



PLAB Medical Update Notes for tutors

Thankyou for helping with the PLAB Medical Update teaching at Reache North West. This guide gives some background information to help plan your teaching.

Most of the tutors who help us really enjoy the session and find our students a stimulating group to meet. We are pleased that many tutors become regulars and offer to come back again and again.

The students

Reache North West students are refugee doctors and other health professionals with varied backgrounds. As a group they will have practiced in different cultures, be used to different styles of training and in different languages, and will have a variety of level of experience from generalist to specialist - an interesting group to teach! In their route to registration in the UK they have to achieve a high level in the IELTS English examination and the doctors must then pass the GMC PLAB examination.

There are normally about 8-15 of our members attending, some will still have the IELTS English examination to take, others will have this behind them and have their focus on PLAB 1. We also invite our members who have passed PLAB 1 to attend as they work for PLAB 2 or are in the final stages of preparing for work in the NHS.

PLAB 1

We aim our Medical Update session to be at the level of the PLAB Part 1 examination. This is a broad-based multiple-choice examination:

- 200 questions in 3 hours → about 1 minute per question
- All single best answer (best of five) questions
- Content (see <http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/plab/23448.asp>)
 - All specialities
 - Diagnosis, investigation and management of common diseases in UK
 - Some data interpretation +/- pictures
 - Health promotion and monitoring
 - Basic science: anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology
 - Legal and ethical matters

It is designed to test whether the doctors can apply their knowledge to patient care at the level equivalent to completing FY1 year of training (and including chronic conditions seen in general practice) and not simply to memorise facts.

Our doctors tend to be very exam focused and so they like teaching across all the key conditions within the topic and with example best-of-five questions. It is valuable for our doctors to know of the recent evidence based guidelines for managing common conditions. They need to be introduced to NICE and other relevant resources.

Some doctors will have had experience of working with established resources, in the Middle East for example, but others might be very experienced in working without investigations and with few resources, so bear this in mind in your teaching. Chronic disease management and continuity of care in the community tends to be an area of initial weakness for many of our doctors, who are sometimes surprised by how much responsibility our specialist nurses take on.

Facilities

Medical Update teaching runs from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm or 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm in the Mayo Building of Salford Royal Hospital. We normally have a short refreshments break and we sometimes run a 10 minute self-management or study skills session as an interlude just before or after the break. Please bear in mind that although our doctors tend to be able to engage in teaching pitched at foundation doctor level, you may find interactive exercises take considerably longer than you are used to.

We can provide flipchart with pens. The tables and chairs in the room are moveable to whatever arrangement suits your teaching. The room where you will be teaching has PowerPoint (Microsoft Office 2007) on the desktop computer linked to a projector although embedded links sometimes will not work owing to some restrictions on access to the internet. You can also connect your own laptop to the projector system if you prefer (but with technical caveat!) but there is no wireless connection.

It would be advisable to bring any presentation files in several formats (email attachment, memory stick, laptop) so that we can help you set up and to be sure that IT problems do not obstruct the session. If you email any presentation files to Marilyn at reache@manchester.ac.uk we can make sure these are loaded onto the system. If you want any handouts photocopied this can also be done in advance.

Planning the session

We have prepared this guide to help your preparations but please feel free to run the session however you wish! Presentations covering key topics / guidelines / recent advances, sample questions, role-play, discussions around ethical and legal dilemmas or case studies would all be appropriate for teaching. We could provide some role-play scenarios with doctor, patient and examiner instructions if you wish (*OSCEs for Medical Undergraduates* - PasTest) and have compiled a list of resources: <http://reache.wordpress.com/links-to-resources/plab-1/>. Published books with PLAB 1 sample questions are often out-of-date but they can give an idea of the level of knowledge expected.

After the session

We have evaluation forms that we will collect, summarise and send back to you afterwards for your records. We hope that you will volunteer to help us again, either delivering the same teaching or see our website for other ways in which we need help from clinicians!

If you have any questions or want to discuss your session please contact me or Marilyn in the office on our main e-mail address: reache@manchester.ac.uk.

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