



Physician Associate National Examination – Written Examination Question Paper Review Group

Terms of reference

Background

The Physician Associate national certification and recertification examinations (PANE) are developed and delivered by the Assessment Unit on behalf of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), of which the Faculty of Physician Associates is part. The PA certification written examination currently takes place in three assessment periods annually and consists of a 200 single best answer written examination.

The PA recertification examination currently takes place in three assessment periods annually and consists of a 200 single best answer written examination only.

Remit

The PANE Written Examination Question Paper Review Group (QPRG) has the responsibility to ensure that the written examination for both the PANE certification and recertification examinations contain questions that fall within the current [SBA blueprint](#), which is derived from the [Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Assistant](#).

The QPRG's work will include (but is not limited to):

- Ensuring the overall examination includes a reasonable balance of clinical presentations
- Ensuring questions include a good mixture of primary and secondary care settings
- Reviewing questions within a written examination for clinical relevance
- Ensuring questions test knowledge in line with current guidelines across all four nations of the United Kingdom
- Generating the standard setting score for each question¹
- Flag questions that do not meet the required standards, for review by the PANE question writing group (QWG)²
- Advising the QWG on future areas for generation of content

Membership

The group will be chaired by the PANE Written Examination Lead, with remaining members drawn from the physician associate profession. Members will be expected to declare to the RCP Assessment Unit when they

¹ Initial review and standard setting to be done individually prior to the group meeting

² The QWG meets separately to the QPRG and is responsible for generating and reviewing content.

enter the beginning of a recertification window and will have their tenure paused until such time as the Assessment Unit has confirmed to them that they have successfully recertified.

Observers

The QPRG may be attended by the following individuals, on an ad-hoc basis, upon invitation from the QPRG Chair:

- Health Education England representative
- General Medical Council representative
- The RCP Vice President of Education and Training
- The PANE Senior Examiner
- Representatives of the RCP Assessment Unit, which may include one or more of the following:
 - Assessment Unit Chief Examiner
 - Head of Assessment Unit
 - Deputy Head of Assessment Unit
 - Senior Examinations Coordinator
 - Examinations Coordinator(s)
 - Examinations Administrator(s)
- Other individuals as invited by the PANE Senior Examiner and/or RCP Assessment Unit

They may contribute to the QPRG meetings where appropriate, but have no formal place on the group, are not involved in any standard setting and have no direct input into the decisions the QPRG make.

Governance

The PANE QPRG will report into the PANE Examination Board. Any developmental work surrounding the PANE that is identified as part of the QPRG's work is governed by the PANE Development Group, which has QPRG representation via the PANE Written Examination Lead.

The RCP Assessment Unit provides all administrative support to the PANE QPRG.

Frequency of meetings

Three times a year, prior to each assessment period³.

Quorum

A minimum of five members of the QPRG must be present for any standard setting to be validated.

³ The QPRG currently meet virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and meetings are split into six half-day workshops (two per assessment period) for logistical purposes.