

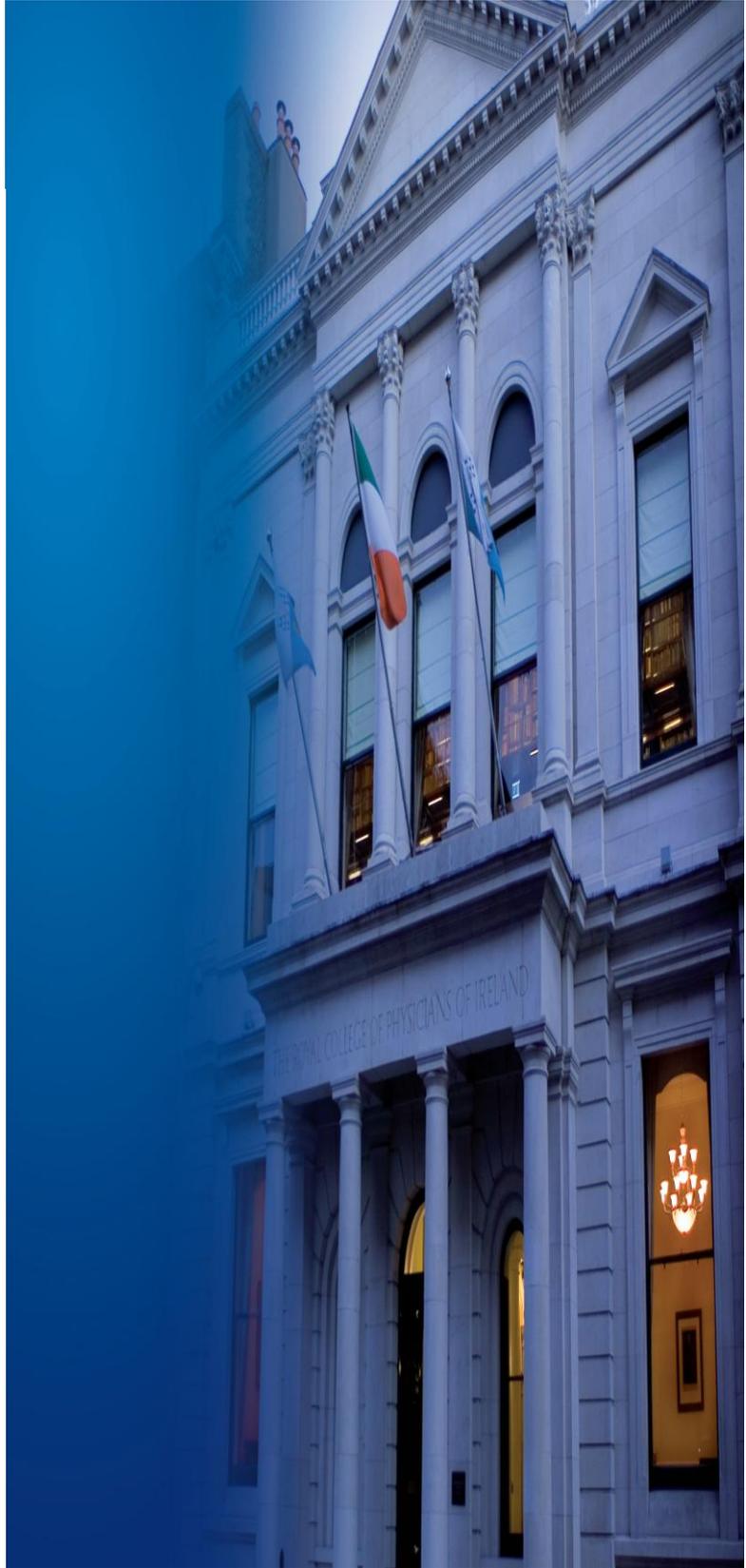


ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Regulations and Information for Candidates

Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry (DCP)

2013 Edition



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1. Introduction

The Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry (DCP) is a post-graduate qualification of particular interest to General Practitioners who wish to have their competence in the area of psychiatric care recognised. A Conjoint Diploma, it is awarded by both the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

The purpose of this examination is to give the recognition for competence in psychiatric care to doctors working in general practice. The examination is also suitable for vocational trainees, who are interested in taking the M.R.C. Psych at a later stage. The level of knowledge and skill required is for good primary care. The emphasis will be placed on a candidate's ability to consider the relevant information and to arrive at judgements on relevant investigations, diagnosis and management. Particular attention will be paid to those psychiatric conditions which are common in primary care.

2. Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry (DCP)

2.1 Entry requirements

Candidates must possess a medical qualification. It is necessary to forward a certified copy of your original diploma of medical qualification.

Candidates are eligible to sit the examination if they have both:

- (a) Held an approved training post in a department or hospital specialising in psychiatry for not less than four months (evidence of this must be obtained from the Consultant in charge).
- (b) Been qualified 18 months at least at the end of the four month training post.

Candidates who have attempted this examination on **four** previous occasions, **are not** eligible to re-enter.

2.2 Exemptions

There are no exemptions available for this examination.

2.3 Examination locations

The DCP written examination is held in Dublin. The oral and clinical examinations are held in hospitals throughout the whole island of Ireland.

2.4 Preparation for DCP Examinations

All DCP examinations are conducted in the English language.

A copy of past DCP essay exam papers (for the last five years) is available to purchase. There is a charge of €15 for these past papers and they can be ordered online at www.rcpi.ie.

2.5 Syllabus

Intending candidates are expected to have a knowledge of the main aspects of psychiatry, as they relate to Primary Care.

This will include familiarity with the following points:

1. The method of taking a psychiatric history, and conducting a mental state examination.
2. The nature and prevalence occurring in primary care of psychoneuroses, including anxiety disorders and mood disorders. This should include an awareness of the many presentations including somatic presentations of these disorders in the Primary Care setting.
3. The manifestations of the major functional psychoses, especially Schizophrenia and the Affective Psychoses.
4. The main features of substance-related disorders. Special emphasis is placed on the recognition of hidden alcoholism in general practice together with strategies for successful intervention and the main treatment methods used.
5. The management of psychiatric emergencies as they present in the community.
6. The assessment of suicidal risk and the management of the suicidal patient.
7. The psychiatric disorders of pregnancy and the puerperium.
8. The diagnosis and management of normal and abnormal grief reactions.
9. The assessment of sexual dysfunction and its appropriate management.
10. The principal manifestations and management of psychological dysfunction in children and adolescents. Knowledge of the procedures to be adopted relating to sexual abuse.
11. Knowledge of eating disorders.
12. The main manifestations of acute and chronic confusional states, particularly in the elderly. The recognition and treatment of functional disorder in the elderly. Familiarity with the management approaches to dementia in Primary Care.
13. Some knowledge of Forensic Psychiatry especially as it pertains to committal of patients to hospital.
14. The development of personality and its disorders.
15. The therapeutic potential of the doctor-patient relationship and the main elements of psychotherapy including psychodynamic psychotherapy, behaviour therapy and cognitive therapy.
16. The appropriate referral of patients for specialist psychiatric opinion and their appropriate referral to counselling and support groups, voluntary organisation and statutory agencies in the community.
17. The psychopharmacology of those psychotropic agents commonly used in Primary Care.

3. How to enter the DCP Examination

3.1 Method of application

All exam application forms together with supplemental documentation and payment must be completed online. The method of payment is by credit card and debit/Laser cards.

Applications will not be accepted by the College before the published opening date or after the published closing date.

Candidates must upload certified copies of their original diplomas (first time entrants only) of Medical Qualification, which must be adjudged to be satisfactory to the College. Copy diplomas must be attested by

- an Garda Siochana (police)
- Solicitor
- Commissioner for Oaths
- the Issuing Authority

The receipt of the retention fee issued by the Medical Council is not acceptable as evidence of registration. Official translations will only be accepted if they have been prepared and/or authenticated by:

- (i) the issuing University or Medical School
- (ii) an Irish or British Consulate
- (iii) the candidate's own Embassy or High Commissioner

Application checklist:

- Online application form
- Proof of Qualification – attested copy of original diploma of medical qualification
- Consultant's Psychiatrist letter attesting candidates four months approved training post
- Up-to-date curriculum vitae

The candidate's full name must be given at the time of entry to the examination and must agree with the name(s) given on Medical Council documentation. The name you provide will be used on all official correspondence (such as diplomas, qualifications and certificates) issued by RCPI. Candidates who change their name(s) by marriage or deed poll must upload documentary proof of this, if they wish to be admitted to the examination in their new name.

3.2 Visas

If a candidate requires a visa to sit an examination, it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure the visa application is made in sufficient time before the examination date for which it has been sought. The College has no influence in granting or refusing visas. A refund will **not** be given if a candidate is unable to attend the examination as a result of a visa related problem.

3.3 Examination fees

The fees payable on entry to the DCP examinations are published annually.

No candidate will be permitted to take any part of the examination unless all outstanding fees are paid in full.

3.4 Withdrawal from the examination

Notice of withdrawal from an examination must be given in writing to the College. A refund less 10% will be made if written notice of withdrawal is received by the College on or before the closing date of entry to the examination. No fee will be held over to a future examination unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances. Each request will be dealt with on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Dean of Examinations, whose decision is final. Documentary evidence is required in all cases. Any request (accompanied by supporting evidence) must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the date of examination if it is to be considered.

3.5 Examination Registration

Registration will take place 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination. Passport, equivalent national identity card or drivers licence must be produced at all parts of each examination.

4. DCP Examination Format

The examination is held over **two** days and the examination consists of:

- one Essay style paper
- one Multiple True False (MTF) style paper
- one Clinical Examination
- one Oral Examination

The essay and MTF section of the examination will, where possible, be held in The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland on the first day of the exam, which normally takes place on a Thursday. The oral/clinical exam will be held at psychiatric hospitals within Ireland on the second day, normally a Friday morning. Candidates must sit all four components of the examination.

4.1 The Essay paper

The Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry essay paper contains four questions. Candidates must answer one question from Section A and one question from Section B. One question will be in the form of a clinical vignette, with a psychiatric problem to be assessed and managed. Time allowed for the paper is 90 minutes.

Candidates must complete their handwritten answers in the candidate answer booklet, issued at the start of the exam, in either pen or pencil. Answers should be concise and handwriting clearly legible.

The MTF paper will follow on immediately.

4.2 Multiple True False (MTF) paper

There are a total of 20 MTF questions with 5 stems in each question, bringing the total to 100 questions.

- The examination is 60 minutes in duration There is no negative marking so it is advised to attempt all questions.

An example of the MTF answer sheet is shown on page 8.

Candidates are expected to complete lines 1 to 20, only.

It is important that a candidate fully understands how to complete the answer sheet before they sit the examination. Please see detailed instructions at point 4.4 below.

Every question is carefully reviewed and assessed to ensure that the standard is fair and consistent at every examination.

4.3 The Clinical/Oral Examination

The Oral and Clinical examinations are normally held on a Friday morning the day following the written component of the examination. Two examiners will examine each candidate. The clinical examination will consist of a long case and will be followed by the oral examination.

The candidate will be permitted 50 minutes to examine a patient for the long case with a further 10 minutes alone before a discussion of the case with the two examiners. Ten minutes will be allocated to the presentation of the case to the examiners followed by 10 minutes during which the candidate will interview the patient in the presence of the examiners. Finally, 10 minutes will be spent on the Oral examination. The total time spent with the examiners will be 30 minutes.

Candidates must pass the Clinical exam component in order to pass the overall exam.

4.4 How to complete a MTF answer sheet

An example of the MTF answer sheet is shown below. The completed answer sheet is computer scored which means the following instructions must be complied with fully, otherwise they may be rejected by the scoring machine.

- 4.4.1 Use only the PENCIL (Grade 2B) supplied. Answers in ink or a different grade of pencil cannot be read by the computer.
- 4.4.2 Candidates may rub out an answer by using the eraser provided. To avoid too many erasures on the answer sheets, candidates are advised to indicate their answers in the question book in the first instance, before transferring them to the answer sheets. Remember to allow sufficient time to do so.
- 4.4.3 Do not fold or crease the answer sheets.
- 4.4.4 At the end of the examination, the question books and answer sheets must be left on the desk. On no account should they be removed from the examination centre.

4.5 Sample MTF answer sheet

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Candidate Name	
Examination	
Subject	Date

▼	Candidate Number
□	c0> c1> c2> c3> c4> c5> c6> c7> c8> c9>
□	c0> c1> c2> c3> c4> c5> c6> c7> c8> c9>
□	c0> c1> c2> c3> c4> c5> c6> c7> c8> c9>
□	c0> c1> c2> c3> c4> c5> c6> c7> c8> c9>

This document is designed to be machine readable.

Mark T for True

Please use the pencil supplied.

F for False

If you make a mistake use an eraser.

D for Don't Know

DO NOT MARK BOXES LIKE THIS:

	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	31	<input type="checkbox"/>								
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	32	<input type="checkbox"/>								
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	33	<input type="checkbox"/>								
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	34	<input type="checkbox"/>								
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	35	<input type="checkbox"/>								
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	36	<input type="checkbox"/>								
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	37	<input type="checkbox"/>								
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	38	<input type="checkbox"/>								
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	39	<input type="checkbox"/>								
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	40	<input type="checkbox"/>								
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	41	<input type="checkbox"/>								
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	42	<input type="checkbox"/>								
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	43	<input type="checkbox"/>								
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	44	<input type="checkbox"/>								
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	45	<input type="checkbox"/>								
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	46	<input type="checkbox"/>								
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	47	<input type="checkbox"/>								
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	48	<input type="checkbox"/>								
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	49	<input type="checkbox"/>								
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	50	<input type="checkbox"/>								
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	51	<input type="checkbox"/>								
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	52	<input type="checkbox"/>								
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	53	<input type="checkbox"/>								
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	54	<input type="checkbox"/>								
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	55	<input type="checkbox"/>								
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	56	<input type="checkbox"/>								
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	57	<input type="checkbox"/>								
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	58	<input type="checkbox"/>								
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	59	<input type="checkbox"/>								
30	<input type="checkbox"/>	60	<input type="checkbox"/>								

4.6 Examination rules and guidelines

- 4.6.1 These Regulations apply to all candidates for examinations of the College. Candidates should note that by applying to enter to sit an examination, they are deemed to have understood and agreed to comply by these Regulations.
- 4.6.2 Candidates are advised to allow for any transport delays when planning time of arrival at the examination centre. The College cannot guarantee candidates will be permitted to enter the examination centre after the start of the examination.
- 4.6.3 Candidates should assemble outside the examination centre for registration at least 30 minutes before the start of the examination and will not enter until instructed by an invigilator(s).
- 4.6.4 Candidates will **not** be permitted entry into the examination centre if they arrive 30 minutes after the start of the examination.
- 4.6.5 Candidates **must** have their personal identity card and notification email with them at **all** MRCPI/Diploma Examinations as proof of identity. A passport or drivers licence may be accepted if the candidate's name is stated in the same manner as on their primary medical degree. Candidates will **not** be admitted to the examination unless they produce photographic identification.
- 4.6.6 Candidates should note that drugs will almost always be referred to by their UK approved names (National Formulary) rather than their trade names. Biochemical and other measurements will be expressed in SI units.
- 4.6.7 Candidates are not permitted to bring into the examination centre, mobile phones, pagers, laptop computers, palm pilots, calculators, text books, documents or items of any kind other than those specifically allowed for that particular examination and previously notified to them.
- Any candidate found to be in possession of such a device during the examination will receive a verbal warning from the exam invigilator. A written report will be drafted and signed by the invigilator and countersigned by a witness to the event. This report will be forwarded to the Dean of Examinations. If the Dean considers the event to be a serious infringement of the exam regulations, the candidate will be advised that he/she is suspended from the exam. This will result in exam failure, the loss of the exam fee and possible exclusion from re-entry to future exams.
- 4.6.8 Candidates are **not** permitted to have their bags and/or other personal items at their desks during the examination. Invigilators will direct candidates to a secure area for personal items to be deposited for the duration of the examination.
- 4.6.9 Question papers are individually numbered with Examination Numbers at the top right hand corner.
- 4.6.10 Candidates must ensure they are sitting at the correct desk and their Examination Number corresponds to the desk number.
- 4.6.11 Candidates must place their Identity Card at the top right hand corner of the desk to enable the invigilators to carry out a check during the exam.
- 4.6.12 Candidates must use the pencil provided when filling out the answer sheet.

- 4.6.13 It is recommended that candidates initially indicate their answer against the questions in the questions box in the question paper. Candidates should leave sufficient time to transfer their answers to the answer sheet.
- 4.6.14 Rough work paper is not provided and candidates must confine notes to the question paper.
- 4.6.15 Candidates are not permitted to remove the question paper or image booklet from the examination hall nor are they allowed to copy out questions from the paper.
- 4.6.16 It is strictly forbidden for candidates to talk or attempt in any way to communicate with other candidates while the exam is in progress.
- 4.6.17 Pencil in the boxes on the answer sheet neatly and boldly. Completely fill in the area within the box. The scoring machine has been programmed to ignore erasures, which can leave smudges. Faint responses and those boxes that are only partially filled may be ignored by the scoring machine. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure only a single clear response is recorded for each question.
- 4.6.18 Smudges may be caused by dirty erasers. Cleaning can be accomplished by rubbing the eraser against any clean part of the question book. Candidates should inform an invigilator if they are concerned about the appearance of their erasures.
- 4.6.19 If a candidate wishes to leave the examination early, they must raise their hand and wait for an invigilator to collect the paper. Candidates **cannot** leave the examination hall 30 minutes before the end of the examination. The College cannot take responsibility for lost or mislaid papers.
- 4.6.20 At the end of the examination, candidates must stop writing when instructed to do so by the invigilator and remain in their seat until the exam paper and answer sheet have been collected. Any candidate continuing to write after being instructed to stop will have their examination number noted. Their behaviour will be reported to the Dean of Examinations who will make a decision on further action.
- 4.6.21 Smoking is not permitted in any part of the examination centre. Candidates will not be permitted to leave the building for a smoke break during the examination.
- 4.6.22 Toilet breaks are permitted during the examination, but in an effort to minimise disruption candidates are requested to visit the toilet before the exam commences. Candidates visiting the toilet during the exam will be escorted by an invigilator.
- 4.6.23 Candidates are advised to provide their own refreshments during the examination, bearing in mind that hot food is not permitted.
- 4.6.24 Any candidate acting in breach of any of the above Regulations, or misbehaving in any way, may be suspended from the examination or be deemed to have failed the examination. If an infringement of the College Regulations is deemed to be particularly severe, the candidate concerned may be **permanently** disbarred from entering any future College examinations.

5. Fire Evacuation

- 5.1 The emergency exits will be pointed out to candidates during the announcements prior to the commencement of the examination.

- 5.2 All alarms should be treated as an emergency unless otherwise advised. If the alarm is sounded a College staff member will be responsible for the evacuation of the examination venue.
- 5.3 Candidates should note that they remain subject to examination rules during the evacuation and should not communicate or have contact with other candidates. Candidates must not attempt to collect personal belongings.
- 5.4 All students should cease writing and leave their answer booklets on the desk when instructed by a College staff member.
- 5.5 The College staff member will instruct the invigilators to act as 'Fire Marshalls' and these marshals will be responsible for leading their designated sections of candidates from the examination centre.
- 5.6 The Fire Marshall should collect the exam register and evacuate the candidates to the assembly point using the emergency exits.
- 5.7 Do not use the lift.
- 5.8 When assembled the Fire Marshall will check the candidates against the examinations register.
- 5.9 If it is possible to resume the examination, candidates will be instructed to endorse their scripts with the words 'examination interrupted' indicating the time of the interruption and the time of resumption. Candidates will be allowed compensatory time equivalent to the period from the time the alarm sounded to the resumption of the examination, plus 10 minutes for re-reading the examination paper and settling back into the examination. The invigilator will inform candidates of the revised finishing time for the examination.
- 5.10 A written report of the evacuation will be filed by the College staff member and forwarded to the Dean of Examinations.
- 5.11 A delay of more than thirty minutes will automatically require a re-scheduling of the examination concerned. In this case, invigilators will announce to the students that they should contact the Examinations Department regarding alternative examination arrangements. Students may then leave.

6. Code of Conduct

This code shall apply to all candidates for examinations of the College. Candidates should note by applying to enter to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to comply by this code. Misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- 6.1 Introduction into any examination of materials other than those specifically permitted for the examination.
- 6.2 Any attempt to communicate with another candidate or any person other than an invigilator on duty.
- 6.3 Any attempt to gain access to or plagiarise the work of another candidate.
- 6.4 Any attempt to gain or pass on information with regard to the content of the examination in advance of the date of the examination.

- 6.5 Impersonation of a candidate.
- 6.6 Bribery of another candidate or examination official.
- 6.7 Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour during an examination.
- 6.8 Failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator or other examination official.
- 6.9 Falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification.

6.1.1 Report procedure

Suspected misconduct may be reported to the College by examiners, invigilators, candidates, patients and any other person who becomes aware of suspected misconduct.

Where an invigilator suspects a candidate of violation of examination rules and guidelines, they will:

- (a) Confiscate any unauthorised material in the possession of the candidate.
- (b) Make a note of the time when the alleged infringement was discovered. An invigilator will ask another invigilator to act as a witness to the alleged infringement and countersign the note to confirm this.
- (c) Allow the candidate(s) to continue the examination. Ejection from the examination centre will only take place in the event of a candidate(s) causing disruption to other candidates.
- (d) Inform the candidate(s) at the end of the examination that a written report of the incident will be submitted to the Dean of Examinations.
- (e) Within three working days of the examination, the invigilator will submit a written report on the alleged incident together with any confiscated materials to the Dean of Examinations.

6.1.2 Investigation procedure

The Dean of Examinations will review the report of the alleged case of misconduct and will determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a case to be answered after consulting with other members of College staff where necessary. In cases deemed to be of a very minor or technical nature, a letter of reprimand will be issued, and no further action is taken.

In all other cases the Dean of Examinations will inform the candidate in writing of the allegations that have been made about them within 10 working days of receiving a report of alleged misconduct. The candidate will be invited to reply to the allegation of misconduct.

The candidate will provide their response in writing to the allegation within 10 working days from the date of the Dean of Examinations letter. If no response is received within 10 working days, a warning letter will be sent. If no response to this warning letter is received within another 10 working days, the file will be sent to the College Executive for a final decision along with a recommendation of an appropriate penalty.

Where a candidate admits in writing to the allegations, full details of the case shall be passed to the College Executive to formally consider the case. The candidate will have the opportunity to include with their response a written statement which may be considered by the Executive. On full review of the case, the Executive will make a final decision, together with a recommendation of an appropriate penalty. The candidate will be notified of the Executive's decision in writing.

7. Adapted Examination Arrangements

Any candidate who has a physical disability, learning disability or any other special need that they believe could affect their performance in an examination, may be entitled to adapted examination arrangements. The purpose of any specific arrangement is to compensate for any restrictions imposed by a disability without impairing the validity of the examination. All such candidates should inform the Examinations Department at the time of application of their circumstances in writing, together with a consultants report to support their application. Failure to include this information at the time of application may affect the arrangements that can be put in place in time for the examination. The information provided is treated strictly confidentially.

8. Examination Results

The College processes the marking of the Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry Examination as quickly as possible, consistent with ensuring accuracy, fairness and a stable pass standard. Candidates who are unsuccessful in the exam will be issued individual feedback letters giving detailed breakdown of performance in each section of the exam.

- Examination results for successful candidates **only** will be posted on the College website, approximately one working week after the date of the examination. Under no circumstances will examination results be given over the telephone, by fax, email or by visiting the College in person.
- All result letters will be posted to candidates shortly thereafter.
- The result letter will be sent to the address as per the candidate's online application.
- Please refrain from telephoning the College regarding your result during this period, as this will delay the process.

8.1 Recheck procedure and appeals policy

Candidates can request a recheck of their written examination results in DCP. There is a fee of €150 for this procedure. This charge will be refunded if a recheck changes the overall examination result to a pass mark.

Please complete the recheck application form which is available on our website www.rcpi.ie and return to the Examinations Department within four weeks of the results release date.

As the Clinical/Oral examination is a 'live' exam there is no facility for re-checking Clinical/Oral examination results/grading.

For details of our appeals policy, please go to our website www.rcpi.ie.