Junior doctor and consultant industrial action and FRCPath examinations

Following the announcement of industrial action by junior doctors and consultants in England as a result of the British Medical Association (BMA) ballot, the College has been considering the potential impact should industrial action coincide with the FRCPath examinations.

The advice from the BMA for junior doctors who have an examination on the day of industrial action is as follows:

"You are able to do the exam on the day of action and take part in the industrial action activities around that. It is possible for your employer to cancel your leave, with any required notice under your contract. If your leave is cancelled, you will still be able to take industrial action and use the time to attend the exam.

You will likely lose a day of pay but you will still be able to take the day for industrial action and take your exam."

The dates for industrial action announced so far are Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 September and Monday 2, Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 October. The dates for the Spring examination session are as follows:

- FRCPath Part 1: Monday 25 – Wednesday 27 September 2023
- FRCPath Part 2 and BMS Stage C: Monday 2 October – Friday 3 November (please see the examination calendar for specific examination dates)

The College has identified a small number of examinations that coincide with the October industrial action and has acted swiftly to ensure that they will be able to continue. Relevant candidates (and examiners?) have been informed.

Should additional subsequent industrial action be announced which coincides with the FRCPath examinations, the College position is as follows:

1. All examinations for the autumn session are being planned as normal and the College will try to minimise disruption for all candidates.
2. FRCPath Part 1 examinations are online and do not require examiners to be present. Therefore, in line with BMA advice that junior doctors in England are able to undertake examinations if they coincide with industrial action, and due to the

   proximity of the industrial action the previous week, we do not anticipate disruption for these examinations.
3. Industrial action that coincides with a face-to-face FRCPath Part 2 examination may affect the availability of medically qualified examiners either if they are required to provide cover for junior doctors at their hospital or Trust or due to their own industrial action. Depending on the size, location(s) and number of examiners required for any affected examination, it may not be possible to move the examinations at short notice. Should any further dates for industrial action be announced, the College will review the impact of those dates on any relevant examinations and advise affected candidates accordingly.

The College administers examinations for candidates who are qualified as doctors, clinical scientists, biomedical scientists, dentists, and veterinary pathologists and we accept candidates from throughout the UK, the Republic of Ireland as well as internationally. We therefore recognise that not all candidates or examinations will be affected by the industrial action, although it is possible that there may be a direct or indirect impact for some candidates if industrial action coincides with some FRCPath Part 2 examinations (e.g. examinations for both junior doctors and clinical scientists).

In addition, the College is aware of the potential for further train strikes during the examination period. Again, these would most affect the FRCPath Part 2 examinations, and any dates announced will be reviewed for potential impact and affected candidates will be advised accordingly. Candidates are strongly encouraged to ensure that they keep themselves up to date with any announcements as well.

For candidate enquiries related the College FRCPath and BMS examinations, please email the College: examinations@rcpath.org.

For enquiries relating to junior doctor and consultant industrial action, please email the British Medical Association: support@bma.org.uk.

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