitioner with a three-week history of back pain. She has lost 8 cm in height over the last four years. Investigations reveal:'. Below the text is a table of laboratory results.

	Result	Normal
Adjusted (corrected) calcium	2.05 mmol/L	2.15-2.55
Phosphate	0.89 mmol/L	0.6-1.25
Estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR)	92 ml/minute	>90
Parathyroid hormone (PTH)	9.8 pmol/L	1.0-6.5

Which of the following is the most likely cause?

○ A. Hypoparathyroidism  
○ B. Primary hyperparathyroidism  
○ C. Pseudohypoparathyroidism  
○ D. Secondary hyperparathyroidism  
○ E. Tertiary hyperparathyroidism