

# **Regulations and Information for Candidates**

## **MRCPI Medicine of Childhood**

2019 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 Medicine of Childhood 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 Paediatrics Clinical Examination.

The Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI) Part II Medicine of Childhood Clinical Examination is available to candidates who successfully passed MRCPI Part I and MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written. This examination is currently held throughout Ireland only.

## 2. MRCPI Qualification

The MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood 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](http://www.rcpi.ie). Candidates who wish to apply to sit the MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood will not be accepted for the examination before the expiry of 18 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 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.

## Examination attempts

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.

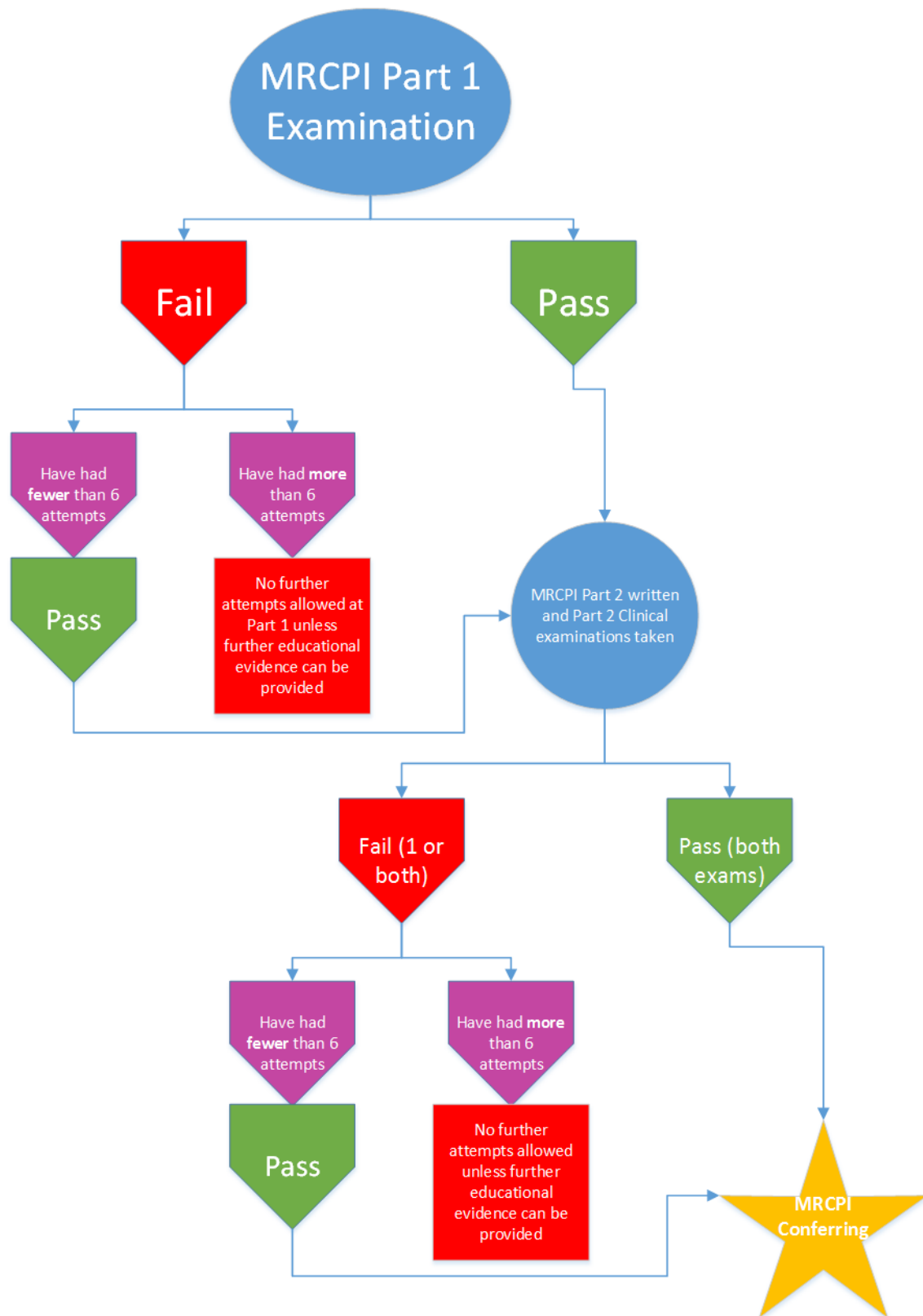
Candidates must pass the MRCPI Part I examination, within six years from their first attempt, before applying to enter the MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written examination, unless they have been granted an exemption. Candidates have 6 years from the date of successfully passing MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood in which to obtain MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written. There will be no extension to this 6 year period. MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood 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 Medicine of Childhood Written in which to pass MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Clinical. There will be no extension to this 3 year period. The MRCPI Part II Written Medicine of Childhood examination will need to be retaken if more than 3 years has elapsed since passing Part II Written.

Candidates for MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written membership exams may be asked to submit testimonials of their 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



## 3. Applications

### 3.1 Entry requirements

Candidates will not be accepted for the examination before the expiry of 18 months from the date given on their diploma of medical qualification. Candidates must have passed MRCPI Part I General Medicine or Part I Medicine of Childhood Examination or have obtained an exemption (see section 3.2) to apply to sit MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written examination.

Candidates must pass the MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written examination before applying to enter the MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Clinical examination.

Candidates who wish to apply for the Part II Clinical require 12 months clinical paediatric experience by the date of the clinical examination. This clinical experience must be Post registration and does not include internship experience.

### 3.2 Exemptions

Applications claiming exemption must be accompanied by adequate documentary evidence. The following qualifications can be considered eligible for exemption from MRCPI:

<b>MRCPI (Part I only)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ MRCP(UK)</li><li>❖ MRCPPath</li><li>❖ MRCPCH</li><li>❖ MRACP</li><li>❖ FRCP(C)</li><li>❖ FCP(SA)</li><li>❖ MRCPsych</li><li>❖ Arab Boards in Medicine and Paediatrics</li><li>❖ Saudi Boards in Medicine and Paediatrics</li><li>❖ Kuwait Boards of Medicine and Paediatrics</li><li>❖ Oman Medical Specialty Board in Medicine and Paediatrics</li><li>❖ FCP&amp;S in Medicine and Paediatrics (Pakistan)</li><li>❖ The American Boards in General Internal Medicine and Paediatrics</li><li>❖ M. Med.(Malaysia)</li></ul> <p><i>Please note that partial completion of any of these qualifications – e.g., MRCP (UK) Part I – is <b>not</b> sufficient for exemption.</i></p>
<b>MRCPI (Part I and Part II Written only)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ FRACP</li></ul>



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 Medicine of Childhood written examinations are conducted by remote invigilation. Remote invigilation was introduced in June 2020 to enable candidates as a result of COVID restrictions to sit examinations. We will continue to monitor the method of delivery for 2020/2021. Remote invigilation allows a candidate instead of travelling to an exam centre to sit the computer-based exam from own computer e.g. at home or at work.

Candidates are supervised remotely by invigilators throughout the exam.

Candidates are required to adhere to the following requirements to sit an exam by remote invigilation:

- A quiet, secure environment – a room where candidate can take the exam without interruption.
- A PC or laptop computer with a reliable internet connection, webcam and microphone. Must have permissions to install software. Multiple screens, headphones and earbuds are not permitted.
- Scrap/rough paper is not permitted. A virtual notepad is available for use during the exam
- Candidate mobile phone must be within reach in the room where sitting the exam. The phone is for registration/technical support purposes only.

A quiet, secure environment means:

- A room to which you have exclusive access (single occupancy - not shared)
- A room that does not have integrated security cameras, or any recording equipment, other than the webcam on PC or laptop
- Candidate is confident he/she will not be disturbed during the examination, e.g. by traffic, construction work, or people

For more information about remote invigilation visit <https://www.testreach.com/exam-candidate-testreach.html>. Note also changes to the Rules and Guidelines in section 7 below.

## 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. Copy diplomas must be attested, on the front side, by:

- An Garda Síochána (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 (unless previously submitted)
- Proof of Exempting Qualification (if claiming exemption)
- Passport-style photo (colour, full-face, minimum 100x100 pixels, neutral background) (unless previously submitted)

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**

For centre based examinations, 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. (Please note the Part I and Part II Written examinations will be conducted via remote invigilation for 2020)

### **3.6 Examination fees**

The fees payable on entry to the MRCPI Examinations are published annually. Candidates sitting clinical examinations in overseas centres may be required to pay a separate administration fee. Please refer to the website [www.rcpi.ie](http://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 or login 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 Medicine of Childhood Examination

## 4.1 Preparation for MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood Examination

All MRCPI examinations are conducted in the English language.

There is a guideline syllabus which is aligned to the BST curriculum available on the website [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie). This will assist with the preparation for the MRCPI Part I Medicine of Childhood examination. The Part I is a check point to identify those who need to gain more basic clinical knowledge of paediatric medicine before advancing to study for the Part II Examination.

## 4.2 Syllabus

The questions in this paper test basic knowledge expected with clinical exposure in General Paediatrics at SHO level in Ireland. Successful candidates will demonstrate a broad knowledge of the basic physiology and physical findings of the neonate, child and adolescent, as well as clinical literature published in paediatrics, public health related to paediatrics and the fundamentals of managing common paediatric conditions. Please see the blueprint on the website for further information on the content of the examination.

## 4.3 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 remote 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 standard necessary to achieve a pass mark is established using criterion referencing. Every question is carefully reviewed and assessed to ensure that the standard is fair and consistent at every examination.

# 5. MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written Examination

## 5.1 Examination Format

The MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Written Examination consists of one SBA paper (Paper 1) and one Short Question Paper (Paper 2). Each paper is 2.5 hours long with an hour break in between. **The examination is conducted by computer-based testing.**

The questions in this paper test advanced knowledge, problem solving and management of emergency situations in General Paediatrics with an increased focus on specialist areas.

It is expected that potential Part II Written candidates will gain a further 6 – 12 months clinical experience after successful completion of the Part I written examination.

The aim of the written examinations is to sample the broad breadth of knowledge that would be expected of a doctor starting in a general paediatrics registrar post.

### 5.1.1 Single Best Answer (Paper 1)

This paper is comprised of 80 single best answer (SBA) questions and is of 2.5 hours duration.

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

### 5.1.2 Short Question Paper (Paper 2)

This paper is comprised of 20 short answer questions covering mainly data interpretation and clinical scenarios and is 2.5 hours duration.

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

A 7-year-old boy presents with a two-day history of limp and thigh pain. There is no history of injury.

- a) What is the differential diagnosis (give 3)?
- b) What clinical sign would support your diagnosis?
- c) What investigations would help (give 4)?

or

In a study on children with type 1 diabetes, 10% of the children who received twice daily insulin injections developed microalbuminuria versus 2% of children managed with an insulin pump.

- a) Calculate the relative risk reduction (RRR).
- b) Explain NNT.
- c) What is the number needed to treat (NNT)?
- d) Calculate the absolute risk reduction (ARR).

## 5.2 Examination Technique

- The purpose of this examination is to give you an opportunity to show what you know.
- Read the questions carefully
- Answer only what you are asked (there are no marks for including material not in the questions)
- Organise your answers and prioritise important items. Think about your answer before writing
- Practise answering examination questions and have your response checked by your mentor/trainer
- If in doubt about the meaning of a question, ask the invigilator
- It is important to answer all questions in order to pass the examination
- Try to avoid using abbreviations

Review of the subject matter of the BST curriculum and a general Paediatric textbook should be adequate for the knowledge tested. Please see the blueprint on the website for further information on the content of the examination.



# 6. MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Clinical Examination

## 6.1 Preparation for MRCPI Part II Medicine of Childhood Clinical Examination

All MRCPI examinations are conducted in the English language. Candidates are advised to contact the Postgraduate/Medical Administration Office in their hospital for a list of any external courses available.

For the clinical examination:

- a) Practise case presentations and physical examination with your mentor/trainer in advance of the examination.
- b) Arrive in plenty of time to your allocated hospital.
- c) Hand hygiene essential.
- d) Be familiar with equipment/growth charts.
- e) When presenting a history, be able to present systematically and to organise a summary of the key points.
- f) Be comfortable examining an upset child. Demonstrate techniques to try to console a child.
- g) Demonstrate good communication skills and rapport with child/family.
- h) Be familiar with the clinical examination techniques, of the different systems to be examined.
- i) Speak clearly on findings elicited to the examiner.
- j) Try to remain calm and remember if one aspect of the examination does not go well you have other opportunities to gain marks.

## 6.2 Clinical Examination Format

It is expected that candidates taking the clinical examination will have a minimum of 12 months but ideally 15 months of experience in paediatric practice and will proficiently perform physical examinations to the level required of a registrar. Clinical judgement, management skills and communication are also assessed.

The clinical examination will focus on the ability of the candidate to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of history taking, communication, physical examination, problem solving and basic steps in the assessment and management of the neonate, child or adolescent with acute or chronic disease.

The new clinical structures will comprise of 6 x 12 minute stations

The typical timing **breakdown** for a clinical examination is as follows:

12 minutes total:

- 10 minutes in which to perform a focused and directed examination on the patient
- A timing notification will be given after 10 minutes
- Candidates will then have two minutes to summarise and discuss investigations and management
- There will be a timing notification after 12 minutes to state the ending of the case
- Candidates will move to await the next station and rest for two minutes to compose before entering the next clinical case
- During these two minutes the examiner will complete the marksheet and write comments where necessary
- Each case will be examined by one examiner who remains at this station for the duration of the examination.

**Examination Station Circuit:**



## **Case descriptions**

Throughout the examination candidates are assessed on:

- Communication skills,
- Management of the child
- Identifying/recognising normalcy/disability or complex need,
- Ability to recognise the acutely ill child and identify red flags

Candidates will see a range of children of different ages and may be asked questions about genetics, epidemiology or pharmacology throughout the examination.

## **List of Stations:**

### **Observed History**

Acute real patient

Cases will be patients with common General Paediatrics presentations. At this station the candidate is expected to take a full patient history. The Clinical judgement discussion will focus on the correct presentation of the case history and the candidate's management plan for the patient.

### **Communication and Ethics**

Simulated scenarios with either parents or actors. These may include ethical dilemmas based on the medical council guidelines. Scenarios may include common paediatric presentations, child protection, or mental health. A sample scenario is available on the RCPI website.

### **Growth and Development**

Child with or without developmental complexity

At this station a candidate may be asked to assess growth or complete a development assessment. The candidate is expected to exhibit knowledge of normal growth and development and potential concerns. The candidate is expected to understand care over the lifespan including vaccinations, care of common childhood illnesses and nutrition.

Structure: Observed case with questions

## **Clinical examination cases**

### **Cardiology or Respiratory Case**

Cardiology: This station will review a candidates ability to perform a cardiology examination and cases can include any common cardiology presentation.

OR

Respiratory: This station can also include an ENT exam. A candidate will perform a respiratory examination and cases can include any common respiratory presentation.

### **Neurology or Abdominal Cases**

Abdominal: This station will primarily include Gastroenterology and Hepatology. It may also cover fluids and nutrition.

Respiratory: This station will include common neurological presentations, it may also include musculoskeletal cases and can include aspects of ophthalmology.

### **Other Subspecialty case**

This will assess the application of General Paediatrics Skills in one of the following:

- Allergy
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- Haematology
- Immunology
- Infectious diseases
- Metabolic
- Nephrology
- Oncology
- Rheumatology

### **Marking Scheme:**

- Each station will be marked by a single examiner. Each examiner will have calibrated the examination with a colleague who is administering the same examination in a different circuit on the same day for consistency.
- The performance of all candidates will be reviewed on the day of the clinical examination.
- Outcomes of the clinical examination will be presented to the Part II examinations board and results released within 3 to 4 weeks after the examination date.

**Rules and Regulations:**

- All Paediatric examinations conform to the Rules and Regulations set down by the Examinations Department of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.
- Any candidate unsuccessful in the examination is entitled to request a review of their performance by the Assoc Dean of Examinations and feedback for future attempts.

## 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 For centre based examinations 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.
- 7.4 Candidates will **not** be permitted to take the examination if they login after their TestReach booking slot.
- 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 take 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 have in the room where they are sitting the remote exam, smart technology, laptop computers, tablets, calculators, rough paper, 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 an infringement warning from the exam invigilator. A written 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 any personal items at their desks during the examination. Invigilators will direct clinical candidates to a secure area for personal items to be deposited for the duration of the examination
- 7.9 Candidates are not permitted to use rough-work paper during a written exam. An electronic notepad is provided within the exam software for this purpose.
- 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 Smoking is not permitted during the exam.
- 7.12 Toilet breaks are not permitted during the examination, except with prior approval on documented medical grounds. Any candidate who moves out of camera range during the exam, for any reason, without approval from the exam invigilator will have their exam session terminated. .
- 7.13 Recording or transmitting any portion of the exam or exam content is strictly prohibited. Any candidate found to be recording or transmitting during the exam will have their exam session terminated immediately.
- 7.14 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. Professional misconduct may be reported to the relevant Medical Council.

#### **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 exits.
- 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
- 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:

1. Confiscate any unauthorised material in the possession of the candidate.
2. Make a note of the time when the alleged infringement was discovered.

3. Allow the candidate(s) to continue the examination. A candidate's exam will only be terminated in the event of a candidate's misconduct threatening the integrity of the exam.
4. 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.
5. Within one working day of the examination, the invigilator will submit a written report on the alleged infringement

### **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 Medicine of Childhood examination as quickly as possible, consistent with ensuring accuracy, fairness and a stable pass standard.

For CBT exams, data files containing candidates' answers are sent securely from our remote CBT provider 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 Physicians Network 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](mailto:examinations@rcpi.ie)) within 10 working days of result letter issue.

For details of our appeals policy, please see **Appendix 1**.

# Appendix 1: RCPI 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 by email 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 candidate's 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.