

**THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS
MRCPSYCH EXAMINATIONS**

APPEALS PROCEDURE

(Updated 5th August 2011)

Candidates who wish to make representations with regard to the conduct of their MRCPsych Examination must initially submit them to the Examinations Operations Manager within **28 days** of the date of publication of the results of that Examination. Representations will be dealt with according to this policy. Under no circumstances are representations to be made to an examiner.

Definitions

"Examinations Appeal Panel"	A panel of five comprising of the Chief Examiner as Chair, three members of the Examinations Sub-Committee and a Director of a College Department.
"Final Appeals Panel"	A panel of four comprising of two members of the College's Central Executive Committee (one of whom will be nominated by the College President as Chair of the panel), one member of the College's Education, Training & Standards Committee and one member of the College's Examinations Sub-Committee (who will not have been involved in the Candidate's initial appeal).
"Final Appeals Panel Hearing"	The hearing of the final appeal comprising of the Final Appeals Panel and the Candidate.
"Application"	An appeal submitted for consideration under these rules before acceptance.
"Candidate"	A trainee who has attempted the MRCPsych Examinations.
"Central Executive Committee"	The highest ranking policy-making committee within the Royal College of Psychiatrists.
"Chief Examiner"	A senior Consultant Psychiatrist appointed by the Education, Training & Standards Committee who oversees the Examinations and chairs the Examinations Appeal Panel.
"Education, Training & Standards Committee"	The committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists with responsibility for all matters regarding Examinations and Training.

"Examinations Sub-Committee"	A sub-committee of the Education, Training & Standards Committee, with specific responsibility for overseeing the running and conduct of the MRCPsych Examinations.
"Director of Professional Standards"	Director of Professional Standards Department at the Royal College of Psychiatrists.
"Examinations Operations Manager"	The manager responsible for the operational delivery of the MRCPsych Examinations at the Royal College of Psychiatrists.
"Observer"	An experienced examiner who monitors all aspects of the MRCPsych Clinical Examinations to ensure that College standards are maintained.

1. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

An appeal will only be permitted to proceed provided the Candidate has complied with all applicable procedures as set out in the prevailing Eligibility Criteria and Regulations for MRCPsych Examination. One or more of the following shall constitute grounds for an appeal under the appeal procedure:-

- 1.1. An examination result is manifestly incorrect, for example, being due to an administrative error.
- 1.2. There is evidence of administrative irregularity or procedural failure and there are reasonable grounds to believe that, were it not for that irregularity or failure, the examination result would have been different.
- 1.3. There were circumstances affecting the Candidate which were not known to the Examinations Sub-Committee at the time it determined the examination result and, had those circumstances been known to the Examinations Sub-Committee, it is likely that the examination result would have been different.

2. WRITTEN APPLICATION

- 2.1. The Application must be submitted to the Examinations Operations Manager by hard copy in writing only (e-mail, faxes and any other form of electronic media are not acceptable) and include the following information:
 - 2.1.1. The Candidate's name, address and contact telephone number.
 - 2.1.2. The ground(s) on which the appeal is made in accordance with paragraph 1 above.
 - 2.1.3. Where relevant to the appeal, all supporting documentation on the Candidate's medical condition at the time of the examination including, where appropriate, a medical report from a suitably qualified medical practitioner written at about the time the Candidate sat the exam the subject of the appeal.
- 2.2. The Royal College of Psychiatrists reserves the right to charge an administrative fee in respect of an appeal under sections 1 to 4 to cover the expenses in connection with that appeal. The amount will be determined from time to time by the College. The current fee for an appeal is £150. If the Candidate's appeal is successful, the administrative fee will be refunded in full.

- 2.3. The Examinations Operations Manager may request in writing within **21 days** of receipt of the appeal further information from the Candidate. The Candidate must supply such further information within **21 days** of the date on which the request for further information was sent by the Examinations Operations Manager. In the event of it not being supplied within the **21 day** period the application will automatically stand dismissed.
- 2.4. Providing that the Applicant complies with the preceding provisions of paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 then, not later than **14 days** after receipt by the Examinations Operations Manager of the Application, the Examinations Operations Manager will send to the Candidate notice in writing that the application for the Appeal has been accepted and to whom it has been referred for consideration.
- 2.5. If, having submitted a formal appeal, the Candidate chooses to re-sit and then passes the examination before the appeal has been determined, the attainment of the pass will be deemed to supersede the appeal which will then automatically be treated as having been terminated. In those circumstances, the fee payable in relation to the appeal will not be refunded. It is entirely a matter for each Candidate to decide whether to re-take an examination prior to exhaustion of the appeal process. It is possible that a decision on a pending appeal may not be made prior to the date of the re-sit. In addition, see the notes at the end of Sections 3 and 4 below.

3. CONSIDERATION OF APPEALS

- 3.1. Grounds for appeal under paragraph 1.1 and 1.3 will be considered by the Examinations Appeals Panel who will review all documentation submitted by the Candidate, together with comments and mark sheets from the Examiners, and from the Observer if available and appropriate. The Examinations Operations Manager will advise the Candidate of the Panel's decision in writing as soon as reasonably possible.
- 3.2. Grounds for appeal under paragraph 1.2 only will be considered by the Chief Examiner in consultation with the Examinations Operations Manager. The Chief Examiner will inform the Candidate of any administrative error which has occurred, and any consequent change to the Candidate's result (if any) as soon as reasonably possible.
- 3.3. A report on the outcome of the Appeal will be presented to the Education, Training and Standards Committee by way of information. The Examinations Operations Manager will provide a copy of the report on the outcome of the appeal to the Candidate at the time of notification of the outcome of the appeal or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.

Candidates are advised to follow the normal application procedures should they wish to re-sit an examination. The College does not guarantee a decision will be made by the Examinations Appeals Panel or Final Appeals Panel prior to the date of the next examination attempt. A full refund of the re-sit examination fees will be issued if the Appeal or Final Appeal is successful.

4. FINAL APPEAL

- 4.1. Candidates who remain dissatisfied following consideration of their appeal under paragraph 3 above can, within **14 days** of receipt of the result of such consideration, lodge a Notice of Final Appeal by hard copy in writing only (E-mail, faxes and any other form of electronic media are not acceptable) with the Director of Professional Standards together with the appropriate fee as referred to in 4.7.1 below.
- 4.2. The Notice of Final Appeal must contain the information and documentation required under paragraph 2.1 and any further information requested under paragraph 2.2 (if any).
- 4.3. Failure by the Candidate to submit the Notice of Final Appeal to the Director of Professional Standards within the period referred to in paragraph 4.1 will render the Notice of Final Appeal invalid as a result of which the Final Appeal will stand dismissed.
- 4.4. The Director of Professional Standards shall convene a Final Appeals Panel and will endeavour to fix a date for the Final Appeals Panel hearing within 45 days (and in any event no more than 60 days) of receipt of the Notice of Final Appeal and inform the Candidate in writing of the date of the Final Appeals Panel Hearing.
- 4.5. The Final Appeals Panel will consider all written evidence submitted by the Candidate and by the Chief Examiner on behalf of the Examinations Appeals Panel. Not more than 14 days after the date of notification of the Final Appeals Panel Hearing, the Candidate may request in writing all written evidence submitted by the Chief Examiner on behalf of the Examinations Appeals Panel. The Director of Professional Standards will supply such documentation within 7 days of the date of the Candidate's written request or as soon as reasonably practicable following submission by the Chief Examiner. In appropriate cases and from time to time the College reserves the right to vary this timetable. In such cases the Director of Professional Standards will inform the Candidate in writing.
- 4.6. The Candidate may attend the Final Appeals Panel hearing and present an oral submission. In addition, the Candidate may wish to bring a representative or friend to the Final Appeals Panel hearing. It is not normally envisaged that such representative will be a lawyer, and if the Candidate does intend to bring a lawyer representative at the Candidate's own expense, then he/she must obtain the College's prior written agreement. In the event that the Candidate is legally represented, the College reserves the right to have its own legal representation.
- 4.7. If it is not possible immediately to make a decision whether to uphold or reject the Appeal, the Final Appeals Panel may at its discretion adjourn the hearing and/or carry out further investigations. Once a decision has been made, the Final Appeals Panel will present its determination in writing to Director of Professional Standards who will send the determination to the Candidate forthwith.
- 4.8. A report on the outcome of the Final Appeal will be presented to the Education, Training and Standards Committee by way of information. A copy of the report on the outcome of the Final Appeal will be provided to the Candidate upon or following notification of the outcome of the Final Appeal.
- 4.9. The Royal College of Psychiatrists reserves the right to charge an administrative fee in respect of a Final Appeal under section 4 to cover the expenses of convening the Final Appeals Panel. The amount will be determined from time to time by the College. The current fee for a Final Appeal is £1200. If the Candidate's Final Appeal is successful the administrative fee will be refunded in full.

Candidates are advised to follow the normal application procedures should they wish to re-sit an examination. The College does not guarantee a decision will be made by the Examinations Appeals Panel or Final Appeals Panel prior to the date of the next examination attempt. A full refund will be issued of the re-sit examination fees if the Appeal or Final Appeal is successful.

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