



# Applicant Guidance

## **National Neurosurgery ST1 & ST3 Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA)**

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Sitting the MSRA .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Structure of the MSRA .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Nursing Mothers Policy .....	4
4.2 Comfort Aids .....	5
<b>5. Test Centre Locations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 Overseas Test Centres .....	5
<b>6. Registering for the MSRA .....</b>	<b>5</b>
6.1 Re-registering for the MSRA .....	6
<b>7. Invitation to the MSRA .....</b>	<b>6</b>
7.1 Booking a test .....	6
7.2 Confirmation of test booking .....	7
<b>8. Admission Policy .....</b>	<b>7</b>
8.1 Alternative Identification Documents .....	7
8.2 Personal belongings .....	7
8.3 Breaks and refreshments .....	8
<b>9. Reschedule Policy .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10. Cancellation Policy .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11. Missed Appointment .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>12. MSRA Outcomes .....</b>	<b>9</b>
12.1 Scoring .....	9
<b>13. Applicant Expenses .....</b>	<b>9</b>

<b>14. Revision Materials .....</b>	<b>9</b>
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## 1. Introduction

The Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA) is a computer-based assessment, delivered in partnership with Work Psychology Group and Pearson VUE, which has been designed to assess some of the essential competences outlined in the CT/ST1 Person Specifications and is based around clinical scenarios.

The MSRA is utilised by a number of CT/ST1 postgraduate medical specialties. Each speciality considers the MSRA differently as part of its selection process. It is recommended that you visit specific national recruitment websites and familiarise yourself with the appropriate guidance for that specialty. This guidance details the process for entry to General Practice ST1.

## 2. Sitting the MSRA

All applicants who apply to Neurosurgery for the first time in any given recruitment year are required to sit the MSRA. There are no exceptions or exemptions to this requirement. A recruitment year commences in November and spans to the October of the following year. It comprises of Round 1 for an August commencement.

A successful MSRA outcome will be valid for the entirety of the recruitment year in which it was undertaken.

A successful outcome *cannot* be carried over into successive recruitment years.

## 3. Structure of the MSRA

There are two component parts to the MSRA - a Professional Dilemmas (PD) paper and a Clinical Problem Solving (CPS) paper. The length of each paper is as follows:

Paper	Length / Time
<b>Professional Dilemmas (PD)</b>	110 minutes
<b>Clinical Problem Solving (CPS)</b>	75 minutes

The papers are independently timed and the time remaining is each paper in denoted by an onscreen countdown timer.

On completion of the Professional Dilemmas paper, the timer on the Clinical Problem Solving paper will commence automatically after 2 minutes; a 2 minute countdown timer will

be displayed onscreen. The Clinical Problem Solving paper can be started earlier by pressing *Next* on the screen.

The structure of both papers, including the question types, the competency domains being assessed and the scoring process is detailed in full in the [MSRA Test Blueprint & Information](#) document; you are strongly advised to read this document. Sample and practice questions for both of the papers are available from the [GPNRO Resource Bank](#).

In addition to the MSRA Test Blueprint & Information document and sample questions, Pearson VUE offer a generic tutorial to aid you in familiarising yourself with the controls and screen layouts in advance of the test. This tutorial can be undertaken at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/athena/>.

## **4. Adjustments under the Equality Act 2010**

All HEE Local Offices and Deaneries are aware of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate requests provided these are made known in advance. If you require any adjustments (e.g. wheelchair access, extra time, nursing mothers) you must inform your first preference HEE Local Office / Deanery or GPNRO of any special requirements, evidenced by supporting documentation at the earliest possible opportunity *and by no later than the application closing date*. Adjustments cannot be guaranteed if contact is made after the specified deadline and no adjustments can be made on the day of the test.

In some instances, in order to satisfy requests for adjustments, it may be necessary to schedule you in test centre at a specific time or in a specific location.

### **4.1 Nursing Mothers Policy**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the GPNRO will consider requests from nursing mothers to provide suitable facilities in the MSRA test centres. If this applies to you then you must submit this information with your application form. The GPNRO will then liaise with Pearson VUE in order to try and honour your request.

It should be noted that children are not permitted at any of the test centres and therefore it is recommended that nursing mothers check the location of the test centre before booking a test to ensure that nearby facilities meet any requirements you may have. Address details for each Pearson VUE Centre can be found at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nro/locate>.

## 4.2 Comfort Aids

Pearson VUE list a number of medicines, medical and mobility devices as comfort aids which do **not** require pre-approval as an accommodation by the GPNRO. Comfort aid items are listed on the Pearson VUE website in the [test accommodations](#) section.

The items listed will be allowed in the testing room upon visual inspection by Test Center staff. Visual inspection will be done by examining the item without directly touching it (or the applicant) and without asking the applicant to remove the item, unless otherwise stated in Pearson VUE's comfort aid list.

## 5. Test Centre Locations

The MSRA is delivered globally on a number of consecutive days in a large number of Pearson VUE Computer Testing Centres. You can find your nearest Pearson VUE test centre by visiting <http://pearsonvue.com/nro/locate>.

All applicants who reside in or, are in employment in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) during the assessment window are expected to attend a UK test centre.

### 5.1 Overseas Test Centres

If you are outside of the UK during the MSRA window, you will have the opportunity to sit the test at your nearest Pearson VUE test centre, subject to seat availability.

To assist candidates with overseas availability, the GPNRO reserve seats in a number of pre-approved core locations and you will be presented with the opportunity to register your interest for one of these locations at the time of application. However, you should be aware that the number of places in centres is limited and overseas test places are available on a first come first served basis; whilst every effort will be made to accommodate you in your preferred location, this cannot be guaranteed and you may be required to attend the nearest location with availability.

## 6. Registering for the MSRA

Once the application window has closed, you will receive a message from the Neurosurgery NRO asking you to register with Pearson VUE using very specific account credentials provided in the message. If you have applied to other specialties, you may receive multiple messages containing the same credentials from each. In this instance, you only need to register once.

Failure to register will result you being unable to sit the MSRA.

It is important to remember that the registration correspondence is not an invitation to attend the MSRA; on completion of registration, your account will correctly state you *do not* have any pre-approved exams at this time meaning you will not be able to book an appointment.

## 6.1 Re-registering for the MSRA

Applicants who registered with Pearson VUE for the MSRA *on or after* September 2017 will not be required to re-register; the account registered will be valid for all future MSRA events.

Applicants who registered with Pearson VUE for the MSRA *before* August 2017 will be required to re-register. However, once a new Pearson VUE account has been registered, it will be valid for all future MSRA events.

## 7. Invitation to the MSRA

All applicants who have been assessed as demonstrating evidence of eligibility as outlined in the person specification will be invited to sit the MSRA. If you are invited, you will be required to book an appointment and undertake the MSRA; failure to do so will result in not being able to sit the test.

### 7.1 Booking a test

If you are invited to the MSRA, you will be required to log into your Pearson VUE account and use the self-service functionality to book a test at a centre, date and time of your choosing, subject to availability. The only exception to this is if you have requested a special accommodation, other than or in addition to extra time, under the Equality Act 2010; in this instance, you will be contacted directly by Pearson VUE with details of your appointment *provided* you have completed the registration process outlined in Section 6.

When booking your test, it is strongly recommended that you avoid booking from a mobile device or internet browsers that have reached the end of their product support lifecycle as these are unlikely to be supported.

When searching for seat availability at test centres by location, Pearson VUE will return a maximum of 30 test centres per location search. To view more test centres, you will need to alter your search criterion.

## 7.2 Confirmation of test booking

Once you have booked your test, you will receive an automated confirmation of booking email to your registered email address. If you do not receive confirmation, log into your Pearson VUE account to confirm if the booking process was completed in its entirety.

## 8. Admission Policy

You must arrive at the test centre at least 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to complete the necessary check-in procedures. It is essential that you arrive on time as applicants who arrive late will NOT be admitted entry.

You should note that children are not permitted at any of the test centres.

At reception, you will be required to present either a:

1. current valid passport,
2. a current valid UK or EU photo card driving licence (full or provisional) or
3. a biometric residency card.

If you opt to present a passport and it is a biometric passport with no signature, you will be required to present a secondary form of identification with your full name and signature e.g. a debit/credit card or NHS ID card.

Please check that your first name and last name, as declared on your GP application form match EXACTLY with the identification documents that you intend to present on the day of your test.

### 8.1 Alternative Identification Documents

If you are unable to present any of the three documents listed above or, your first name and last name does not match EXACTLY with the one of the three documents that you intend to present on the day of your test, you must contact the GPNRO at the earliest opportunity at [gpnro@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:gpnro@hee.nhs.uk) for further advice and instructions on suitable alternatives.

Failure to notify the GPNRO of any discrepancies will result in you not being permitted entry to sit the test.

### 8.2 Personal belongings



You will not be allowed to take any personal items with you into the testing room. This includes all bags, books or other materials not authorised for the MSRA, notes, phones, pagers, watches and wallets.

### **8.3 Breaks and refreshments**

You are prohibited from taking food and drink into the test room. You may leave the test room for water or a comfort break, but no additional time will be allowed in your test. If you wish to leave the room, you must ask the invigilator. Please note that you will not be permitted to eat whilst in the test centre.

## **9. Reschedule Policy**

If you wish to reschedule your test, you may do this via your [Pearson VUE account](#) for the test in question, within the test booking period. If you are an applicant with a pre-approved adjustment and wish to reschedule your test, please contact Pearson VUE via email at [nrocustomerservice@pearson.com](mailto:nrocustomerservice@pearson.com). You must reschedule test appointments at least 24 hours before the appointment.

## **10. Cancellation Policy**

If you wish to cancel your test, you may do this via your [Pearson VUE account](#) for the test in question, within the test booking period. If you are an applicant with a pre-approved adjustment and wish to cancel your test, please contact Pearson VUE through email at [nrocustomerservice@pearson.com](mailto:nrocustomerservice@pearson.com). You must cancel test appointments at least 24 hours before the appointment.

## **11. Missed Appointment**

If you miss your test and wish to schedule another appointment, please contact the GPNRO at [gpnro@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:gpnro@hee.nhs.uk) immediately; you will not be able to re-book online via self-service without first being re-authorised by the GPNRO. You should be aware that test centre availability is likely to be limited at this point and that you may be required to travel beyond your preferred locality.

Regrettably, the GPNRO will be unable to accommodate you if you miss an appointment on the final day of the MSRA window.

## 12. MSRA Outcomes

All applicants will be notified of their combined shortlisting and MSRA results between the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018 when the invites to interview are released.

### 12.1 Scoring

The MSRA score will account for 40% of the total shortlisting score.

## 13. Applicant Expenses

Expenses incurred by applicants attending the MSRA will *not* be reimbursed by the Neurosurgery NRO. The MSRA is delivered on a number of consecutive days throughout the whole of the UK in a vast number of Pearson VUE test centres. You are therefore expected to attend a venue close to your residence or place of work.

## 14. Revision Materials

None of the Neurosurgery question writers take part in or endorse any preparation courses or books.

The Neurosurgery NRO understands that applicants may wish to revise and prepare for the MSRA with each other in small groups. However, sharing information about the actual assessments is unacceptable and is viewed as unprofessional behaviour. The MSRA uses a large number of different equated test forms and therefore knowledge of questions in one paper will not necessarily benefit others. We would also remind all applicants that entry to Neurosurgery specialty training is competitive.