

# **Regulations and Information for Candidates**

## **MRCPI Obstetrics & Gynaecology**

2019 Edition

# 1. Introduction

The Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI) Part II Obstetrics and Gynaecology Examination is available to candidates who meet the criteria detailed in the Examination Regulations.

## 2. MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology

### 2.1 Entry requirements

Candidates are eligible to enter for the Part II Written Examination leading to Membership when:

- (i) they have succeeded in MRCPI Part I, or have obtained exemption from this requirement through possession of one of the exempting qualifications listed separately (see 2.3 Exemptions).
- (ii) they have completed a period of postgraduate training in posts recognised by the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. At present, candidates are required to have completed two years of post-registration training in recognised posts, one year in Obstetrics and one year in Gynaecology (or two years in combined posts). Each recognised post will be for a minimum period of six months. Any application for modification of any of these requirements will only be considered on an individual basis.
- (iii) they provide testimonials from two referees who being medical practitioners are willing to testify to the above and to the professional and personal character of the applicant, before being allowed to sit the examination. The College reserves the right to take up additional references without reference to the candidate, and to refuse permission for any candidate to attempt either part of the examination.

Prospective candidates who are working in Ireland are encouraged to discuss their training requirements with the appropriate Institute postgraduate adviser. Training should be completed by 1st January preceding the March examination, and by 7th August prior to the September examination.

Candidates are eligible to enter for the Part II OSCE/Clinical Examination leading to Membership when:

- (i) They have succeeded in passing the MRCPI Part II O&G Written Examination.
- (ii) Are within the 3 year time limit.

## 2.2 MRCPI Qualification

The Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI) examination in O&G Written and OSCE/Clinical has now been de-coupled. This is effective from March 2014 whereby the Written and OSCE/Clinical examinations will be held independently of each other. Candidates must now apply separately for each exam and opening and closing dates along with fees can be found on the exam calendar.

A candidate must still pass the MRCPI Part II Written exam in order to be eligible to sit the MRCPI Part II OSCE/Clinical exam. Should a candidate fail the OSCE/Clinical exam they will not, as previously, have to repeat the written exam, they can re-apply for the OSCE/Clinical exam as long as the 3 year time limit has not expired. Candidates can now choose which diet of the clinical examination they wish to sit. Candidates will be given a time limit of 3 years within which to pass the OSCE/Clinical exam. On expiry of the 3 year limit, candidates will have to re-sit both the Written and OSCE/Clinical components of the examination again.

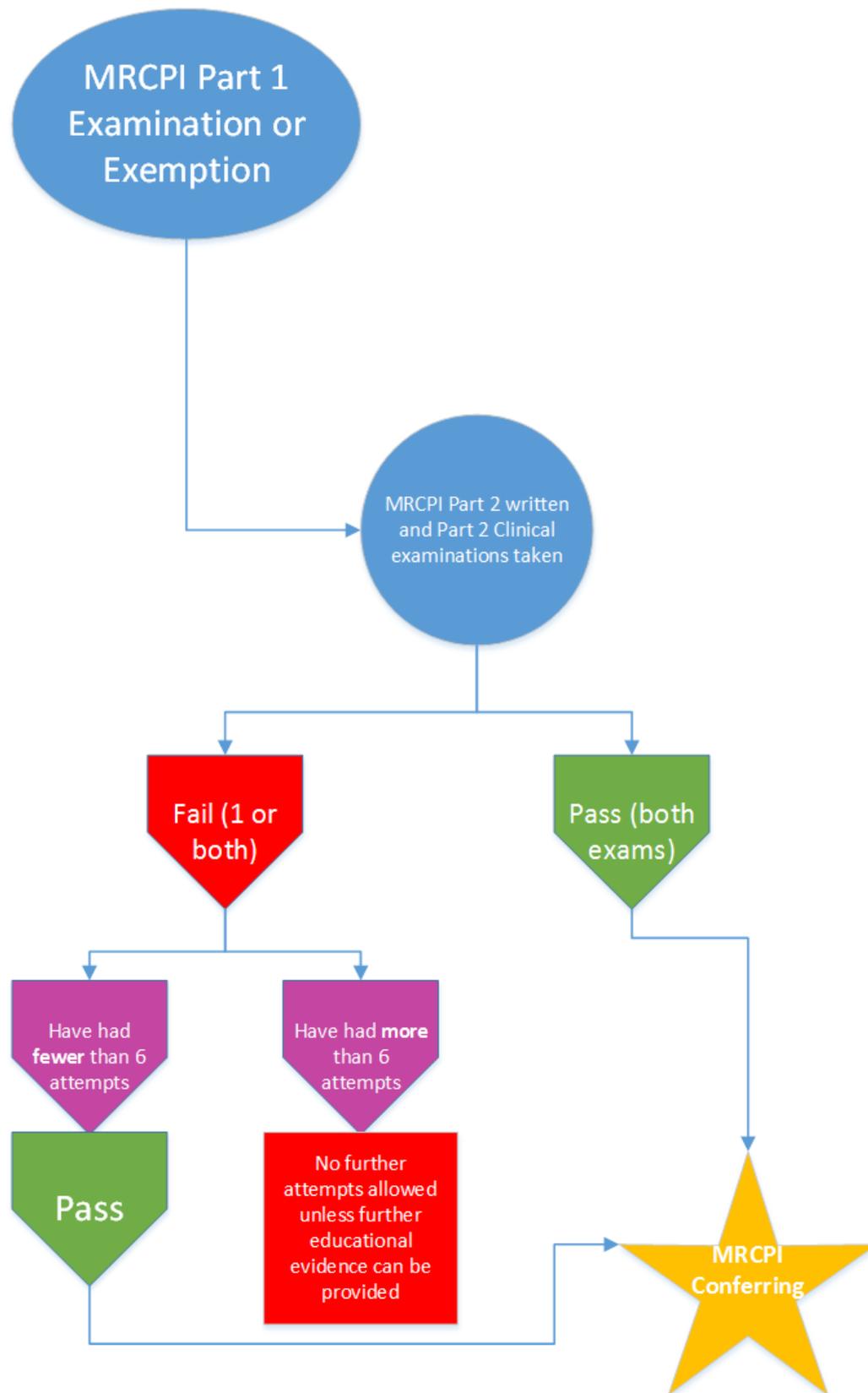
For those candidates who were unsuccessful in the MRCPI Part II OSCE/Clinical O&G exam in 2013 or before you must re-sit the Written exam. However if you re-sit the Written exam in 2014 onwards and pass this can be banked and you will not have to re-sit the Written unless the three year limit has expired.

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 complete all their attempts at Part II Written and OSCE/Clinical within six years of the date of their success in, or exemption from, Part I MRCPI. There will be no extensions to this seven year period. However, if more than six years have elapsed since passing Part I, that Part can be retaken. Please note that exemption comes into effect from the 1st sitting of the MRCPI Part II examination.

## 2.2.1 Qualification map



## 2.3 Exemptions

Applications claiming exemption must be accompanied by adequate documentary evidence. If you have passed MRCPI Part I General Medicine or Medicine of Childhood you are eligible for exemption.

The following qualifications are also recognised for exemption from MRCPI Part I for Obstetrics & Gynaecology:

- MRCOG Part I (Please note – exemption from MRCOG Part 1 is not accepted)
- MRACOG (Australia)
- MRNZCOG (New Zealand)
- FCOG (SA)
- FCPS (O&G) (Pakistan)
- MRANZCOG
- M. Med Malaysia (O&G) – Applies only to candidates awarded this qualification from 2008 onwards.

## 2.4 Examination locations

The MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology is held in Dublin, and in a number of overseas centres. Please check the examinations calendar for examination centres and dates.

## 2.5 Preparation for MRCPI Examinations

All MRCPI examinations are conducted in the English language. For further information please check our website [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie).

## 2.6 Part II Guideline Syllabus

There is a guideline syllabus to assist with the preparation for the MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology. The guidelines present a framework of topics which should be covered, but it is not intended to be inclusive and candidates should not limit their studies solely to these topics.

### Syllabus for Part II MRCPI (Obstetrics & Gynaecology) Examination

Candidates are expected to have a comprehensive knowledge of obstetrics and gynaecology, together with those aspects of other medical disciplines relevant to the practice of both. Although already tested in the Part I Examination (or its equivalent exempting Examinations) on their knowledge of the scientific foundations of the specialty, candidates are expected to show an ability

to apply this knowledge to the management of clinical problems, in addition to their knowledge of practical procedures.

## **Genetics and Embryology**

Comprehensive knowledge of normal and abnormal karyotypes, the inheritance of genetic disorders, the genetic causes of infertility and early abortion, as well as the ability to transmit this knowledge to patients, to discuss its implications as well as any ethical dilemmas.

## **Anatomy**

Comprehensive knowledge of anatomy particularly relevant to surgical procedures undertaken by the obstetrician and gynaecologist.

## **Pathology, Biochemistry and Endocrinology**

Thorough knowledge of the pathology of the female genital tract and associated structures. Sound understanding of biochemistry of mother and fetus. Whilst knowledge of all endocrine organs is required, extensive knowledge is expected of endocrine organs relevant to reproductive medicine.

## **Pharmacology**

Comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of pharmacology with particular reference to those drugs used in obstetrics and gynaecology.

## **Immunology**

Candidates should be expected to understand basic immunology and how this may be changed in pregnancy; development of the immune system in the fetus, with particular knowledge of rhesus and other isoimmunisations.

## **Infectious disease**

Comprehensive knowledge of infectious diseases which may affect pregnant and non-pregnant women, including the fetus in utero. Knowledge of epidemiology, diagnostic techniques, prophylaxis, and immunisation, including the use of antibiotics and antiviral agents.

## **Obstetrics**

Proficiency in history taking and physical examination in obstetrics. Detailed knowledge of common obstetric procedures.

## **Normal pregnancy labour and puerperium**

Knowledge of all maternal and fetal systems. Comprehensive knowledge of antenatal care, its aims and method of implementation. Knowledge of intrapartum care should include in-depth knowledge of obstetric analgesia and anaesthesia.

## **Abnormal pregnancy, labour and puerperium**

Clear knowledge of all aspects of abnormality in pregnancy, labour and puerperium is expected, together with their management. Detailed knowledge of neonatal resuscitation is mandatory.

## **Pre- and post-pregnancy counselling**

Candidates should demonstrate their ability to advise patients regarding any aspect of obstetric or gynaecological disease.

## **Maternal and Fetal Medicine**

Candidates are expected to be familiar with definitions and concepts, and to be conversant with confidential enquiries and other reports/guidelines relevant to obstetric practice.

## **Gynaecology**

Proficiency in history taking and physical examination in gynaecology. Detailed knowledge of all basic gynaecological procedures is required. Candidates will be expected to have knowledge of more complicated procedures, e.g. in oncology or reproductive medicine, but proficiency in these areas will not be expected.

## **Prepubertal gynaecology**

Thorough knowledge of normal and abnormal sexual development, paediatric pathology and its management, normal puberty and its disorders.

## **Disorders of menstruation and the menopause**

In-depth understanding of pathophysiology of menstrual disorders, their investigation and management. The menopause.

## **Infertility**

Causes, investigation and management of infertility together with basic knowledge in the techniques involved in assisted human reproduction.

## **Family Planning**

All methods of contraception should be thoroughly understood.

## **Psychosexual Medicine**

A thorough understanding of the principles of psychosexual medicine is required.

## Gynaecological Oncology

The epidemiology and aetiology of gynaecological tumours. The principles of carcinogenesis, tumour immunology and pathology together with diagnostic techniques and staging of gynaecological tumours is essential. Basic principles of treatment, both surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy together with knowledge of terminal care of patients dying from gynaecological malignancy. Screening for malignant disease in gynaecology, including cervical cytology and colposcopy.

## Urogynaecology

Knowledge of normal and abnormal bladder function, including urodynamics and the common urogynaecological procedures.

## Statistics and Epidemiology

Candidates will be expected to be familiar with common statistical methods used in clinical research and of epidemiological investigations relevant to the specialties of obstetrics, gynaecology, family planning and neonatal medicine.

# 3. How to enter the MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology Examination

## 3.1 Method of application

All examination application forms, together with supplemental documentation listed below, and payment must be completed online. The method of payment is by credit/debit cards.

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

Candidates must submit the following documents when applying:

- Attested/Certified copy of original diploma of Medical Qualification
  - Attested/Certified copy of MRCOG Part I Pass letter
  - Testimonial form signed by two doctors of five years standing
- (Note: re-entrants need only apply and pay appropriate fee)

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.

NOTE: For those applying for the MRCPI OSCE/Clinical examination, no documentation is required at application, as you would have already submitted these when applying for the MRCPI Part II O&G Written examination.

## 3.2 Visas

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

## 3.3 Examination fees

The fees payable on entry to the MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology exam are published annually.

No application to sit an examination will be accepted unless the appropriate fee has been paid.

## 3.4 Withdrawal from the examination

Notice of withdrawal from an examination must be given in writing to the College. A refund less 10% will be made if written notice of withdrawal is received by the College on or before the closing date of entry to the examination. 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](#).

## 3.5 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](#).

## 3.6 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 Obstetrics & Gynaecology Part II Examination Format

## 4.1 Format

Candidates are examined in obstetrics and gynaecology and also tested on their knowledge of medical subjects relevant to clinical practice, in a Single Best Answer (SBA) style paper, OSCE and a clinical examination.

### MRCPI Part II O&G Written Examination

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.

## MRCPI Part II O&G OSCE/Clinical Examination

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) consists of seven active stations, each of ten minutes duration, including interactive stations. There is a 2 minute rest period in between each station. This examination tests factual knowledge and understanding, problem solving skills, diagnosis, investigation, treatment, clinical skills and communication skills.

The Clinical Examination consists of the presentation and discussion of one long clinical case in either obstetrics OR gynaecology. Each candidate is allowed twenty minutes to examine a patient before discussing with two examiners for a further 20 minutes.

A pass in the OSCE/Clinical Examination is mandatory and is achieved by satisfying the following conditions:

- Obtain the minimum pass mark for skills which have been pre-set
- Obtain the overall minimum pass mark which is determined by the Board after a thorough data analysis which takes into account both the difficulty of the examination stations and the overall performance of the candidates taking the exam
- Pass a minimum number of stations required
- Pass Clinical
- Non adherence to WHO hand hygiene standards will result in an automatic fail in the clinical examination

Candidates who fail the OSCE/Clinical examination, must re-take this component of the examination. Candidates will be notified of their result by email only. In no circumstances will the result be given by telephone. Examination results will be published within four weeks of the examination.

## 4.3 Examination rules and guidelines

4.3.1 These Regulations apply to all candidates for examinations of the College. Candidates should note that by applying to enter to sit an examination, they are deemed to have understood and agreed to comply by these Regulations.

4.3.2 Candidates are advised to allow for any transport delays when planning time of arrival at the examination centre. The College cannot guarantee candidates will be permitted to enter the examination centre after the start of the examination.

4.3.3 Candidates should assemble outside the examination centre at least 30 minutes before the start of the examination, for registration, and will not enter until instructed by an invigilator(s).

4.3.4 Candidates will not be permitted entry into the examination centre if they arrive 30 minutes after the start of the written examination. Candidates who arrive once the OSCE/Clinical examination has started will not be permitted entry into the examination.

4.3.5 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.

4.3.6 Candidates should note that drugs will almost always be referred to by their UK approved names (National Formulary) rather than their trade names. Biochemical and other measurements will be expressed in SI units.

4.3.7 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.

4.3.8 Candidates are not permitted to have their bags and/or other personal items at their desks during the examination. Invigilators will direct candidates to a secure area for personal items to be deposited for the duration of the examination.

4.3.9 Candidates must ensure they are sitting at the correct desk and their Examination Number corresponds to the desk number.

4.3.10 Candidates must place their Identity Card at the top right hand corner of the desk to enable the invigilators to carry out a check during the exam.

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

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

4.3.13 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.

4.3.14 Candidates are advised to provide their own refreshments during the examination, bearing in mind that hot food is not permitted.

4.3.15 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.

#### **4.3.16 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.

## 5. Fire Evacuation

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

5.2 All alarms should be treated as an emergency unless otherwise advised. If the alarm is sounded a College staff member will be responsible for the evacuation of the examination venue.

5.3 Candidates should note that they remain subject to examination rules during the evacuation and should not communicate or have contact with other candidates. Candidates must not attempt to collect personal belongings.

5.4 All students should cease writing and leave their answer booklets on the desk when instructed by a College staff member.

5.5 The College staff member will instruct the invigilators to act as 'Fire Marshalls' and these marshals will be responsible for leading their designated sections of candidates from the examination centre.

5.6 The Fire Marshall should collect the exam register and evacuate the candidates to the assembly point using the emergency exits.

5.7 Do not use the lift.

5.8 When assembled the Fire Marshall will check the candidates against the examinations register.

5.9 If it is possible to resume the examination, candidates will be instructed to endorse their scripts with the words 'examination interrupted' indicating the time of the interruption and the time of resumption. Candidates will be allowed compensatory time equivalent to the period from the time the alarm sounded to the resumption of the examination, plus 10 minutes for re-reading the examination paper and settling back into the examination. The invigilator will inform candidates of the revised finishing time for the examination.

5.10 A written report of the evacuation will be filed by the College staff member and forwarded to the Director of Examinations.

5.11 A delay of more than thirty minutes will automatically require a re-scheduling of the examination concerned. In this case, invigilators will announce to the students that they should contact the Examinations Department regarding alternative examination arrangements. Students may then leave.

## 6. Code of Conduct

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

- 6.1 Introduction into any examination materials other than those specifically permitted for the examination.
- 6.2 Any attempt to communicate with another candidate or any person other than an invigilator on duty.
- 6.3 Any attempt to gain access to or plagiarise the work of another candidate.
- 6.4 Any attempt to gain or pass on information with regard to the contents of the examination in advance of the date of the examination.
- 6.5 Impersonation of a candidate.
- 6.6 Bribery of another candidate or examination official.
- 6.7 Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour during an examination.
- 6.8 Failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator or other examination official.
- 6.9 Falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification.

### 6.1.1 Report procedure

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

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

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

### **6.1.2 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.

## **7. Adapted Examination Arrangements**

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

## **8. Examination Results**

The College processes the marking of MRCPI Part II Obstetrics & Gynaecology Written and OSCE/Clinical examinations as quickly as possible, consistent with ensuring accuracy, fairness and a stable pass standard.

- Examination results will be sent to candidates approximately three working weeks after the date of the Written examination. Results for the OSCE/Clinical examination will be published approximately three weeks after the examination date. Under no circumstances

will examination results be given over the telephone, by fax or by visiting the College in person.

- Please refrain from telephoning the College regarding your result during this period, as this will delay the process.

## 8.1 Recheck procedure and appeals policy

Candidates can request a recheck of their written examination results in O&G. There is a fee of €150 for this procedure. This charge will be refunded if a recheck changes the overall examination result to a pass mark. Please complete the recheck application form which is available on The Physician Network on the RCPI website <http://www.rcpi.ie> and return to the Examinations Department within two weeks of the results being published to the website.

Please note, the result of a recheck cannot be guaranteed before the next sitting of the MRCPI Part II Obstetrics and Gynaecology OSCE/Clinical examination.

As the O&G OSCE/Clinical examination is a 'live' exam there is no facility for re-checking Clinical examination results/grading, only the written component of this examination.

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 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.