

APPEALS PROCEDURE

(For MRCPsych Examinations commencing in 2008, up to and including 23rd September 2009)

Candidates, who wish to make representations with regard to the conduct of their MRCPsych Examination, must initially submit them to the Head of Examinations Services 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 Chief Examiner as Chair, 3 members of the Examinations Sub-Committee and a College Head of Department other than the Head of Examinations.
“Final Appeals Panel”	A panel of four comprising of a Vice-President of the College as Chair, one member of the Education, Training and Standards Committee, and one member of the Central Executive Committee of the College and a member of the Examinations Sub-committee who has not been part of the Examinations Appeals Panel. If both Vice Presidents are unavailable the President will invite a second member of the Central Executive Committee to join the Panel and select one of the three to take the Chair.
“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 and Standards Committee who oversees the Examinations and chairs the Examinations Appeal Panel.
“Education, Training and 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 and Standards Committee, with specific responsibility for overseeing the running and conduct of the MRCPsych Examinations

“Head of Examination Services” Head of the department at the Royal College of Psychiatrists which administers the MRCPsych Examinations.

“Observer” An experienced ex-examiner who monitors all aspects of the MRCPsych Clinical examinations to ensure that College standards are maintained.

1. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

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

- 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 Head of Examination Services in writing only (e-mail and faxes 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 Appropriate supporting documentation such as medical certificates and any other documentation.
- 2.2 The Head of Examination Services 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 Head of Examination Services. In the event of it not being supplied within the **21 day** period the application will automatically stand dismissed.

- 2.3 Providing that the Applicant complies with the preceding provisions of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 then, not later than **14** days after receipt by the Head of Examination Services of the Application, the Head of Examination Services 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.
- 2.4 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. It is entirely a matter for each candidate to decide whether to re-take an examination prior to exhaustion of the appeal process. A decision on a pending appeal may not be made prior to the date of the re-sit.

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 Head of Examination Services will advise the candidate of its decision 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 Head of Examination Services. 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.

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 in writing only (E-mail and faxes are not acceptable) with the Head of Examination Services 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 Head of Examination Services 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 Head of Examination Services shall convene a Final Appeals Panel and will endeavour to do so within 45 days (and in any event no more than 60 days) of receipt of the Notice of Final Appeal.

- 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. The candidate may attend the Final Appeals Panel and present an oral submission. In addition, the candidate may wish to bring a representative or friend to the Final Appeals Panel. It is not normally envisaged that such representative will be a lawyer, and if the candidate does intend to bring a lawyer representative, then he/she must obtain the College's prior agreement.
- 4.6 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 the Head of Examination Services who will send the determination to the Candidate forthwith.
- 4.7 A report on the outcome of the Final Appeal will be presented to the Education, Training and Standards Committee by way of information.
- 4.7.1 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 £965. 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.