



Royal College of Psychiatrists

Criteria for MRCPsych Qualification
Equivalence and
Eligibility for Entry to Higher Training

REGULATIONS 2006

Introduction

International psychiatrists holding a specialist qualification in psychiatry who wish to enter further training in the United Kingdom (UK) may apply to the Royal College of Psychiatrists (the College) for assessment of their training and qualifications. The assessment will determine whether the qualification they hold and the training leading to its award can be deemed equivalent to the MRCPsych (Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists) qualification. This process is intended to help international doctors to obtain registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) by providing objective evidence of their capability to practise in the UK under the following route:

Completion of basic specialist training to the satisfaction of a UK Royal College or Faculty

This applies to doctors who, in addition to their primary overseas medical qualification and twelve months' internship, can provide evidence that they have completed basic specialist training (confirming eligibility to undertake higher specialist training) to the satisfaction of the appropriate UK Medical Royal College or Faculty. This will usually be demonstrated by obtaining higher qualifications equivalent to e.g. the UK MRCS or MRCPsych. The GMC will grant limited registration to cover supervised employment in the NHS in the specialty or group of specialties in which basic specialist training has been completed.

Eligibility for Assessment of MRCPsych Qualification Equivalence

To apply for assessment of your international qualification you must:

- 1. Provide evidence that you have spent at least three years whole-time equivalent (wte) in a recognised specialist training programme approved by a relevant body in your country**

This must include a minimum of two years in psychiatry (including at least one year in general adult psychiatry). Up to one year wte of training in other relevant fields of medicine may be counted towards the overall requirement of three years wte. All training must carry educational approval of a relevant international regulatory body. Examples of acceptable relevant fields of medicine include: general medicine, accident and emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology and general practice.

2. Provide evidence that you hold a formal qualification in psychiatry

The Overseas Doctors Training Committee (ODTC) will determine whether the training which led to the award of an international qualification and the examination procedures can be regarded as equivalent to the MRCPsych qualification.

Criteria, Standards and Evidence for MRCPsych Qualification Equivalence and Eligibility for Entry to Higher Training Assessment

Applicants whose international specialist qualification has been found equivalent to the MRCPsych qualification will be eligible to apply for registration with the GMC (if not already registered) and for Specialist Registrar (SpR) posts in the UK National Health Service (NHS) leading to the award of the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). It is therefore essential that they meet the standards set out in the GMC's *Good Medical Practice (2001)* which stipulates:

Patients must be able to trust doctors with their lives and well-being. To justify that trust, we as a profession have a duty to maintain a good standard of practice and care and to show respect for human life. In particular as a doctor you must:

- make the care of your patient your first concern;
- treat every patient politely and considerately;
- respect patients' dignity and privacy;
- listen to patients and respect their views;
- give patients information in a way they can understand;
- respect the rights of patients to be fully involved in decisions about their care;
- keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date;
- recognise the limits of your professional competence;
- be honest and trustworthy;
- respect and protect confidential information;
- make sure that your personal beliefs do not prejudice your patients' care;
- act quickly to protect patients from risk if you have good reason to believe that you or a colleague may not be fit to practise;
- avoid abusing your position as a doctor; and
- work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests.

In all these matters you must never discriminate unfairly against your patients or colleagues. And you must always be prepared to justify your actions to them.

The table below specifies the standards, criteria and requirements for evidence which all applicants must demonstrate to have their qualifications assessed towards MRCPsych qualification equivalence and eligibility for entry to higher training.

Training		
Criterion	Standard	Evidence required
Approved basic specialist training in hospital and non-hospital settings	Duration: 36 months of which 24 months in psychiatry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full CV with dates • Training curriculum relevant to the period of training, or, if not available, authenticated description of training content provided by a relevant national or regional authority responsible for training • Authenticated confirmation of completion of training issued by a relevant national or regional authority responsible for training • References from trainers
Exposure to a variety of clinical experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 12 months of training should normally be in general adult psychiatry, or a combination of 6 months in the psychiatry of old age and 6 months of general adult psychiatry. Substance misuse, liaison psychiatry and rehabilitation are regarded as sub-specialties of general adult psychiatry • Supervised on-call: 55 nights in total • Multi-disciplinary team working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticated evidence of experience in general adult psychiatry and other sub-specialities (assessment notes/reports; a job description and timetable; supervisors' notes, sample of case notes [anonymous]; etc.) • Confirmation of on-call duties issued by a relevant authority, e.g. employer • Evidence of exposure to multi-disciplinary team work • References from trainers
Academic course	Nationally or regionally recognised course comprising a systematic course of lectures and/or seminars covering basic sciences and clinical subjects relating to basic specialist training and a published curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticated confirmation of completion of a relevant academic course issued by the academic institution providing the course • Authenticated syllabus, if available • Authenticated description of content, if syllabus not available
Regular clinical and educational supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical supervision: provided at a level appropriate to the needs of individual trainees including close supervision of both inpatient and outpatient work, emergency consultations and liaison work • Educational supervision: provided by an appropriately approved/recognised educational supervisor on a regular basis for one hour per week as part of the trainee's timetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticated evidence of supervision by relevant psychiatric authorities e.g. certification, log books/training records, portfolio • Progress reports, records of supervisory sessions, supervisors' notes, etc. to include nature, frequency and duration of supervisory sessions. • References from trainers/supervisors
Regular formal assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an objective process to confirm whether the trainee has reached a satisfactory level of competence and obtained his/her learning objectives. • At the mid point and at the end of each attachment, the educational supervisor conducts and records a formal assessment of the trainee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authenticated evidence of formal assessment, e.g. standardised forms including assessment of history taking, relationship with patients, therapeutic skills and judgement, etc.

Criterion	Standard	Evidence required
Appraisal	The process involves an open discussion with the trainee about his/her strengths and weaknesses, training needs and learning objectives. It may include a review of assessments undertaken by the educational / clinical supervisor and others. Much of this takes place within educational supervision. At the beginning of the training placement specific learning objectives should be identified appropriately to the trainee's experience and should be recorded in writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authenticated evidence of regular (at least annually) formal appraisal, e.g. standardised forms including assessment of history taking, relationship with patients, therapeutic skills and judgement, etc.
Accreditation of training	To ensure the quality of training there should be a national or regional system of external accreditation of training institutions. Any such system should ensure that trainees receive broad experience in a variety of settings and specialties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authenticated confirmation of accreditation of the training programme issued by the relevant authority Details of accreditation, if available, e.g. frequency of accreditation visits, date of the last visit, outcome, etc.
Summative Assessment Process		
Examination or other form of formal assessment against defined criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal test in basic clinical psychiatry with theoretical knowledge of the subject and practical skills being of equal importance in testing the candidate's competence. Clinical competencies assessed in written and oral tests Multiple Choice Questions, essay, clinical review paper, OSCE, individual patient assessment, patient management problems, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal examination syllabus, if available If syllabus is not available, an authenticated description of the format of the assessment issued by a relevant body Authenticated confirmation of successful completion of formal assessment, e.g. final assessment report, examination certificate, diploma, etc.
Assessment criteria	There is an ongoing process of reviewing the reliability and validity of examinations used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published assessment criteria Procedures for creating and verifying assessment tools, e.g. how tests are set, who by, etc.
Requirements for examiners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected through an interview Practising consultant psychiatrist with min. 3 years experience for MRCPsych P1 and min. 5 years for P2 Current registration with the medical regulatory body An approved trainer (desirable but not essential) Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Up to date with CPD/CME 	Confirmation of the selection process for examiners, criteria they need to meet, etc.
Registration		
Registration and good standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All doctors must register with the GMC in order to practise medicine in the UK. Doctors who have qualified outside the UK need to provide evidence of their character and good standing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authenticated certificate of registration issued by a relevant medical regulatory authority Certificate of good standing confirming the entitlement to practise medicine AND stating that the doctor was not disqualified.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The College administrative fee for the assessment of applications is currently £500.00 plus VAT making the total of **£587.50**. The fee must be submitted with the application pack. Please make the cheques payable to the 'Royal College of Psychiatrists'.

Application packs are available from the International Affairs Unit at the College and include:

- A copy of Regulations
- An Application Form including guidance on how to complete it
- MRCPsych Curriculum (electronic version only)

To obtain the pack please contact the International Affairs Unit (Tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 123, Email: jcarroll@rcpsych.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can log onto the College website (www.rcpsych.ac.uk) and download the forms from the Training and Development or International page of the site.

Applications will be scrutinised by the College staff to ensure that all the relevant documentation has been enclosed, including the payment. If the application is found to be complete the applicant's referees will be contacted in writing. They will be sent a structured reference form together with a copy of the MRCPsych curriculum. Referees will be asked to comment on the applicant's clinical performance and academic abilities with regard to specific skills and knowledge described in the aforementioned document. On receipt of satisfactory references the application will be assessed by the Overseas Doctors Training Committee and the applicant will be informed of their decision in writing.

If successful the applicant will receive a statement confirming that their specialist qualification and training is equivalent to the MRCPsych qualification and the UK basing training. The statement will enable the applicant to apply for registration with the General Medical Council (GMC). For further information on GMC registration please refer to their website: www.gmc-uk.org.

We aim to reach the decision within three months from the date the last reference has been returned to the College. We strongly advise the applicants not to come to the UK until confirmation is received that the College has agreed to issue the Statement of Eligibility.

THE RIGHT TO APPEAL

Applicants whose applications have been turned down have the right to appeal against the committee's decision under the rules described in the Appeal Procedure. A copy of this document will be sent together with the decision letter to unsuccessful applicants. The College will charge for this process.

FURTHER ADVICE

If you have any questions about any part of this document please contact Mrs Joanna Carroll, International Manager, as follows:

<p>By post: Dept of Postgraduate Educational Services Royal College of Psychiatrists 17 Belgrave Square LONDON SW1X 8PG; UK</p>	<p>By phone: +44 (0)20 7235 2351 x123 By fax: +44 (0)20 7235 7976 By email: jcarroll@rcpsych.ac.uk</p>
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You might find it helpful to read this sheet in conjunction with:

- *A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training (Department of Health, February 1998)*; available at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4006614&chk=KINOTD
- *The Basic Specialist Training Handbook (The Royal College of Psychiatrists, January 2003)*; available at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traindev/postgrad/bst.pdf>
- *The Higher Specialist Training Handbook (The Royal College of Psychiatrists, March 1998)*; available at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/op/pdf/op43.pdf>
- *General Information and Regulations for the MRCPsych Examinations (The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2004)* available at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traindev/exams/regaug03.pdf>