



Latest update: The next confirmed PLAB 1 exam date is 7 August 2025.

The [PLAB exam \(Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board\)](#) is a key requirement for international medical graduates (IMGs) who want to practice medicine in the UK. Conducted by the General Medical Council (GMC), PLAB is divided into two parts – [PLAB 1](#) (written MCQs) and [PLAB 2](#) (clinical OSCEs).

As of recent data, the PLAB 1 pass rate hovers around 65–75%, while the PLAB 2 pass rate varies by country, averaging around 70% globally. For Indian candidates, the PLAB 2 pass rate by country remains one of the highest due to strong clinical training.

This blog provides a step-by-step guide for PLAB exam preparation, covering strategies, timelines, study resources, and tips to help you succeed. Whether you're preparing in India or abroad, this guide will help you understand how to pass PLAB 1 and 2 on your first attempt.

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Step-by-Step PLAB Exam Preparation (2025 Updated Guide)

Preparing for the PLAB exam can feel overwhelming, especially if you're doing it alongside a busy internship or clinical job. This step-by-step breakdown will help you tackle each phase confidently and improve your PLAB pass rate.

Step 1: Understand the PLAB Exam Structure

Before starting your preparation, it's crucial to understand the **structure of the PLAB exam**:

- PLAB 1 is a written exam with 180 Single Best Answer (SBA) type multiple-choice questions. Duration: 3 hours. It assesses your ability to apply medical knowledge in UK clinical scenarios.
- PLAB 2 is a practical OSCE exam with 16 clinical stations. Each station lasts 8 minutes, testing communication, diagnosis, ethics, and patient safety.

Step 2: Check Your Eligibility and Choose Exam Dates

You are eligible to take PLAB if:

- You're an international medical graduate (IMG) from a non-UK medical school.
- You've passed [IELTS](#) (7.5 overall) or [OET](#) (Grade B).
- You've completed a primary medical qualification (PMQ).

Once eligible, choose your PLAB 1 date based on your preparation timeline. PLAB 1 is conducted four times a year, and PLAB 2 is held throughout the year in Manchester, UK.

Check out: [PLAB Eligibility: Who Can Apply for the PLAB Exam?](#)

Step 3: Gather the Right Study Resources

PLAB 1 Resources:

- **PLABable** – Most trusted platform with daily practice sets, mocks, and analytics
- **Samson Notes & 1700 Questions PDF** – Good for revising clinical concepts
- **Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine** – For detailed reference
- **NICE Guidelines** – UK protocols you'll be tested on

PLAB 2 Resources:

- **Geeky Medics** – For OSCE-based station walkthroughs
- **NHS.uk & GMC's ethical guidance** – For real-world consultation knowledge
- **PLAB 2 Academy courses** – Optional but helpful for polishing clinical skills
- **Telegram/Reddit groups** – Peer practice and daily station reviews

Step 4: Create a Study Plan (3, 6, or 9 Months)

Structure is key to your PLAB preparation. Choose a timeline that fits your lifestyle:

- **3-Month Plan:** Best for full-time students or fast-track candidates
- **6-Month Plan:** Ideal for working doctors or interns
- **9-Month Plan:** Suited for slow-paced learners or those with long gaps

Each plan should include:

- Daily question practice (at least 50 questions)
- Weekly mock tests
- System-based revision (Cardio, Resp, Neuro, etc.)
- The final 2 weeks for pure revision and mocks

Step 5: Practice Regularly with Mocks and Recalls

Mock tests and recalls are the backbone of your preparation. For PLAB 1:

- Use PLABable's timed mocks
- Review wrong answers weekly
- Focus on clinical reasoning, not rote memory

For PLAB 2:

- Practice stations with a partner
- Focus on soft skills: empathy, active listening, and patient education
- Time your responses; 8 minutes per station is strict

Step 6: Apply for the Exam & Book Your Slots Early

Once ready, register on the GMC website for PLAB 1. Booking PLAB 2 should be done immediately after passing PLAB 1, as slots fill fast.

PLAB exam centres for PLAB 1 are available in India, the UK, and other international locations. PLAB 2 is only conducted in Manchester, UK.

Step 7: Revise Smart and Stay Exam-Ready

The final weeks are for smart revision, not cramming.

- Use flashcards, sticky notes, and video summaries
- Focus on high-yield topics: emergencies, ethics, and prescribing
- Practice OSCEs under time pressure

Check out: [PLAB Test Centre Guide 2025](#)

PLAB 1 Preparation Strategy

PLAB 1 is your first step toward practising medicine in the UK. It's a 3-hour written test that checks whether you can apply your medical knowledge in real-life situations, just like a UK Foundation Year 2 doctor. Here's how to prepare effectively and improve your PLAB 1 pass rate.

1. Know the PLAB 1 Exam Format Inside-Out

PLAB 1 consists of:

- 180 single best answer (SBA) questions
- 3 hours to complete the paper
- Topics from medicine, surgery, OBGYN, paediatrics, psychiatry, and ethics

2. Start with the Right Materials

Using focused and reliable study resources makes a big difference. Some of the most trusted ones include:

- **PLABable:** The go-to question bank with explanations, mocks, and progress tracking

- **Samson Notes:** Concise topic summaries
- **Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine:** Ideal for deeper understanding
- **GMC Blueprint:** Highlights exam themes and expected competencies
- **NICE Guidelines:** For UK-based management protocols

3. Build a Structured Study Schedule

Consistency matters more than long hours. Based on your timeline (3 to 6 months), break down your plan:

Timeframe	Daily Focus
Month 1	Basic subjects + 50 daily questions on PLABable
Month 2	Advanced topics + daily questions + weekly mocks
Month 3	Full mocks, revision, weak topic review

4. Learn by System, Not Subject

Instead of preparing subject-wise, study system-wise:

- Cardiovascular
 - Respiratory
 - Gastrointestinal
 - Neurology
 - Endocrine
- ...and so on.

5. Use Mock Tests to Simulate Real Exam Conditions

Don't just passively study – actively test yourself:

- Take full-length mock tests under timed conditions
- Review not just your wrong answers, but *why* you got them wrong
- Track your scores to see if you're crossing the 120–130 score range (safe zone)

6. Revise Intelligently

In your final month:

- Revise all marked/saved questions

- Focus on topics with a high error rate
- Go over emergency management, clinical ethics, and prescription writing

7. Stay Updated and Stay Calm

Keep an eye on updates from the GMC, especially any changes in guidelines or format. Stay active in Telegram/Reddit PLAB groups where candidates share recalls and tips.

PLAB 2 Preparation Strategy

PLAB 2 is an OSCE-style exam that tests your ability to apply clinical knowledge in real-life scenarios. Unlike PLAB 1, this is a practical assessment with 18 stations, each lasting 8 minutes, where you'll interact with actors playing patients. Preparing well is crucial, especially since the PLAB 2 pass rate is around 60–75%, depending on the candidate's background.

1. Understand the Exam Format Clearly

Here's what PLAB 2 looks like:

- **18 scenarios (stations):** Including history taking, examination, counselling, and ethics
- **8 minutes per station**, with a 2-minute reading time before each
- Assesses communication, interpersonal skills, and clinical management

2. Choose a Reliable Coaching/Academy (Optional but Helpful)

If you're preparing in India or abroad, enrolling in an academy can offer structure and mock stations. Some well-known options:

- Samson Academy (UK-based)
- Aspire Academy
- PLAB Coach (online)

3. Practise Stations Regularly with a Study Partner

PLAB 2 is **skill-based**, so practice is everything. Find a study partner and:

- Simulate stations daily
- Use stopwatches for strict time management
- Focus on clear, empathetic communication
- Take feedback seriously and refine your approach

4. Use the Right Practice Materials

- **GMC PLAB 2 Blueprint**
- **NICE Guidelines** – for clinical decision-making
- **PLAB 2 Recall Groups** – join Telegram/Reddit groups where real scenarios are discussed
- **PLABable and common scenarios PDFs**- Practice high-yield stations like: Angry patient, Breaking bad news, Chest pain, Abdominal pain

5. Master Communication & Empathy

Most candidates fail not because of wrong medical knowledge, but due to poor communication. Practice:

- Active listening
- Reflecting the patient's emotions
- Explaining clearly without jargon
- Managing time within 8 minutes

6. Use Mock Exams & Feedback Loops

Attend at least **1-2 full mock exams**:

- Simulates the real pressure
- Helps with pacing and confidence
- Exposes gaps in your approach

7. Final Month Revision Plan

- Revise top 50–60 scenarios
- Rehearse emergency stations and communication-heavy cases
- Don't neglect basic skills like hand hygiene, explaining diagnosis, etc.
- Rest well before the exam day

Read more: [PLAB Exam Syllabus: Understand PLAB Exam Format & Blueprint](#)

PLAB Study Plan – 3-Month vs 6-Month Timeline

Planning your PLAB exam preparation begins with one critical decision: how much time do you need? While some aspirants prefer a fast-track 3-month plan, others benefit from a more spaced-out 6-month timeline.

Below is a detailed comparison of both study plans, helping you find the right pace based on your schedule,

background, and readiness.

3-Month PLAB Preparation Plan (Intensive Track)

This plan is best suited for candidates who are already familiar with clinical medicine or have recently graduated. It demands 5–6 focused hours of study every day.

Month 1: Build a Solid Foundation

- Focus on high-weightage clinical subjects: Cardiology, Respiratory, Neurology, Gastroenterology.
- Study GMC guidelines and understand UK-based clinical decision-making.
- Practice 80–100 MCQs daily from a reliable question bank like PLABable.
- Begin maintaining a revision notebook or flashcards.

Month 2: Deep Dive + Test Yourself

- Cover systems like Endocrine, Renal, Reproductive, Psychiatry, and Ethics.
- Take weekly mock exams and analyze performance in detail.
- Begin timed MCQ practice sessions to build exam stamina.
- Use spaced repetition for complex concepts.

Month 3: Revision & Mock Simulation

- Focus on revising weaker topics and revisiting all your notes.
- Attempt full-length mocks (3–4 per week) under timed conditions.
- Read explanations, not just answers — focus on clinical reasoning.
- Avoid new material at this stage. Focus only on refinement.

6-Month PLAB Preparation Plan (Moderate Track)

Ideal for working professionals, parents, or students with ongoing academic or job responsibilities. You can study for 2–3 hours on weekdays and more on weekends.

Months 1–2: Set the Foundation

- Begin with core systems (Cardiology, Respiratory, Neuro) and GMC Good Medical Practice guidelines.
- Start slow with 30–50 MCQs/day and increase gradually.

- Watch explainer videos or attend live/online classes for complex topics.
- Make summaries of topics, and highlight “UK way of practice” points.

Months 3–4: Expand Your Knowledge

- Focus on subjects like Dermatology, Rheumatology, OBGYN, Paediatrics, Emergency Medicine, and Ethics.
- Integrate your learning by linking related systems (e.g., Endocrine + Reproductive).
- Gradually shift to 70–100 MCQs per day.
- Begin mock testing biweekly and track performance.

Month 5: Begin Revision Cycles

- Complete your syllabus by early Month 5.
- Start active recall, flashcards, spaced repetition, and weekly mocks.
- Group study (online/offline) may help in topic retention and peer discussion.

Month 6: Final Prep & Exam Simulation

- Simulate real test conditions 2–3 times a week.
- Focus on improving timing and minimizing errors.
- Revise only from your notes – no new material.
- Stay consistent with ethics, statistics, and clinical judgment topics.

Tips to Pass PLAB on the First Attempt

Passing the PLAB exam in the first attempt is very achievable with the right planning and mindset. Whether you're preparing for PLAB 1 or PLAB 2, these smart tips can help boost your PLAB passing rate and make your preparation more effective.

1. Understand the Exam Blueprint

Before you begin, go through the official GMC PLAB blueprint. It shows you what skills and knowledge are tested.

- Focus on UK-style clinical practice, patient safety, and decision-making.
- Align your preparation with the exam's real-life scenarios.

2. Stick to Reliable Study Resources

Avoid overloading yourself with too many books. Stick to:

- **PLABable** (for PLAB 1 MCQs)
- **NICE Guidelines** (UK-standard treatment plans)
- **Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine**
- **Samson Notes** or **Academy guides** (especially for PLAB 2)

3. Practice Daily – Not Randomly

Consistency beats cramming. Set a daily routine:

- Solve 50–100 MCQs daily for PLAB 1
- Practice 2–3 OSCE scenarios for PLAB 2
- Review and revise the topics you get wrong

4. Focus on Communication for PLAB 2

Many candidates fail PLAB 2 not due to a lack of medical knowledge, but because of:

- Poor communication
- Rushed explanations
- Lack of empathy

5. Join Active PLAB Communities

Whether you're in India or abroad, join:

- Telegram groups for recall questions
- Facebook/Reddit PLAB communities
- Online coaching discussions

6. Use Timed Mock Tests

Mock exams prepare you for real pressure. Try:

- PLABable mocks for PLAB 1
- OSCE circuits (online or in the UK/India) for PLAB 2

7. Revise Smartly in the Last Month

- Focus on high-yield systems: cardio, neuro, respiratory, emergency
- Revise all flagged questions
- Don't study new material in the final 7 days
- Practice active recall and clinical judgement questions

8. Avoid Common Pitfalls

- Don't depend on free material without verifying
- Avoid memorising scripts for PLAB 2
- Don't underestimate time pressure – practise under real conditions

Top Resources for PLAB Exam

Choosing the right study material is crucial for effective PLAB exam preparation. Whether you're targeting PLAB 1 or PLAB 2, here are the most trusted resources that thousands of international medical graduates rely on.

Top Resources for PLAB Exam – Quick Comparison:

Resource Name	Use For	Key Features
PLABable	PLAB 1	MCQ bank, mock tests, explanations, performance tracking
NICE Guidelines	PLAB 1 & 2	Official UK clinical protocols and treatment guidelines
Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine	PLAB 1	Concise medical concepts, quick reference
Samson Academy Notes/Videos	PLAB 2	OSCE scenarios, communication, and ethics coverage
PLAB 1 Recall Groups (Telegram/Facebook)	PLAB 1	Real recall questions, updates from recent exams
PLAB 2 Mock Circuits (UK/Online)	PLAB 2	OSCE station simulation, timed feedback sessions
GMC PLAB Blueprint	Both	Official guideline of topics, skills assessed
Study Partners/Role-play Groups	PLAB 2	Peer practice, feedback, case discussion

Read more: [PLAB Accepted Countries 2025: Complete Guide for Medical Graduates](#)

Conclusion

Preparing for the PLAB exam may seem overwhelming at first, but with the right strategy, resources, and consistency, success is well within reach. Whether you're aiming to improve your PLAB 1 pass rate or crack PLAB 2 in your first attempt, following a step-by-step plan tailored to your timeline makes all the difference. Focus on understanding UK clinical standards, practising mock tests, and refining your communication skills. Thousands of international medical graduates have achieved GMC registration; you can too with the right PLAB exam preparation.

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