



Physician Associate National Examination Question and Scenario Writing Groups - Terms of reference

Background

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) is seeking to appoint individuals to the Physician Associate National Examination Question and Scenarios Writing Groups for its written, clinical and recertification examinations.

The Physician Associate national certification and recertification (PANE) examinations are developed and delivered by the Assessment Unit on behalf of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), of which the FPA is part. The PANE written examination currently takes place in three assessment periods annually and consists of a 200 single best answer written examination, held online. The PANE clinical examination is a 14-station OSCE, which takes place in three assessment periods annually and is held at our recently opened, purpose-built assessment centre in Liverpool.

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

Remit

The Question Writing Group (QWG) has the responsibility for generating new questions and reviewing current content for the online written examination for both the certification and recertification examinations. Content should focus on areas within the current [SBA blueprint](#), which is derived from the [Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Assistant](#).

The Scenario Writing Group (SWG) has the responsibility for generating new scenarios and reviewing current content for the PANE OSCE. Content should focus on areas within the current [OSCE blueprint](#), which is also derived from the [Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Assistant](#).

The QWG and SWG's work will include (but is not limited to):

- Generating new content that is appropriate for the written and clinical examinations, in line with the relevant examination blueprint and style guide¹
- Generating content that include a good mixture of primary and secondary care settings
- Ensuring content flagged for review by the PANE board or PANE Question Paper Review Group remains clinically relevant, amending questions or scenarios as appropriate
- Ensuring questions test knowledge in line with current guidelines across all four nations of the United Kingdom

Membership

The QWG will be chaired by the PANE Written Examination Lead, with the SWG chaired by the PANE Clinical Examination Lead. Remaining members will be drawn from the physician associate profession and

¹ After observing their first meeting, members would then be expected to submit 10 written questions or one OSCE scenario ahead of each subsequent meeting

healthcare professionals who have substantial demonstrable experience in working with, training, or supervising the physician associate role.

Appointments will be for a term of three years, subject to satisfactory performance, and renewable after review by the PANE Written Examination Lead and/or PANE Clinical Examination Lead and (in respect of continuing eligibility) by the RCP Assessment Unit².

Members would be expected to attend a minimum of four full days³ over a rolling two-year period.

Observers

The QWG and SWG may be attended by the following individuals, on an ad-hoc basis, upon invitation from the relevant group 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 QWG or SWG meetings where appropriate but have no formal place on the groups and have no direct input into the decisions they make.

Governance

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

The RCP Assessment Unit provides all administrative support to the PANE QWG and SWG.

Frequency of meetings

One full day per month, on average.⁴

Quorum

A minimum of three members (including the relevant examination lead) to ensure content is generated and reviewed effectively.

² Decisions on the renewal of membership may be referred to the PANE Senior Examiner where appropriate

³ Via half day virtual meetings, full day in-person meetings or a combination of the two

⁴ The QWG and SWG currently meet virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with meetings running for half a day.