

Applicant Guidance

Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA) 2021-22

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PART I: OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to outline requirements to allow successful completion of the Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA) for recruitment to GP training for Neurosurgery posts commencing in August 2021.

The 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 Person Specification and is based around clinical scenarios.

The MSRA is utilised by several 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 speciality.

2. Sitting the MSRA

All applicants who apply to Neurosurgery for the first time in this recruitment year are required to sit the MSRA. There are no exceptions or exemptions to this requirement. The recruitment year commences in November 2020 and spans to October 2021. It comprises of rounds for posts commencing in August 2021 and February 2022.

Important: The MSRA will be delivered at Pearson VUE test centres and a remote testing provisions will in place, *as a reasonable adjustment*, for those who are isolating/shielding in line government or public health guidance due to COVID-19 or, depending on their geographical location, where local or national COVID-19 lockdown measures prevent access to a testing centre due to site closures or travel restrictions.

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
Professional Dilemmas (PD)	95 minutes
Clinical Problem Solving (CPS)	75 minutes

The MSRA is delivered as a *single* exam. The two papers are independently timed and the time remaining in each paper is denoted by an onscreen countdown timer.

On completion of the Professional Dilemmas paper, there will be a 5 minute scheduled break before the Clinical Problem-Solving paper commences. In instances where a break of longer than 5 minutes is taken the excess time will be *automatically* taken off the available time for the Clinical Problem-Solving paper when you commence the paper.

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 demo to aid you in familiarising yourself with the controls and screen layouts in advance of the test. This demo can be accessed via <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nro>.

3.1. Revision Materials

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

The Neurosurgery National Recruitment Office (NNRO) 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 many different equated exam forms and therefore knowledge of questions in one paper will not necessarily benefit others. We would also remind all applicants that entry to GP specialty training is competitive.

4. Registering an account for the MSRA

Once the application window has closed, you will receive a message from the NNRO asking you to register with Pearson VUE using very specific account credentials associated with your new Oriol 2 account. 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.

Accounts previously created for the MSRA with credentials associated with the older version of Oriel will no longer be valid from this recruitment year.

Failure to register will result you being unable to sit the MSRA and your final shortlisting score will be affected.

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.

4.1 Signing into a registered Pearson VUE account

Following the successful completion of the registration process, applicants will be able to sign into their new or existing Pearson VUE accounts by visiting <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nro>.

Applicants who are unable to recall their login credentials can retrieve or reset this information by using the *forgot my username / password* links available on the sign-in page.

Applicants who continue to experience difficulties accessing their account are advised to direct their queries to the Pearson VUE customer services team at nrocustomerservice@pearson.com. When contacting customer services, please ensure the following information is provided:

- Your Pearson VUE Application Number (i.e. your 12-digit Oriel Exam ID)
- Your, full name, as registered on the Pearson VUE account
- Your email address, as registered on the Pearson VUE account
- Your postal address, as registered on the Pearson VUE account

5. Invitation to the MSRA

All applicants who have been assessed as demonstrating evidence of eligibility as outlined in the National Neurosurgery 2021 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 your application(s) not progressing further.

All invitations will be for the delivery of the MSRA in Pearson VUE test centres. Once invitations have been received, applicants who are isolating/shielding due to COVID-19 or are prevented from accessing a test centre due to local or national COVID-19 lockdown

measures, will have the opportunity to request sitting the MSRA remotely by exception. The MSRA team will approve requests on a case by case basis. Remote testing is **not** available to applicants for any non-COVID-19 related issues.

PART II: TEST CENTRE DELIVERY

6. 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 your exam at a specific time or in a specific location.

6.1 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 to try to 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 <https://pearsonvue.com/nro/locate>.

6.2 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 Centre 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.

7. Test Centre Locations

The MSRA is delivered globally on several consecutive days in a large number of Pearson VUE Computer Testing Centres. You can find your nearest Pearson VUE test centre by visiting <https://pearsonvue.com/nro/locate>. Please note that capacity at each centre is finite and there may be a requirement to travel to the nearest location with availability if there is no availability at your preferred location.

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

8. 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 4.

When booking your exam, 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.

8.1 Confirmation of exam booking

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

9. 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.

9.1 Health & Safety Guidelines for COVID-19 at Test Centres

Before travelling to a test centre, it is vitally important that you familiarise yourself with the [health and safety guidelines](#) implemented at all Pearson VUE owned centres to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and for protecting testing applicants and their staff.

The guidelines contain important applicant information and anyone who fails to comply with the guidelines will be denied their testing services.

9.2 Identification (ID) Requirements

In line with the [Pearson VUE ID policy](#), from the list below, you are required to present one form of original (no photo copies or digital IDs), valid (unexpired) government issued ID that includes your **name**, recent **recognisable photograph**, and **signature**.

- International Travel Passport,
- Driver's license,
- Military ID (including spouse & dependents),
- Identification card (national/state/province identity card),
- Alien registration card (green card, permanent resident, visa),
- Local language ID (not in Roman characters) – *accepted only if issued from the Country you are testing in.*

All forms of acceptable IDs must be issued by the country in which you are testing. If you do not possess qualifying ID issued from the country you are testing in, an international travel passport in roman characters from your country of citizenship is required. If you are European Union applicant testing within the EU zone, you may also provide a valid, unexpired EU identity card as primary ID.

Expired forms of ID are not acceptable, unless accompanied by valid renewal papers. A government issued ID missing a visible signature or one that has an embedded signature must be supplemented with an original, valid ID that has at least a matching name and recent recognizable photo, or a matching name and signature.

The first and last name you used on your application form and thus your Pearson VUE account must match exactly the first and last name on the ID that is presented on the day of your MSRA appointment.

9.3 Alternative Identification Documents

If you are unable to present any of the documents listed above or, your first name and last name does not match EXACTLY with the one of the documents that you intend to present on the day of your exam, you must contact the MSRA team at the earliest opportunity at msra@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 exam.

9.4 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.

9.5 Breaks and refreshments

There is a short 5 minute scheduled break between the Professional Dilemmas and the Clinical Problem-Solving paper. In instances where a break of longer than 5 minutes is taken the excess time will be automatically taken off the available time for the Clinical Problem-Solving paper when you commence it.

You may leave the exam room for an unscheduled water or a comfort break, but no additional time will be allowed in your exam. If you wish to leave the room, you must ask the invigilator.

You are prohibited from taking food and drink into the exam room and you will not be permitted to eat whilst in the test centre.

PART III: OnVUE DELIVERY (*by exception*)

10. What is OnVUE Delivery?

OnVUE offers a secure and convenient online proctoring solution for home-testing and maintains a consistent testing experience with test centre delivery. OnVUE delivery is offered as a *reasonable adjustment* by exception to applicants impacted by COVID-19.

10.1 Eligibility for OnVUE Delivery

Applicants who are isolating/shielding due to COVID-19 or are prevented from accessing a Pearson VUE test centre due to local or national COVID-19 lockdown measures, will have the opportunity to request a remote, OnVUE delivery by exception. The MSRA team will approve requests on a case by case basis. Remote testing is not available to applicants for any non-COVID-19 related issues.

In the event of a significant disruption to UK test centre delivery (e.g. site closures due to national lockdown or reduced capacity due to increased social distancing measures), OnVUE delivery will become the default delivery platform.

11. Adjustments under the Equality Act 2010

All HEE Local Offices and Deaneries are aware of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate applicants provided these requests are made known in advance.

The **only** adjustments to the MSRA that can be accommodated for exams delivered by OnVUE are requests for additional time. The maximum amount of addition time available is +25%.

12. OnVUE Minimum Requirements

Before booking an exam, applicants should ensure that their equipment and environment meet Pearson VUE's required specification for the successful delivery of an online proctored exam.

You should visit <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nro> and run the system test **and** read the system requirements to ensure that device you intend to use to sit the MSRA meets the minimum specification requirement. You should also ensure that your testing environment is a quiet, private location with a strong and reliable internet connection.

It is strongly recommended that you avoid sitting the exam at work or on a work computer as it is likely that your employer's strict network security / firewall will disrupt the online exam delivery.

You are also strongly advised to familiarise yourself with Pearson VUE's policies and procedures which are also available in the above link which must be strictly adhered to. You should be aware that any violation of policies and procedures will result in the immediate termination of your exam and withdrawal of your application on grounds of misconduct.

Important: all applicants sitting the exam via OnVUE are solely responsible for their testing environment, internet connectivity, the device(s) used for the exam and any other devices connected to their network that could interfere with delivery, and for ensuring that minimum internet bandwidth requirements are maintained on their network for the entire duration of their Pearson VUE exam appointment. Any equipment or connectivity failures that occur during the exam which result in the disruption or early termination of the exam will not lead to further attempts at the exam if responsibility for the failures does not lie with Pearson VUE. Please note that technical support will not be available from the GPNRO.

13. Booking an exam

If you are approved to sit the MSRA remotely due to factors relating to COVID-19, you will be required to log into your Pearson VUE account and use the self-service functionality to book an exam on a date and time of your choosing, subject to availability within the specified testing window. The *only exception* to this is if you have requested a special accommodation of additional time, under the Equality Act 2010; in this instance, you will need to book via Pearson VUE's Customer Services team.

When booking your exam, 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.

13.1 Confirmation of exam booking

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

14. Admission Policy

The MSRA delivered via OnVUE is proctored in English only. There is not an option for local language proctoring for this exam.

All applicants are advised to log into their accounts 30 minutes early to start the self-check-in process, run through ID authentication protocols using artificial intelligence and to allow for any troubleshooting. If you are more than 15 minutes late after your scheduled exam time you will be unable to begin your exam.

To log into your account:

- Visit <https://home.pearsonvue.com/nro> and click on the Sign In button
- Click on your scheduled exam under 'Purchased Online Exams'
- Click "Begin Exam" and follow the on-screen prompts to complete the check-in process
- Once you have completed the check-in process you will be contacted by a Proctor to begin your exam

Please note that you are required to have a clean and clutter free workstation. During check in, the Proctor will ask you to perform a room and desk scan using your webcam and will inspect any materials near your workstation.

If a third party is detected in the physical room where you are seated during the exam, the exam will be immediately terminated, and your application will be withdrawn.

14.1 Identification (ID) Requirements

The Identification (ID) requirements for online proctored exams differ to the requirements for an exam delivered at a test centre. Therefore, it is important that you understand the requirements for this occurrence.

You will need to show one (1) valid form of unexpired, Government-issued personal ID. The Government-issued ID must contain your name, signature and photo.

The name on the exam registration must match the names on the Government issued ID exactly. *If your identification is not considered valid you will not be permitted to complete your exam.*

Examples of acceptable identification include:

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Military ID (including spouse and dependents)
- Identification card (national or local)
- Registration card (such as green card, permanent resident, visa)

Please note that Pearson VUE are unable to accept the following ID's for an online proctored exam:

- Renewal forms with expired ID's
- Government-issued name change documents with Government ID.

14.2 Alternative Identification Documents

Alternative identification documents cannot be accepted for exams delivered through OnVUE. If you are unable to satisfy the ID requirements, you must contact the MSRA team immediately at msra@hee.nhs.uk for further advice.

Failure to notify the MSRA team of any discrepancies will result in you not being permitted to sit the exam.

14.3 Breaks and refreshments

There is a short 5 minute scheduled break between the Professional Dilemmas and the Clinical Problem-Solving paper. In instances where a break of longer than 5 minutes is taken the excess time will be automatically taken off the available time for the Clinical Problem-Solving paper when you commence it.

Unscheduled breaks are not allowed during the exam for any reason. If you leave your device during your exam in an unscheduled period, the Pearson VUE proctor will end your session and you will be unable to continue testing; this will result in the automatic withdrawal of your application.

You are advised take a comfort break prior to the commencement of your exam or during the scheduled break.

If you require refreshments, water in a clear glass is allowed during testing however, eating, smoking, and chewing gum are prohibited.

PART IV: OTHER POLICIES

15. 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. You must reschedule test appointments at least 24 hours before the appointment.

16. 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 via email at nrocustomerservice@pearson.com. You must cancel test appointments at least 24 hours before the appointment.

17. Missed Appointments

If you miss your test and wish to schedule another appointment, please contact the MSRA team at msra@hee.nhs.uk immediately; you will not be able to re-book online via self-service without first being re-authorised by them. 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. The GPNRO will be unable to accommodate you if you miss an appointment on the final day of the MSRA window.

18. Applicant Expenses

Expenses incurred by applicants in sitting the MSRA will **not** be reimbursed.

PART V: MSRA OUTCOMES

19. MSRA Outcomes

All applicants will be notified of their results when the MSRA and shortlisting data has been finalised.

The results will be published in your Oriel application as interview scores. Detailed guidance on how to locate or view these scores is contained in the [Oriel Applicant User Handbook](#).

19.3 Appealing the Outcome

All applicants will receive feedback when they are notified of their outcome. The outcome is final and cannot be reviewed, re-marked or disputed. There is no appeals process.