Regulations and Information for Candidates

MRCPI General Medicine

2018 Edition
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1. Introduction

Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (College) is governed by the By-Laws of the College. The following Regulations apply to all candidates entering for the MRCPI examinations. Any decision on the interpretation of these Regulations made by the College is binding. The acceptance of any application is at the sole discretion of the College. Every candidate for the Membership of the College must pass all parts of the Membership Examination unless exemption has been granted as indicated in section 3.2 below.

The MRCPI Part I examination is designed to assess a candidate’s knowledge and understanding both of the basic sciences relevant to medical practice and of the common or important disorders, to a level appropriate for entry to specialist training. The College conducts the MRCPI Part I examination in General Medicine and Paediatrics. Candidates who wish to become Members of the College must pass this examination in order to progress to the MRCPI Part II Examinations.

The MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written Examination consists of two papers which pose questions about the diagnosis and management of clinical conditions, to a level appropriate for entry to specialist training. Candidates who wish to become Members of the College must pass this examination in order to progress to the MRCPI Part II Clinical Examination.

The Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI) Part II General Medicine Clinical Examination is available to candidates who have successfully passed MRCPI Part I and MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written. This Examination is held throughout the island of Ireland and in a number of overseas centres. Please refer to the website www.rcpi.ie which is updated regularly with local centre information.

2. MRCPI Qualification

The MRCPI Part I examination is held in Dublin as well as a number of overseas centres. Details of these centres can be accessed via the website at www.rcpi.ie. Candidates who wish to apply to sit the MRCPI Part I General Medicine will not be accepted for the examination before the expiry of 6 months from the date given on their diploma of medical qualification.

Candidates are not required to have undergone training in specific posts before entry to the Part I examination, but the College recommends that candidates prepare by spending time
gaining clinical experience in suitable hospital posts, studying up-to-date clinical textbooks and by reading current medical journals. In addition, it is recommended that candidates study section 5 in this booklet dealing with single best answer question papers.

The maximum number of times a candidate may attempt each Part of the MRCPI exam is six. Following a sixth unsuccessful attempt, a candidate will only be allowed a further attempt if their trainer/educational supervisor confirms that the candidate has demonstrated an improvement in knowledge and skill, so that a pass result is highly likely at the next attempt.

From 1 January 2019, if a candidate does not attend an MRCPI examination and is recorded as absent, this will be recorded as one attempt. A withdrawal will not be deemed as an attempt.

Transition: Candidates who have already attempted an exam five or six times as of 31 December 2018 will be permitted two additional attempts at that exam. Candidates who have attempted an exam more than six times as of 31 December 2018 will be permitted one additional attempt.

Candidates must pass the Part I examination, within six years from their first attempt, before applying to enter the MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written examination, unless they have been granted an exemption. Candidates have 6 years from the date of successfully passing MRCPI Part I General Medicine in which to obtain MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written. There will be no extension to this 6 year period. MRCPI Part I General Medicine examination will need to be retaken if more than 6 years has elapsed since passing Part I.

Successful candidates then have an additional three years from the date of passing MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written in which to pass MRCPI Part II General Medicine Clinical. There will be no extension to this 3 year period. The MRCPI Part II Written General Medicine examination will need to be retaken if more than 3 years has elapsed since passing Part II Written.

Every candidate for MRCPI Part II Written membership exams may be asked to submit testimonials of his/her professional qualification and character references from two Medical Practitioners of at least 5 years standing and statements on the approved form regarding:

- Professional experience acceptable to the Education and Examination Committee
- Not keeping an open shop for the sale of medicine
2.1 Qualification map

MRCPI Part 1 Examination

Fail
- Have had fewer than 6 attempts
- Have had more than 6 attempts

Pass

Pass

Pass (both exams)
- Have had fewer than 6 attempts
- Have had more than 6 attempts

No further attempts allowed unless further educational evidence can be provided

Pass (both exams)
- No further attempts allowed unless further educational evidence can be provided

Fail (1 or both)

MRCPI Part 2 written and Part 2 Clinical examinations taken

MRCP Conferring
3. Applications

3.1 Entry requirements

Candidates for the MRCPI General Medicine Part I examination must have received their primary medical degree and a minimum of 6 months must have passed between the date of their primary medical degree and the date of the exam.

Candidates must have passed MCRPI Part I General Medicine Examination or Part I Paediatrics Examination or have obtained an exemption (see section 3.2) to apply to sit MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written Examination.

Candidates must pass the Part II General Medicine Written examination before applying to enter the MRCPI Part II General Medicine Clinical examination, unless they have been granted an exemption.

3.2 Exemptions

Applications claiming exemption must be accompanied by adequate documentary evidence.

The following qualifications can be considered eligible for exemption from MRCPI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MRCPI (Part I only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ MRCP(UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ MRCP(Ch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ MRCPCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ MRACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ FRCP(C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ FCP(SA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ MRCPsych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Arab Boards in Medicine and Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Saudi Boards in Medicine and Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Kuwait Boards of Medicine and Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Oman Medical Specialty Board in Medicine and Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ FCP&amp;S in Medicine and Paediatrics (Pakistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ The American Boards in General Internal Medicine and Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ M. Med.(Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that partial completion of any of these qualifications – e.g., MRCP (UK) Part I – is not sufficient for exemption.
Candidates claiming exemption must accompany their application with attested/certified proof of this qualification. Documents can be attested by any one of the following:

- An Garda Siochana (Irish police force)
- The issuing University or Medical School
- A solicitor/ notary public/ lawyer
- A Commissioner for oaths
- An Irish or British Consulate
- Your Embassy or High Commissioner

### 3.3 Examination locations

The MRCPI General Medicine written examinations are held in Dublin together with a number of overseas centres. The MRCPI Part II General Medicine Clinical examination is held in a hospital anywhere within the island of Ireland as well as a number of overseas centres. Please note that clinical exams may be held on any day of the week including Saturday and Sunday. Details of these centres can be accessed via the website at [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie).

### 3.4 Method of application

All exam application forms together with supplemental documentation and payment must be completed online, on the College’s website at [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie). The method of payment is by credit/debit card.

Applications will not be accepted by the College 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. Candidates who are currently registered with the Medical Council in Ireland or the UK may instead submit proof of their Medical Council registration (not needed if already submitted for successful BST application). Copy diplomas must be attested, on the front side, by:

- An Garda Siochana (Irish police force)
- The issuing University or Medical School
- A solicitor/ notary public/ lawyer
- A Commissioner for oaths
• An Irish or British Consulate
• Your Embassy or High Commissioner

The receipt of the retention fee issued by the Medical Council is not acceptable as evidence of registration.

Diplomas in a language other than English must be accompanied by an official translation. Official translations will only be accepted if they have been prepared and/or authenticated by:

• the issuing University or Medical School
• Irish or British Consulate
• the candidate’s own Embassy or High Commissioner

Application checklist:

• Application form
• Proof of Qualification (first-time entrants only)
• Proof of Exempting Qualification (if claiming exemption)
• Passport-style photo (colour, full-face, minimum 100x100 pixels, neutral background) (first-time entrants only)

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.

3.5 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.
3.6 Examination fees

The fees payable on entry to the MRCPI General Medicine Examinations are published annually. Candidates sitting examinations in overseas centres may be required to pay a separate administration fee. Please refer to the website www.rcpi.ie which is updated regularly with local centre information.

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

3.7 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. Refunds will not be made where candidates submit their withdrawal request after the closing date. 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 Director of Examinations, whose decision is final. Documentary evidence is required in all cases. Any request (accompanied by supporting evidence) must be submitted within 2 weeks of the examination date if it is to be considered. For further details, please see the RCPI Cancellation Policy.

3.8 Cancellation Policy

RCPI reserves the right to cancel, reschedule the date, or change the location of an exam. In the event of a reschedule or cancellation by RCPI, the College will endeavour to inform all applicants at least six weeks prior to the exam date. If an exam is cancelled or rescheduled by RCPI, candidates will be offered a full refund or option to transfer to another date if applicable. For further details, please see the RCPI Cancellation Policy.

3.9 Examination Registration

All candidates will be emailed a time to arrive for registration prior to the examination. Please take a careful note of this time as any candidates who arrive after their allocated registration time, will not be permitted to take the examination. Candidates will be admitted to the
examination under the names (surname and first name(s)) as given in the current edition of the Medical Register of Ireland or of the United Kingdom or on their original medical registration certificates or diplomas of medical qualification or official translations of the diplomas. The last name will be taken as the surname. Passport, equivalent national identity card or drivers licence must be produced at all parts of each examination.

For the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting the examination will be required to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, the candidate's face. The College will observe sensitivity and, in specific circumstances, privacy in the visual identification of candidates.
4. MRCPI Part I General Medicine Examination

4.1 Preparation for MRCPI Part I General Medicine Examination

All MRCPI examinations are conducted in the English language.

There is a guideline syllabus to assist with the preparation for the MRCPI Part I General Medicine on the website www.rcpi.ie. The guidelines present a framework of topics which should be covered, but it is not intended to be comprehensive and candidates should not limit their studies solely to these topics.

4.2 Part I General Medicine Blueprint

Each examination will consist of 100 questions in the single best answer style. The questions are selected to achieve a balanced spread of questions across the specialties, the sciences underlying evidence based medical practice, and basic skills required in general medicine. The questions will be on common or important diseases, including medical emergencies. At least 75% of the questions will concern direct clinical care of in-patients and out-patients in hospital medical practice. Correct answers will be within up-to-date guidelines for diagnosis and management. The usual number of questions on each paper, N, by specialties and skills are shown on the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialties and Sciences</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy, Bacteriology, Biochemistry, Ethics, Genetics, Immunology, Metabolic, Physiology, Principles of evidence based practice and Statistics</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>2-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrinology</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haematology</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3 Syllabus

The BST curriculum is fully aligned with the syllabus of the Membership examinations.

### 4.4 Examination Format

The examination is 3 hours in duration and consists of one Single Best Answer (SBA) style paper containing 100 questions to answer. The exam is conducted via Computer Based Testing (CBT).

Each question is equally weighted. There is no negative marking, so you are strongly advised to give a considered response to every question.

The questions will appear in the format of the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage emergencies in medicine</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply knowledge of disease</td>
<td>5-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand mechanisms of disease</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret clinical information</td>
<td>5-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret data</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret images</td>
<td>0-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan investigations</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan non-drug therapy</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan drug therapy</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Infectious diseases                        | 2-8 |
| Nephrology                                 | 5-15 |
| Neurology                                  | 5-15 |
| Ophthalmology in the context of General Medicine | 0-3 |
| Psychiatry                                 | 0-3 |
| Respiratory medicine                       | 5-15 |
| Rheumatology                               | 5-15 |
| Therapeutics and Pharmacology              | 5-15 |
A 55-year-old man presents to the Emergency Department with a one hour history of severe central chest pain which increased over about 15 minutes, spread down his left arm and was since then persistent. He also has nausea and vomiting. He has a long history of chest pain on exertion, which had worsened during the previous week. He is a cigarette smoker.

On examination, he is sweating. His pulse is regular at 100 beats per minute and his blood pressure is 132/84 mmHg. There is a short mid-systolic murmur audible at the apex. There are crackles in both lung fields, left worse than right.

Investigations:
- troponin T not elevated
- creatine kinase 60 U/L (24–195)
- C reactive protein 2 mg/L (<10)
- ECG see IMAGE below

What is the most likely diagnosis?

A. aortic dissection
B. myocardial infarction
C. oesophageal rupture
D. pericarditis
E. pneumothorax

Correct answer B
4.5 The question paper

The General Medicine paper contains questions designed to test the knowledge of the basis of medical practice over a wide area, including elementary statistics and clinical sciences, e.g. anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology, microbiology and pharmacology.

The examination paper will cover elementary and clinical sciences. Questions may be set on relevant principles of cell molecular and membrane biology, immunology, genetics and on biochemistry, as well as anatomical, physiological, microbiological and pharmacological topics.

4.6 Marking

The standard necessary to achieve a pass is set to achieve excellence in physician training. Every question is carefully reviewed and assessed for difficulty. Test equating procedures are applied to every examination, so that the standard is fair and consistent between examinations. The score you receive is not a raw score but has been normalised to achieve a consistent scale and thereby allow easier comparison of your performance between examinations should it be necessary for you to repeat.
5. MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written Examination

5.1 Examination Format

The MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written Examination consists of two papers that pose questions about the diagnosis and management of patients. The examination is five hours in total. Each paper consists of 75 Single Best Answer (SBA) format questions, with 2.5 hours allocated for each paper. Each question consists of an initial stem followed by 5 possible answers, identified A, B, C, D and E. Candidates should select one item they believe to be correct. Every other item in that question must be left blank. Questions may include printed photographic reproduction of clinical findings including retinal photographs, imaging and graphical data or on occasions, pathological material relating to the questions concerned.

The marks of the two papers will be combined. Each correct answer will be awarded 1 mark making a total of 75 available for each paper. There is a total combined mark of 150. Candidates will not be required to pass both papers individually. There is no negative marking; therefore all candidates are encouraged to answer all questions.

The questions will appear in the format of the following example:

Which of the following has the most anti-viral activity?

A. ganciclovir
B. ranitidine
C. danazol
D. amantadine
E. fluconazole

ANSWER: A
5.2 MRCPI Part II General Medicine Written Examination Blueprint

The questions are selected to achieve a balanced spread of questions across the specialties, the sciences underlying medical practice and medical diseases, and basic skills required in general medicine. The questions will be on common or important diseases in hospital medical practice. The categories of the 150 questions used in the Part II Written Examination are determined by the percentages outlined in the table below. The skills will be examined across the specialties and not necessarily within any individual specialty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialties and Sciences</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrinology &amp; Metabolic Medicine</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology &amp; Hepatology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunology &amp; Haematology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious diseases &amp; Genitourinary Medicine</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurology, Ophthalmology &amp; Psychiatry</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oncology &amp; Palliative Care</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nephrology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Medicine</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatology</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutics &amp; Toxicology</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. MRCPI Part II General Medicine
Clinical Examination

6.1 Clinical Examination Format

Two long case stations

You will examine two patients for 25 minutes each. In each, you will be observed for 20
minutes while you take a clinical history and perform a focused and directed examination.
You will present a summary of active problems and differential diagnosis to the examiner.
There will be a verbal notification of timing at 10 minutes. The remaining 5 minutes of the
examination will be dedicated to discussing investigation and management of the patient's
overall clinical problems and aftercare. Your ability to communicate will be tested throughout
these stations by the observed history-taking, your interaction with the patient and your
ability to clearly communicate with the examiner.

Five short case stations

You will be examined by five independent examiners (one in each station) for 10 minutes each
on your ability to elicit and interpret physical signs in various clinical systems. There are two
types of short cases:

1. Clinical cases
2. Communication skills cases

Typically, there will be 4 clinical cases and 1 communication skills case

Clinical Cases

Each clinical case will last 10 minutes. In the first 6 minutes of the examination you will be
instructed to examine the patient (or interact with the communication station’s actor) based
on the patient/actor presentation) and elicit and interpret physical signs. In the remaining 4
minutes of the examination, you should present your findings and discussion of your
management plan with the examiner.

Each case will be examined by one examiner (who remains at this station for the duration of
the examination).
The cases will include patients with medical conditions from the following systems:

- Cardiology
- Respiratory
- Abdominal
- Endocrine
- Dermatology
- Neurology
- Rheumatology

**Communication Skills/Ethics case**

Each communications skills/ethics case will last 10 minutes (with a standard period for observation of 6 minutes, before a 4 minute discussion).

- The candidate will be expected to interact with a simulated patient.
- The candidate will be provided with a written instruction summarising the case.
- Each case will be examined by one examiner (who remains at this station for the duration of the examination).
- The cases will include communication scenarios relating to:
  - Information giving – example: discussing of treatment options with a patient with sexually transmitted infection
  - Breaking bad news – example: telling a person her husband died, or telling a patient he has cancer
  - Consent – example: obtaining consent for treatment from a patient with a mild cognitive impairment
  - Confidentiality – example: maintaining confidentiality under pressure from family members
  - Managing challenging situations – example: discussing organ donation with next of kin of a ventilated patient who has an organ donor card in her pocket but the next of kin objects because it is against his/her religion
  - Ethics – example: telling a colleague that you need to report their drug abuse as they are unsafe to continue to practise
- Candidates should prepare by attending the following courses:
  - Leadership in Clinical Practice 1 course (BST mandatory)
  - Breaking Bad News course (optional)
  - Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners (Medical Council Guide)
  - Good Medical Practice (GMC Guide)
  - [http://www.med.qub.ac.uk/osce/index.html](http://www.med.qub.ac.uk/osce/index.html) for on-line practice
6.2 Marking

The examiners will use standardised marking sheets to record your abilities on a number of different skills including:

- Clinical communication skills (CCS)
- Managing relationships with patients (MRP)
- Physical examination (PE)
- Identifying physical signs (IPS)
- Differential diagnosis (DD)
- Clinical judgment (CJ)
- Maintaining patient safety and quality of care (MPSQ)

Decisions of pass/fail marking are made by the Board of the Part II Clinical Examination after thorough data analysis and rigorous standard setting.
7. Examination rules and guidelines

7.1 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.

7.2 Candidates are advised to allow for any transport delays when planning time of arrival at the examination centre.

7.3 Candidates should assemble outside the examination centre for registration at least one hour before the start of the examination and will not enter until instructed by an invigilator(s).

7.4 Candidates will not be permitted entry into the examination centre if they arrive after the allocated registration period has expired.

7.5 Candidates must have their personal identity card and notification email with them at all MRCPI 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.

7.6 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.

7.7 Candidates are not permitted to bring into the examination centre, mobile phones, smart technology, laptop computers, tablets, 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 Director of Examinations. If the Director 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.
7.8 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.

7.9 Candidates must ensure that they are sitting at the correct station and that the computer number corresponds to the station number allocated.

7.10 It is strictly forbidden for candidates to talk or attempt in any way to communicate with other candidates while the exam is in progress.

7.11 Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination hall until the end of the exam.

7.12 Smoking is not permitted in any part of the examination centre. Candidates will not be permitted to leave the building for a cigarette break during the examination.

7.13 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.

7.14 Candidates are advised to provide their own refreshments during the examination, bearing in mind that hot food is not permitted. All liquids must be in a sealable container.

7.15 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.

7.16 Dress Code for RCPI Clinical Examinations

Dress and appearance are an important aspect of professionalism. For the Clinical component of MRCPI, you should dress in a smart and conservative manner. Your fingernails should be short and clean. You are usually required to wear a short-sleeved shirt or blouse, with no neck-tie, false nails, wrist-watch or wrist jewellery (a plain wedding ring may be acceptable) at examination centres in Ireland.

To facilitate the assessment of non-verbal communication skills and interaction with patients and examiners, RCPI will require exam candidates, for the duration of the examination, to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, their face.
Candidates attending centres in Ireland must come prepared to meet these criteria – failure to comply will mean that you cannot sit the exam, and in these circumstances you will not be eligible for a refund. Centres outside Ireland have not imposed dress requirements at the present time, but where such policies are introduced, candidates will be expected to comply with them.

8. Fire Evacuation

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

8.2 Unless otherwise advised, all alarms should be treated as an emergency. If the alarm is sounded, a College staff member will be responsible for the evacuation of the examination venue.

8.3 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.

8.4 On instruction from the College staff member, all candidates will cease work and leave all exam materials on the desk.

8.5 The College staff member will instruct the invigilators to act as ‘Fire Marshals’ and these marshals will be responsible for leading their designated sections of candidates.

8.6 The Fire Marshal should collect the exam register and evacuate the candidates to the assembly point using the emergency exists.

8.7 Do not use the lift.

8.8 When assembled the Fire Marshal will check the candidates against the examinations register.

8.9 If it is possible to resume the examination, 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 settling back into the examination. Candidates will be informed of the revised finishing time for the examination.

8.10 A written report of the evacuation will be filed by the College staff member and forwarded to the Director of Examinations.
8.11 In the event that it is not possible to resume the exam within a reasonable time period, the examination will be re-scheduled. In this case, invigilators will announce to the candidates that they should contact the Examinations Department regarding alternative examination arrangements. Candidates may then leave.

9. 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:

9.1 Introduction into any examination of materials other than those specifically permitted for the examination.

9.2 Any attempt to communicate with another candidate or any person other than an invigilator on duty.

9.3 Any attempt to gain access to or plagiarise the work of another candidate.

9.4 Any attempt to gain or pass on information with regard to the content of the examination in advance of the date of the examination.

9.5 Impersonation of a candidate.

9.6 Bribery of another candidate or examination official.

9.7 Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour during an examination.

9.8 Failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator or other examination official.

9.9 Falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification.

9.1.1 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 Director 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 Director of Examinations.

9.1.2 Investigation procedure

The Director 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 Director 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 Director 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.
10. 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 consultant’s 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.

11. Examination Results

The College processes the marking of the MRCPI General Medicine examination as quickly as possible, consistent with ensuring accuracy, fairness and a stable pass standard.

For written exams, data files containing candidates’ answers are sent securely from each exam centre to RCPI offices, where they are verified and scored against an answer key. Mathematical performance indicators are then calculated and scrutinised by the Board, to confirm the fairness of every question. The pass mark is approved by the Board of Examiners. Every effort is made to inform candidates of their result before the closing date for receipt of applications for the next available MRCPI Part II Written examination or MRCPI Part II Clinical examination, as appropriate, although admittance to that examination cannot be guaranteed.

For clinical exams, individual feedback letters giving detailed breakdown of performance are prepared for those who do not pass the examination.

- Examination results for successful candidates only will be posted on the College website, approximately four working weeks after the date of the examination. Under no circumstances will examination results be given over the telephone, by fax, or by visiting the College in person.
- All result letters will be posted and/or sent as an email attachment to candidates shortly thereafter.
- Please refrain from telephoning or emailing the College regarding your result during this period, as this will delay the process.
11.1 Recheck procedure and appeals policy

Candidates can request a recheck of their examination results in the Part I or Part II Written MRCPI examination. 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. Exam marks are generated by a rigorous process with multiple safeguards, and are also reviewed by the Examinations Board before the results are released. Given the nature of single best answer questions, the quality assurance measures undertaken by the Board, and the exam being conducted via computer based testing, the margin for error is negligible and therefore it is highly unlikely that a recheck will result in a change to an exam result.

Please complete the recheck application form which is available on The Physician Network on the RCPI website and return to the Examinations Department within four weeks of the results release date.

As the Clinical examination is a ‘live’ exam there is no facility for re-checking Clinical Examination results/grading. However should a candidate wish to get clarification of their detailed feedback letter they should contact the examinations department directly by email (examinations@rcpi.ie) within 10 working days of result letter issue.

For details of our appeals policy, please see Appendix 1.
Appendix 1: The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Examination Appeals Regulations

1 Introduction

1.1 These Regulations apply to all candidates for examinations administered by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland from September 2012 (when these Regulations came into effect). Examinations governed by these regulations are as follows: MRCPI General Medicine Examinations, MRCPI Medicine of Childhood Examinations, MRCPI Obstetrics & Gynaecology Examinations, MFPHMI Examinations, Diploma in Medicine of the Elderly Examination, Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry Examination, Diploma in Obstetrics and Women’s Health Examination.

1.2 Candidates should note that by virtue of entering to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by all relevant regulations, including these Appeals Regulations.

1.3 Throughout these Regulations, the Director of Examinations may delegate any of the duties ascribed to him/her to another appropriate member of College staff.

1.4 Any dispute as to the interpretation of these Regulations shall be referred, in the first instance, to the Director of Examinations and is subject to the general appeals policy of the College whose decision in the matter shall be final.

2 Definitions

2.1 These Regulations are to be used to investigate examination appeals.

2.2 An ‘appeal’ is defined as a request for a review of a decision made by or on behalf of an Examinations Board about the performance in an examination of a candidate subject to 2.3.1 and/or 2.3.2 below.
2.3 A candidate who has attempted any Part or component of an MRCPI examination governed by these regulations may, in the circumstances set out below, have the right of appeal against the result. The only grounds for appeal are that:

2.3.1 There is clear evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) which has adversely affected a candidate’s performance;

2.3.2 There were exceptional circumstances, such as illness or some other extenuating circumstance (for which clear documentary evidence must be provided), which adversely affected a candidate’s performance in the examination. Candidates are advised to submit details of any such circumstances preferably on the day of the examination or in any circumstances within three working days of the examination and not wait until after they receive their results.

2.4 Appeals will not be accepted on the grounds that a candidate:

- Considers his or her efforts were under-marked
- Did not understand or was unaware of the Examination Regulations
- Seeks to question the exercise of professional or academic judgement

2.5 If an appeal is upheld the normal recourse offered is that the attempt at the examination may be expunged from their record and they are entitled to re-sit the examination.

2.6 All candidates should note that it is only in very exceptional extenuating circumstances can a candidates result be amended. Furthermore the Director of Examinations must be satisfied that if a candidate had been able to complete the exam in the normal way/circumstances they would have passed it.

2.7 Any expression of a specific concern about the provision or quality of a service by the RCPI, including issues such as staff conduct, disputes about the regulations, other procedures or the application thereof is defined as a ‘complaint’ and as such will not be considered under these Regulations.

2.8 It is recognised that on occasion it may be initially unclear whether a case constitutes an appeal or a complaint; hence RCPI reserves the right to reclassify appeals to complaints or vice-versa at any stage in proceedings, after consulting with the person appealing or complaining. Such reclassification will always be done so that the matter
can be considered in the most appropriate and fair way, and candidates will not be
required to resubmit their cases following any reclassification.

3 Procedure

3.1 Any appeal shall be made in writing to the Director of Examinations within ten working
days of the despatch of the result to which it relates, and include supporting
documentary evidence including the fee of €250 which will be refunded if the appeal
is upheld. In cases where the appeal is made under 2.3.2 the appeal should be lodged
within three working days.

3.2 Any appeal submitted after these periods must include an explanation and evidence
as to why it could not be submitted sooner, and will only be accepted at the sole
discretion of the Director of Examinations.

3.3 Candidates are assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate
concern through these Appeal Regulations without risk of disadvantage or criticism.
Towards this end, the RCPI recognises the importance of confidentiality when
handling appeals, and will maintain an appellant’s anonymity as far as is possible
during any investigation. However, it will occasionally be necessary to disclose an
appellant’s identity to progress an investigation, and moreover this will be done as a
matter of routine should any hearing by an Appeals Panel be necessary. Candidates
who are not willing for their identity to be disclosed in this way should notify the
Director of Examinations.

3.4 Acknowledgement of receipt of an appeal will be sent to a candidate within five
working days of receipt of the appeal.

3.5 On receipt of an appeal the Director of Examinations or his/her nominee will
investigate and collate all relevant information to ascertain the validity of the appeal
having regard to 3.6 and 3.7 below within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal.

3.6 If it is considered by the Director of Examinations or his/her nominee that the appeal
is frivolous, unsubstantiated or outside the permitted grounds, the candidate will be
notified of this and informed that the appeals procedure is at an end. If it is considered
that the appeal is vexatious or malicious, or that the appellant has used false
information, the appeal procedure will also be at an end but in this instance the Director of Examinations may consider what other action is appropriate.

3.7 If it is considered by the Director of Examinations or his/her nominee that there is a prima facie case in support of the appeal, he/she may arrange for an immediate remedy to be offered to the candidate. Alternatively, if the Director of Examinations or his/her nominee is unable to determine whether there is a prima facie case, or (particularly in the absence of precedent, or in any case involving the possible correction of results and/or marks) decides the appeal requires further investigations, he/she shall refer the appeal to the Chair/Director of the relevant Examinations Board for investigation.

3.8 The Chair/Director of the relevant Examinations Board or their nominated representative will convene an Investigation Team to comprise one member of the Examinations Board to which the appeal refers and one member of another

3.9 The Investigation Team will have ten working days to make a recommendation to the Director of Examinations or his/her nominee from the date of referral by the Director or his/her nominee. In some cases, extra time may be needed to undertake further investigations, in which case the appellant will be informed within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal.

3.10 The Director of Examinations or his/her nominee may or may not accept the recommendation. This decision must be communicated to the appellant within five working days of receipt of the recommendation.

3.11 If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of any appeal considered under paragraph 3.6 and 3.10, they must contact the College Registrar within ten working days of being notified of it to request that their case be reconsidered by an RCPI Appeals Committee.

4 Appeals Process

4.1 The College Executive, on behalf of the College, will be notified by the Registrar that that the notice of appeal has been appropriately lodged.

4.2 The College Executive will arrange for the appeal to proceed, and advise the appellant of the fact, and that the sum of €500 is required to be lodged with the College as an
act of good faith. The fee may be refundable if the appeal is upheld. The appeal will be considered by the College Executive and will refer the matter to an Appeals Committee which they will appoint.

5 Appeals Committee

5.1 The Appeals Committee will consist of two senior Fellows of the College together with an external assessor from another academic or professional body. It is recommended that one of the Fellows selected should be currently practising in the appellant’s own specialty, the other being drawn from a different medical or related specialty. No person who has been concerned in any way with the decisions giving rise to the appeal will be eligible to sit on the Appeals Committee. A legal representative of the College may be present as an adviser to the Committee.

6 Appeals Committee Decision

6.1 The date of the Appeal will be set by the Appeals Committee and the appellant will be informed giving at least 21 working days notice so that he/she can arrange to be present, accompanied if so wished.

6.2 The appellant may withdraw his/her appeal at any time up to and including the date set for the appeal. The appellant will also be informed that the Appeals Committee has the power to consider the case even in the absence of the appellant him/her-self.

6.3 The Appeals Committee will consider all the evidence available, and may ask for additional information to be presented. The Committee’s judgement on the appeal will be reported in writing to the College Executive. If the decision of the Appeals Committee is accepted by the College Executive this fact will be transmitted by the Registrar to the appellant. The decision of the College Executive is final.