ICBSE | Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations

Security Scanning at Pearson Examination Venues

Purpose

To uphold the highest standards of exam security, Pearson has introduced advanced screening protocols designed to address the evolving threat of covert recording devices. As part of these enhanced measures, all candidates will be subject to a security scan utilising both infrared and metal detection wands. These devices are specifically designed to identify small cameras and other hidden electronica that may compromise exam confidentiality.

This policy applies to all candidates sitting MRCS Part A examinations delivered through Pearson test centres.

Can I Decline Screening?

No. Pearson security screening is a mandatory part of the test centre check-in process for all candidates. Candidates must either complete the security screening or have an approved waiver in place before attending the test centre.

If you believe you are unable to participate in the security screening process you should submit a waiver request to the relevant College in advance of your examination.

Waivers may be considered where a candidate is unable to undergo screening due to medical or other exceptional circumstances

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Candidates who decline security screening without an approved waiver may be refused entry to the test centre and permitted not to sit the examination.

How do I apply for a waiver?

You should complete the Security Screening Waiver Application Form and submit it to the relevant College together with any supporting evidence.

When should I submit my application?

Candidates must submit waiver requests during the application window and before booking their examination.

What evidence do I need to provide?

The evidence required will depend on the reason for your request. Examples may include:

- A medical certificate or letter from a healthcare professional.
- Documentation relating to an implanted medical device.
- Other evidence relevant to the circumstances of your application.

What types of circumstances may qualify for a waiver?

The circumstances listed below are examples only and do not represent an exhaustive list of situations in which a waiver may be considered. Requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Each application is assessed individually and approval is not automatic.

- Pacemakers, ICDs, neurostimulators, or other implanted medical devices.
- Cochlear implants or implanted hearing devices.
- Insulin pumps or continuous glucose monitoring devices.
- Physical disabilities, injuries, or mobility restrictions.
- Medical appliances or prostheses that interfere with scanning.

Does pregnancy automatically qualify for a waiver?

No. Pregnancy alone would not normally require a waiver as the security screening process is not considered a risk to health. However, specific medical circumstances related to a pregnancy may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Can I decline security screening instead of applying for a waiver?

No. Security screening is a mandatory part of the Pearson check-in process. Candidates must either complete the security screening or have an approved waiver in place. Candidates who refuse screening without an approved waiver may be refused entry to the test centre and unable to sit the examination.

How long does it take to receive a decision?

The College will review applications as quickly as possible. Processing times may vary depending on the complexity of the request and whether additional information is required.

What happens if my waiver is approved?

The College will notify Pearson through the examination registration process. The approved waiver will be recorded on your examination booking, and the test centre will be informed that you are exempt from the standard security scan. All other examination and test centre rules will continue to apply.

What happens if my application is declined?

You will be informed of the outcome and the reason for the decision. If you wish to proceed with your examination, you will be required to complete the standard Pearson security screening process.

Can I appeal a decision?

If you believe relevant information was not considered, or if additional information becomes available, you may request that your application be reviewed. Complex or exceptional cases may be considered further on a case-by-case basis.

Will my personal information be kept confidential?

Yes. Information provided as part of a waiver application will be processed solely for the purpose of assessing your request and administering your examination.

Where a waiver is approved, details of the approval will be shared with Pearson to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be put in place at the test centre. However, the specific medical, religious, or personal circumstances supporting the waiver will not normally be shared unless this is necessary to facilitate the approved accommodation.

To ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making across the examination, details of waiver applications and supporting information may be shared with the Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations (ICBSE) and the participating Surgical Colleges involved in the delivery of the examination.

All information will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and will only be accessed by individuals who require it for the purpose of assessing, administering, or reviewing the waiver request.

Will I need to apply for a waiver every time I sit an examination?

Yes. Unless otherwise advised by the College, waiver requests should be submitted for each examination diet to ensure that candidate information and examination arrangements remain current.