

Eligibility Criteria and Regulations for

MRCPsych Written Papers and

Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC)

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SECTION 1: Eligibility Criteria - effective 15 November 2018

Please note that the MRCPsych Examinations can be taken by:

- Doctors in an approved training programme
- Doctors in the UK who are not in an approved training programme (NB: Please note section 3 below as to the limitations of validity of examinations if taken whilst outside an approved training programme)
- Doctors from the EU who are working or have worked Overseas
- Non-EU doctors who are working or have worked Overseas

All applicants must meet the eligibility criteria set out in these Regulations. Normally posts of a minimum of 4 months duration will count towards relevant eligibility requirements. Please refer to section 3.

1. Registration

All applicants must be registered with the General Medical Council or equivalent body prior to entry as well as up to and including the date of sitting all examinations.

2. MRCPsych Written Papers

The mandatory requirement for entry to sit MRCPsych Paper A is:

Any fully registered medical practitioner

The requirement for entry to sit MRCPsych Paper B is:

• An approved training programme. It is recommended that you have 12 months experience in psychiatry before attempting Paper B.

OR

Posts recognised by the Hospital (or Trusts where applicable) as incorporating within contractual arrangements specified time and funding for educational training. Job plans must include dedicated time for academic and educational activities such as attending journal clubs, grand rounds, attendance at an MRCPsych course or equivalent, study leave and regular weekly educational supervision. It is recommended that you have 12 months experience before attempting Paper B.

3. **General Requirements**

- a. After 12 months of training, the MRCPsych written papers can be taken in any order.
- b. Foundation Programmes or Trust Grades do not count towards eligibility requirements for Paper B or the CASC.
- c. Re-sitting Papers
 Unsuccessful candidates may re-sit Papers. Candidates must refer to Section 6c with regards to the number of attempts.
- d. With effect from October 2014 an examination undertaken and passed whilst outside an approved training post will only count towards a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) if the candidate re-enters training within seven years of passing the relevant examination. The seven-year period commences with the date of publication of results.

For the avoidance of doubt such a pass can still count towards completion of the MRCPsych.

Applications for special adjustments concerning these provisions should be directed to the Training and Workforce Unit of the College.

4. Changes to Written Papers

Candidates are referred to the announcement in Appendix A, revised October 2018.

5. Transitional Arrangements for Written Papers

The following transitional arrangements are for candidates who hold passes in only Paper 1, 2 or 3 prior to the introduction of Paper A and B in 2015:

a. Candidates who only hold a pass in Paper 1

Candidates who only hold a pass in Paper 1 will be required to sit and pass papers A (ii) and paper B prior to being eligible to attempt the CASC. They will have until the end of the Written Paper Validity Period (WPVP) issued with their Paper 1 pass to sit and pass Paper A (ii), Paper B and the CASC. Those who fail to pass all the aforementioned components of the MRCPsych Exam within the WPVP will be required to sit and pass Papers A and B prior to further attempts at the MRCPsych CASC.

b. Candidates who only hold a Pass in Paper 2

Candidates who only hold a pass in Paper 2 will be required to sit and pass Paper A (i) and Paper B prior to being eligible to attempt the CASC. They will have until the end of the Written Paper Validity Period (WPVP) issued with their Paper 2 pass to sit and pass Paper A (i), Paper B and the CASC. Those who fail to pass all the aforementioned components of the MRCPsych Exam within the WPVP will be required to sit and pass Papers A and B prior to further attempts at the MRCPsych CASC.

c. Candidates who only hold a Pass in Paper 3

Candidates who only hold a pass in Paper 3 will be required to sit and pass paper A (i and ii) prior to being eligible to attempt the CASC. They will have until the end of the Written Paper Validity Period (WPVP) issued with their Paper 3 pass to sit and pass Paper A (i and ii) and the CASC. Those who fail to pass all the aforementioned components of the MRCPsych Exam within the WPVP will be required to sit and pass Papers A and B prior to further attempts at the MRCPsych CASC.

d. Candidates who only hold a Pass in Paper 1 and Paper 3

Candidates who only hold a pass in Papers 1 and Paper 3 will be required to sit and pass Paper A (ii) prior to being eligible to attempt the CASC. They will have until the end of the Written Paper Validity Period (WPVP) issued at the time of the first written paper passed to sit and pass Paper A (ii) and the CASC to do this. Those who fail to pass all the aforementioned components of the MRCPsych Exam within the WPVP will be required to sit and pass Papers A and B prior to being eligible for further attempts at the MRCPsych CASC.

e. Candidates who only hold a Pass in Paper 2 and Paper 3

Candidates who only hold a pass in Papers 2 and Paper 3 will be required to sit and pass papers A (i) prior to attempting the CASC. They will have until the end of the Written Paper Validity Period (WPVP) issued at the time of the first written paper passed to sit and pass Paper A (i) and the CASC. Those who fail to pass all the aforementioned components of the MRCPsych Exam within the WPVP will be required to sit and pass Papers A and B prior to being eligible for further attempts at the MRCPsych CASC.

The College will consider requests from candidates for extensions of time in which to complete all necessary components to complete the MRCPsych. Such requests, which should be accompanied by relevant evidence, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking the candidate's individual circumstances into account. Candidates are referred to Section 6c of the MRCPsych Exam Regulations.

All MRCPsych candidates are advised that it is their responsibility to keep abreast of developments about training and examinations through the College website and to inform the Examinations Unit in writing of any changes to contact details. The College has done its best to send a copy of the relevant announcement as also published on the College website to all MRCPsych candidates affected whose identity and contact details are known to the College. However, the College does not have a complete list of all affected candidates and accordingly it is not in a position to guarantee that each affected candidate will receive personal notification. Furthermore, the College does not accept responsibility for misdirected or delayed communications due to incorrect or out of date addresses of candidates.

For the avoidance of doubt, candidates who are NOT subject to the transitional arrangements are required to sit the whole of Paper A for each attempt. Those

who are unsuccessful in Paper A will be required to retake the whole of Paper A and cannot retake part (i) or (ii) only. The split of Paper A into sittings of sections (i) and (ii) is for logistical reasons and only applicable to those candidates who already hold a pass in either Paper 1 or 2 (as the case may be).

6. Written Paper Validity Period

a. Written Paper Validity Period

Effective from 1 January 2011 all written papers are time limited from the date of passing the first written paper. This regulation superseded all previous regulations pertaining to the validity of all previous papers passed.

Once the first written component of the MRCPsych examinations has been passed, candidates will have a time limit of 1643 days from the date of publication of results of that written paper to complete all remaining components of the MRCPsych ("the Written Paper Validity Period"). The date of publication of results counts as day 1. Written Paper Validity Dates can be found in Appendix B.

Those who fail to complete all components of the MRCPsych within this 1643-day time period will be required to re-sit and pass Written Papers A and B prior to retaking the MRCPsych CASC. A new 1643-day Written Paper Validity Period will commence for such candidates starting from the date of publication of the results of the first paper PASSED.

b. Special Adjustments

Requests can be made for special adjustments to the Written Paper Validity Period. Submissions in writing should be made to the Chief Examiner. The College reserves the right to request submission of any additional documentation.

I. Parental Leave

Those who within the 1643-day Written Paper Validity Period have taken time out from employment and/or training for parental leave will on production of supporting documentation be entitled to a further maximum of 365 days by reference to the period of parental leave.

The following supporting evidence should be submitted in writing to the Chief Examiner:

- Confirmation of parental leave from the Employer confirming the time taken as parental leave.
- Equivalent provisions will apply to adoption leave and any extensions to the Written Paper Validity Period will be calculated by reference to the period of leave taken. Applications should be submitted with equivalent supporting evidence as set out above.

Please note that candidates who attempt any component of the MRCPsych examinations during a period of parental leave will only be compensated for the number of possible attempts at examinations they have missed. Once a candidate applies to sit any component of the MRCPsych during a period of parental leave the balance of time of the relevant parental leave will not be taken into account for the purposes of extending their written paper validity period.

II. Less Than Full-Time Workers

By reference to the requirement that candidates must have 23 months whole time equivalent in Psychiatry (see section 7), the College acknowledges that less than full time workers will require longer to achieve 23 months whole time equivalent. Accordingly, less than full time workers may be considered for extensions of their Written Paper Validity Period by reference to additional time allowed to achieve this requirement. However, such extensions will only be considered so long as the 23 months whole time equivalent has not been met. Once a candidate has achieved the required 23 months whole time equivalent this basis for an extension of time is no longer applicable. Applications should be made in writing to the Chief Examiner with supporting evidence (including a job description and weekly timetable) from the College Tutor (for trainees where applicable or the Employer (for those in non-training posts).

III. Other Exceptional Circumstances

The College will consider applications for an extension of the 1643-day Written Paper Validity period on the grounds of exceptional circumstances on an individual basis. An example would be serious illness. Supporting evidence (including any relevant medical certificates) and a letter from the College Tutor (for trainees where applicable) or the Employer (for those in non-training posts) must be provided.

Applications for permission to undertake more than six attempts at any one component of the MRCPsych examination will be considered by the Chief Examiner. A candidate who wishes to undertake any further attempts must provide evidence of exceptional circumstances and/or significant additional education experience* to the College whereupon the College will determine whether any further attempts will be permissible. Supporting evidence (including any relevant medical certificates) and a letter from the College Tutor (for trainees where applicable) or the Employer (for those in non-training posts) must be provided. Please refer to section 6c.

Submissions should be made IN WRITING as soon as reasonably possible after the relevant circumstances have arisen, before any further examinations are attempted and PRIOR to the expiry of the Written Paper Validity Period. Retrospective applications will not normally be considered where the applicant has made a further examination attempt in the meantime.

IV. Out of Programme

If you require an extension Candidates must inform the Examinations Unit in advance if they are going out of programme, which could be either not working or working outside of clinical psychiatric practice. Supporting evidence,

including evidence from the Employer confirming the time taken OOP, should be submitted in writing to the Chief Examiner if you require an extension.

Please note that candidates who attempt any component of the MRCPsych examinations during OOP will only be compensated for the number of possible attempts at examinations they have missed. Once a candidate applies to sit any component of the MRCPsych during OOP the balance of time of the relevant OOP will not be taken into account for the purposes of extending their written paper validity period.

c. Attempt numbers

Following a requirement imposed by the GMC, with effect from 1 January 2015, candidates are normally allowed a maximum of six attempts within their individual Written Paper Validity Period at any one component of the MRCPsych examinations (i.e. each written paper and the CASC). A candidate who wishes to undertake any further attempts must provide evidence of exceptional circumstances and/or significant additional education experience* to the College whereupon the College will determine whether any further attempts will be permissible. Supporting evidence (including any relevant medical certificates) and a letter from the College Tutor (for trainees where applicable) or the Employer (for those in non-training posts) must be provided.

This rule applies to all candidates who will attempt any one component of the MRCPsych after 1 January 2015. Attempts at any of the MRCPsych examinations before this date will not be counted towards the maximum six attempt rule.

Withdrawal from an exam in accordance with these Regulations will not count as an attempt. If you do not formally withdraw from an exam, it will be counted as an attempt for the purposes of the six-attempt rule. Please refer to Section 2.5.

* additional education experience - All requests to undertake more than six attempts will be decided on an individual basis. By way of illustration of the sort of evidence of additional educational experience to be provided, an example would be documented evidence from the candidate's trainer/medical education lead demonstrating that they have discussed and analysed with the candidate their method of preparing for the examination (short and long term) and agreed an alternative strategy or a strategy to augment previous preparation methods. This evidence should be sent to the Head of Examinations who will forward it to the Chief Examiner for review.

d. Maximum number of attempts at Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC)

To ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, whether based in the UK or overseas, no more than two attempts at the CASC are permitted in each calendar year, regardless of venue.

This rule takes effect from 1 January 2020. For the avoidance of doubt this rule does not affect the Witten Paper Validity Period (see paragraph 6a above), nor the GMC imposed rule of a maximum number of six attempts of any one MRCPsych component.

Candidates who wish to make representations for extensions of their Written Paper Validity Period should do so in writing to the Chief Examiner in accordance with paragraph 6 b above.

e. Rescinding passes/Commencing a new Written Paper Validity Period

A candidate may conclude that there will be insufficient time to complete all of the outstanding exam components within the remaining period of his or her individual Written Paper Validity Period. Such a candidate may choose to renounce their existing valid written paper pass with a view to starting a new Written Paper Validity Period. The candidate must notify the Head of Examinations in writing **before** taking the next written Paper, stating that s/he wishes to treat a pass in the next exam diet as the first published for the purposes of calculating the Written Paper Validity Period. Candidates need to be aware that in making such renunciation their previous Written Paper Validity Period will be extinguished and they will then be required to obtain passes in Paper A and B and the CASC within their new individual 1643 day Written Paper Validity Period.

7. MRCPsych Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC)

Training Requirements

a. 23 months whole time equivalent post foundation/internship experience in Psychiatry by the time of sitting the CASC to include the following:

Individual Posts should normally be of a minimum of 4 months duration regardless of the number of weekly sessions. Trainees are expected to work a minimum of 50% (or five sessions a week).

Appropriate experience gained by candidates is to be verified by sponsors.

AND

b. A pass in Papers A and B OR comply with transitional arrangements - see Section 1.5

All applicants for the CASC must hold a valid pass in Papers A and B OR comply with transitional arrangements Section 1.5. The Written Paper Validity Period must be valid up until and including the first day of the relevant CASC which an applicant wishes to sit.

Note:

- If a candidate's Written Paper Validity Period expires on the day before the date of the first day of the relevant CASC examination diet, the candidate will be ineligible to sit the CASC.
- If a candidate's Written Paper Validity Period expires on the second or any of the later dates of the relevant CASC examination diet the candidate will be eligible to sit the CASC irrespective of the day allocated to the candidate to undertake the examination.

AND

c. For posts within a programme of approved training

i. Successful completion of Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) (achieved by the time of applying for the CASC) documented on the application form by the Sponsor.

and

ii. Sponsorship (refer to Section 1.8 Sponsorship Requirements)

OR

d. For all other posts

i. Successful completion of an Assessment Portfolio demonstrating achievement of equivalent competencies to those defined in the ARCP documented on the application form which must include competencies in Psychotherapy AND Child & Adolescent Psychiatry or Learning Disability (achieved by the time of applying for the CASC).

and

ii. Sponsorship (refer to Section 1.8 Sponsorship Requirements)

e.

For the following Diets of the CASC only, the requirement in 7 b that all applicants must hold a valid pass in Papers A and B is waived. All other provisions of these Regulations will continue to apply.

UK and Ireland Diet 2, September 2020 Hong Kong Diet 2020, October 2020 UK and Ireland Diet 1, January 2021

8. Sponsorship Requirements

Sponsorship is required for entry into the MRCPsych CASC for all applicants.

Sponsorship forms must be authorised and submitted by an appropriate medical education lead confirming that the eligibility requirements to sit the MRCPsych examinations have been met. A list of sponsors can be found in Appendix C.

Sponsorship must remain valid up to and including the date of the examination. Withdrawal of sponsorship will deem the applicant ineligible. The College reserves the right to verify sponsorship with signatories. If confirmation of sponsorship is not verified the application will be rejected and the College reserves the right to take appropriate action.

9. Overseas Candidates and UK Candidates in Non-UK Approved Training Posts

Candidates from overseas or in Non-UK approved-Training posts must show their sponsor evidence of having achieved equivalent competencies at appropriate competency levels (year 1, 2, 3) for each component of the examination.

In addition, competencies in Psychotherapy AND Child & Adolescent Psychiatry or Learning Disability must have been achieved by the time of applying for the MRCPsych CASC.

Candidates are expected to undertake the following activities as part of their structured job plans (this is NOT an exhaustive list):

- a. be observed interviewing patients in ward rounds for specified reasons e.g. elicit phenomenology, identify problems, assess risk, negotiate a treatment plan
- b. be observed interviewing patients in out-patient or community settings or other contexts for specified reasons e.g. elicit phenomenology, identify problems, assess risk, negotiate a treatment plan
- c. be assessed via formal presentation of cases with their medical notes; discuss management of cases with their Clinical or Educational Supervisor
- d. be assessed formally in having achieved competencies in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry or Learning Disability AND Psychotherapy.

Assessments and achievement of competencies should take place in a range of settings and psychiatric specialties (see requirements of experience in specialties). The trainee must have received structured, documented feedback on their performance.

10. Locum Posts

a. LATS

Locums approved for training (LATS) may count all time in posts towards eligibility requirements.

b. All other Locum Posts including LAS

All other locum posts including locums approved for service (LAS) may count a maximum of EIGHT months towards the time requirements for entry to the examination if they meet all the following criteria:

- i. Minimum duration of FOUR months whole time equivalent in Psychiatry
- ii. Recognised by the Hospital (Trusts where applicable) as incorporating within contractual arrangements specified time and funding for educational training. Job plans must include dedicated time for academic and educational activities such as attending journal clubs, grand rounds, attendance at an MRCPsych course or equivalent, study leave and regular weekly educational supervision.

Note: Foundation and Trust Grade posts do not count towards eligibility.

11. Parental Leave, and Sick Leave

A total of three months whole time equivalent in either of the above, or a combination of the above, is permitted during the course of training. This must be agreed with the College Tutor and Postgraduate Deanery. A letter of support confirming leave should be issued by the College Tutor/Training Lead (Non-Training approved post holders)/Head of Department of Psychiatry (Overseas post holders).

12. Research or Academic Posts

Candidates in full-time posts whose job plan contains protected time for research or other academic study may count some research/academic time towards the time eligibility requirements for entry to the examination. Candidates must submit a job description and weekly timetable for the attention of the Chief Examiner. They must meet all other requirements as stipulated in the Eligibility Criteria and Regulations for the MRCPsych Examinations. The Chief Examiner will check eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

13. Transferable Competencies

Candidates who have worked in other specialties may count some of their experience (in addition to their psychiatry placements) towards the time eligibility requirements for entry to the examination. Candidates must submit evidence including a job description and weekly timetables and learning objectives and outcomes for the attention of the Chief Examiner. They must meet all other requirements as stipulated in the Eligibility Criteria and Regulations for the MRCPsych Examinations. The Chief Examiner will review and confirm eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

14. MRCPsych Part I Holders

MRCPsych Part I 1643-Day Validity Period

Candidates in possession of the 'old style' MRCPsych Part I are referred to the previous Regulations published in February 2012 which are available from the College.

SECTION 2: General Information & Regulations

1. Introduction

The MRCPsych Examinations consists of two Written Papers and one Clinical Examination (CASC). A calendar of dates and a schedule of fees are available from the College website https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/exams All updates regarding the MRCPsych Examinations will be published on the Exams pages of the College website.

As stated elsewhere in these Regulations, candidates are reminded that it is their responsibility to keep abreast of developments about training and examinations through the College website and to inform the Examinations Unit in writing of any changes to contact details. The College does not accept responsibility for misdirected or delayed communications due to incorrect or out of date addresses of candidates.

Update: June 2020

Due to the impact of Covid-19 the College has reviewed possibilities for delivery of the MRCPsych examinations, both as regards written papers and the CASC. With effect from 22 June 2020 and until further notice all assessments are now offered as digital exams.

Note: Spaces for the online assessments are limited and priority will be given specified below.

Candidates who fail to secure a space for any given examination will be offered to enter a waiting list for the next sitting of that particular exam. If necessary, an appropriate extension to the Written Paper Validity Period will be granted.

2. Examination Venues

a. Written Papers

i. Digitally delivered Written Exams

With effect from 22 June 2020, the Written Papers are conducted on a digital platform – either at a test centre operated by the RCPsych's delivery partner Pearson VUE and their network of global test centres or on Pearson VUE's online platform.

Candidates are required to apply using the online application form during the published application periods.

Exam places are available on a first-come first-served basis. Pearson VUE test centre places are also available on a first-come first-served basis. Should no test centre places be available, a candidate's exam sitting will take place on Pearson

VUE's remote online examining platform OnVUE in the candidate's chosen location (normally home or workplace on their personal laptop or desktop computer). Following the closure of the application window, candidates will receive an email with instructions allowing them to book their test centre with Pearson VUE directly from amongst the available Pearson VUE test centres nearest to them, always bearing in mind that these places are available on a first-come first-served basis. If booking for a place to sit a Written Paper outside the UK, a candidate must book a time slot with Pearson VUE directly from amongst the available test centres. This booking must be for a start time between 06:00 – 09:00 UK time. Should an overseas candidate book a start time outside of this three (3) hour window, the booking will be cancelled. In this instance, the candidate will be required to rebook at the risk of places at the test centre of their original choosing having all been taken by the time they re-enter the Pearson VUE booking system to re-book.

ii. Note: Please refer to Section 5 (d) below. If sitting a Written Paper online/remotely, it is the candidate's responsibility to have adequate IT facilities and data connectivity in accordance with the current relevant specifications available on the College's website.

Admissions Requirements

Admission documents/log in details issued for the examination are only valid for the date and/or centre they are issued for. If taking the exam online/remotely from a candidate's chosen location (normally home or workplace) candidates will be advised in advance of the examination with detail of how to provide ID on the date of the examination. Types of acceptable ID will be notified in advance (this may differ to the requirements regarding ID when attending a test centre).

If attending an exam centre, YOU MUST BRING AN ORIGINAL PHOTO IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT (ID) TO THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION. We accept an original valid passport, original valid photo driving licence only, or National ID card (the Aadhar in India). Electronic/scanned or photocopy ID will not be accepted. Candidates who do not produce appropriate ID in accordance with these Regulations will not be permitted to sit the examination.

If you have any reason why you cannot bring the original of any of these documents to the examination venue/digital examination (or your ID document has recently expired), please contact the examinations unit at the RCPsych once you have received notification of being entered to sit the examination, and in any event in advance of the examination date. Exemptions from the requirement to bring original photo ID will only be granted in exceptional circumstances (for example theft on production of a police crime report) and alternative requirements will be specified with which candidates must comply. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the candidate not being permitted to sit the examination.

iii. Extra time candidates

Candidates who have been approved by the College to be allowed extra time will have the timing of their examination adjusted appropriately.

b. Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC)

i. Remote/online delivery of the CASC

Given the Covid-19 restrictions and the ongoing risks associated with conducting the CASC in a live venue, the following diets of the CASC will be online, with candidates, examiners, actors and administrators all participating remotely by videoconference:

- September 2020
- January 2021
- September 2021
- January 2022
- September 2022

The situation remains under review; it is presently undecided whether subsequent CASC diets will be conducted remotely.

ii. Admission requirements

(i) Remote/online CASC

Admission Documents issued for the examination are only valid for the exam date they are issued for.

YOU MUST PRESENT AN ORIGINAL PHOTO IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT (ID) AT THE CASC. We accept an original valid passport, original valid photo driving licence only, or National ID card (the Aadhar in India). Electronic/scanned or photocopy ID will not be accepted. Candidates who do not produce appropriate ID in accordance with these Regulations will not be permitted to sit the examination.

If you have any reason why you cannot present the original of any of these documents at the CASC (or your ID document has recently expired), please contact the Head of Examinations once you have received notification of being entered to sit the examination, and in any event in advance of the examination date. Exemptions from the requirement to present original photo ID will only be granted in exceptional circumstances (for example theft on production of a police crime report) and alternative requirements will be specified with which candidates must comply. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the candidate not being permitted to sit the examination.

(ii) Physical/live CASC

Admission Documents issued for the examination are only valid for the centre they are issued for.

YOU MUST BRING AN ORIGINAL PHOTO IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT (ID) TO THE CASC. We accept an original valid passport, original valid photo driving licence only, or National ID card (the Aadhar in India). Electronic/scanned or photocopy ID will not be accepted. Candidates who do not bring appropriate ID in accordance with these Regulations will not be permitted to sit the examination.

If you have any reason why you cannot bring the original of any of these documents to the examination venue [or your ID document has recently expired], please contact the Head of Examinations once you have received notification of being entered to sit the examination, and in any event in advance of the examination date. Exemptions from the requirement to bring original photo ID will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, [for example theft on production of a police crime report] and alternative requirements will be specified with which candidates must comply. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the candidate not being permitted to sit the examination.

3. Registration Requirements

All doctors in the UK must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) when applying for the MRCPsych Examinations. The College will verify that registration is valid with the GMC. Details regarding registration can be found on the GMC website (http://www.gmc-uk.org/).

Overseas trainees must be registered with their national regulatory body. An original or attested copy of their current registration certificate must be included with the application to sit an examination. Please note that any communications and documentation submitted to the examinations unit in any language other than English must be accompanied by a certified English-language translation. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange and pay for this translation. Any original documentation submitted in hardcopy form will be returned via international registered post.

4. Application Procedure

Examination dates together with application periods are published on the exams pages of the College website. Dates might be subject to changes and all changes will be published on the exams pages of the College website. Candidates are advised to check these pages regularly for updates.

All applications must be received within the specified dates. An online application form can be obtained from the Examinations page of the College website. Please note the following:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that online applications are complete, and that all necessary documentation required is submitted within the application period.
- Incomplete applications must be resubmitted within the application period.
- Applications must be submitted NO LATER THAN 3.30pm UK time on the published closing date.
- Applicants are strongly advised to apply as early as possible within the application period. Spaces for the CASC online assessments are limited and are allocated on a 'first come first served' basis, to be determined by the time stamp of the online submission of the application. Spaces for written papers will be prioritised as specified on Section 2, 2.a.i. Candidates who fail to secure a space for any given examination will be offered to enter a waiting

list for the next sitting of that particular exam. If necessary, an appropriate extension to the Written Paper Validity Period will be granted.

- Spaces for written papers will be prioritised as specified in Section 2, 2.a.i. Spaces for CASC online assessments will be prioritised as follows:
 - o Candidates who were rescheduled from the previous diet.
 - All other candidates on a first-come first-served basis.
- Applicants will receive automatic emails confirming receipt of application and payment of fees. This does not guarantee a place at the examination. A separate email will be sent by the examinations team after the application deadline to confirm whether the applicant has been allocated a place.
- Applicants are welcome to contact the Examinations Unit to enquire about receipt of their application should they not have received a confirmation email within 24 hours of submitting an online application.
- Please note that under no circumstances will late applications be accepted. There is no exception to this rule.
- The College will not accept responsibility for computer errors, loss of documentation in the postal system or insufficient postage paid.

Note:

With effect from 1 January 2020 no more than two attempts at the CASC are permitted in each calendar year, regardless of venue. This is to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, whether based in the UK or overseas. Please refer to Section 1, paragraph 6d above.

5. Withdrawals, Refunds and Cancellations

a. Preparation and Fitness to take an Examination

It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure that they are physically and mentally fit to undertake an examination. This includes bereavement, family illness or other potentially traumatic experiences. Subject to any notification to the contrary provided to the College candidates who attend for an examination are by reason of their attendance declaring themselves adequately prepared and fit. Retrospective claims regarding examination performance or requests for an extension to the Written Paper Validity Period will not be considered once a candidate has presented and undertaken an examination. Candidates who are on sick leave from work must provide a fitness note from their GP if they believe that they are fit to take the examination.

b. Withdrawal Prior to an Examination

If the candidate is not fit, or if he/she thinks there may be other grounds for withdrawal - for example, illness/bereavement or personal problems of a very serious nature - he/she should inform his/her College Tutor/Training Lead/Head of Department of Psychiatry who should issue a letter of support. If the College Tutor/Training Lead/Head of Department of Psychiatry is not available, the candidate should contact his/her Educational Supervisor.

Candidates should also inform the Director of Professional Standards, or the Head of Examinations or Examinations Co-ordinator at the Royal College of Psychiatrists in writing together with supporting evidence. Withdrawal on reasonable grounds may on the production of supporting documentation be considered for a special adjustment to the Written Paper Validity Period.

Supporting documentation should be submitted in writing to the Chief Examiner as soon as possible and before any further attempts at MRCPsych examinations.

c. Withdrawal during an Examination

Candidates who attend an examination and are or become unwell on the day of the examination should speak to the Chief Invigilator (written papers) or a Member of the Examinations Unit (CASC exam). If the candidate wishes to continue the examination, the Examiners/Examinations Sub-Committee will not normally make allowances for adverse performance levels due to illness. Candidates should be aware that if they decide to continue under such circumstances their attempt will stand whatever the circumstances. If a candidate fails to complete and submit the assessment this would still count as an attempt and no refund will be given.

If in the opinion of the Chief Invigilator it is unsafe for a candidate to continue or other candidates will be compromised, then the Chief Invigilator will withdraw the candidate from the exam and stop the progress of the exam if necessary. The Chief Invigilator's decision will be final in such matters.

It will not be possible to allocate another date or session during the week of the examination for candidates who withdraw.

Withdrawal on reasonable grounds may on the production of supporting documentation be considered for a special adjustment to the Written Validity Period.

Supporting documentation should be submitted in writing to the Chief Examiner as soon as possible and before any further attempts at MRCPsych examinations.

d. Candidate Responsibility: IT systems, data connectivity, undisturbed location

For any remote/online examination taken in a candidate's chosen location (normally home or workplace, as set out above) it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure to have adequate IT facilities and data connectivity in accordance with the specifications for the relevant examination. The College accepts no liability whatsoever in connection with a disrupted or curtailed assessment. No refund of the application fee will be given.

If a candidate fails to complete and submit the assessment this would still count as an attempt and no refund will be given as mentioned in section 5c above.

For the avoidance of doubt a disrupted or curtailed examination due to a candidate's inadequate IT equipment/data connectivity does not constitute a ground of appeal under the MRCPsych Appeals Procedure.

Candidates are strongly advised to avail themselves of test sessions (dry runs) offered prior to an examination.

Also, if choosing to sit an examination in a candidate's chosen location (normally home or workplace, other locations subject to the College's approval) it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure the location is quiet and undisturbed. Disruption or interference in a candidate's chosen location does not constitute a ground of appeal under the MRCPsych Appeals Procedure.

e. Refunds

Trainees/candidates who withdraw in accordance with paragraph 5 (b) prior to the closing date of applications will receive a full refund. **All withdrawals must be made in writing.**

Trainees/candidates who withdraw after the closing date are not entitled to a refund.

However, if the withdrawal has been prompted by accident/illness or bereavement, written submissions should be made to the Head of Examinations NO LATER THAN 30 DAYS after the date of the examination. Any such request must be supported in writing by an appropriate medical lead (refer Appendix C). Additionally, those withdrawing due to illness must send a letter from the physician responsible for their treatment. The Director of Professional Standards will liaise with the Chief Examiner to assess, on a caseby-case basis, whether a refund may be awarded. Refunds are granted at the discretion of the College Treasurer and will not normally exceed more than 50% of the total fees paid for the examination (including administration charges).

f. Cancellations

In the event of a national emergency, war, epidemic or pandemic, prohibitive governmental regulation or any other cause reasonably beyond the control of the parties in the country hosting the examination ("force majeure event") the College and the candidates will be released from their respective obligations; the examination will be cancelled and candidates will receive a full refund of fees. In addition, the College agrees to extend candidates' written paper validity periods by reference to the time-period until the next possible diet of the examination. Candidates may request to transfer to sit the examination in an exam centre in another country if space and time permits but a transfer cannot be guaranteed. The Royal College of Psychiatrists will not accept liability for travel or accommodation expenses or any other costs that candidates may have incurred in preparation for or in connection with the cancelled or rescheduled examination.

6. Special Requirements for Candidates Taking the MRCPsych Examination

a. Special Adjustments

The following guidelines specify the procedure for special adjustments. Please note that consideration of special adjustments may only be given in advance of an examination and that although it is not possible to sit either Paper A or B by way of a hardcopy of the exam, adjustments can be made for digitalised sittings on the delivery platform based on the submissions outlined in (i) and (ii) below.

To qualify for consideration of special adjustments candidates must supply:

- (i) A written assessment from an educational psychologist normally within the last 5 years, or a current report from their physician as may be appropriate, which includes a statement confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant special examination arrangements and recommendations for the specific adjustments or arrangements required; accompanied by:
- (ii) A letter of support from their College Tutor (or supervising consultant of equivalent standing if applying from overseas or are in a UK non-training post).

Such an application will be considered by the Chief Examiner. If a candidate is not able to supply the above documents within the application period, the candidate may choose to (i) withdraw, or (ii) proceed without special arrangements. Please note the College is not liable for any costs incurred in connection with the production and delivery of supporting documentation.

b. Notification of Disability or state of health within an examination centre

Applicants should inform the Examinations Unit of any disabilities or factors that may hinder their movements within an examination centre within the application period. Supporting documentation from the applicant's physician should also be submitted together with details of the specific adjustments or arrangements required. If a candidate is not able to supply the above documents within the application period, the candidate may choose to (i) withdraw, or (ii) proceed without special arrangements.

In the event that a candidate requires special assistance at an examinations centre outside of the application period due to unforeseen circumstances they should contact the Examinations Unit immediately. In such event the College will endeavour to provide such reasonable assistance as may be possible. If the required assistance cannot be provided, the candidate may choose to (i) withdraw, or (ii) proceed without special arrangements.

The College will not adjust the standard required to pass the examination under any circumstances.

7. Conduct in Examinations

All candidates are expected to comply with the MRCPsych Code of Conduct for Examination Candidates (including Applicants) – see section 16 below.

Further rules and guidance regarding conduct during the examination and expectations of candidate, including technical specifications for the online exams will be issued to candidates prior to the examination date, and these documents will form part of the Eligibility Criteria & Regulations for the MRCPsych Examinations.

Invigilators may conduct checks to ensure safety of the assessment and in order to detect any academic misconduct. In online/remote examinations candidates must on request of the invigilator provide a scan of their desk/room.

(i) Remote/online examinations

All candidates must be logged in, have their ID ready to present and be ready to commence the assessment by the stipulated time provided in the advance information provided.

Candidates who log in late will not be permitted to sit the examination and refunds will not be provided.

Calculators are not permitted. Candidates are expected to use the inbuilt calculator available on the online platform.

Candidates are not permitted to have electronic devices (including but not restricted to mobile phones, tablets, smart watches, recording devices, etc.) or study aides in their presence during the examination. Breaches of this will be treated as misconduct with possible recourse to the GMC as mentioned in section 15 below.

(ii) Physical/live examinations

All candidates are advised to arrive in good time prior to the start for the examination. Please ensure you allow adequate time for potential delays and travel disruptions. Candidates who arrive late will not be allocated extra time. Candidates who arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination will not be permitted to sit the examination. Candidates are not permitted to leave in the last 15 minutes of the examination.

Candidates must store items such as mobile phones*, books, calculators†, notes, aids, writing paper, overcoats, handbags, cases, and any electronic, computer in the designated place as instructed by the invigilator at the written or clinical examination room. It is strictly forbidden to take recording or other similar equipment into the examination room.

Should a candidate be provided with any writing materials for use in an examination, they must be returned together with all notes made. It is strictly forbidden to remove examination material from the examination. This includes written questions and CASC stations.

During the periods before, during and (in the case of the CASC) after sitting the examination, the use of telephones, computers, or any form of communication, messaging or electrical/electronic equipment, including recording devices by candidates is strictly forbidden. For the CASC, candidates will require a timing device such as an analogue watch. **Smart watches will not be permitted.** Candidates who attend the written papers must stop writing when instructed to do so within the permitted examination time period.

Please note that failure to comply with these requirements will lead to disqualification from the examination.

* Mobile phones must be SWITCHED OFF and kept in the designated area as instructed by the exam invigilator. The designated area may be inside the examination hall. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure their phone is completely switched off and to ensure that no phone settings may be activated during the examination - this includes alarms, alerts or notifications which may create a disturbance to the examination. Any incidents involving disruption to the examination caused by mobile phones may lead to disqualification.

† Basic calculators are only permitted in Paper B.

8. Publication of Results

Dates for publication of results are published with the Examinations Calendar on the College website <u>here</u> or from the Examinations Unit.

Results are sent to candidates on the predetermined dates as published in the examinations calendar.

Names of successful candidates will normally be available by 5pm on the date of publication on the College website. Candidates who do not wish to have their name published if successful MUST inform the Examination Unit at the time of application.

RESULTS WILL NOT BE GIVEN OVER THE TELEPHONE, BY FAX, OR E-MAIL. Candidates are asked to refrain from contacting the Examinations Unit to enquire about or discuss results.

For UK training posts, results will also appear on the online portfolio within one week of publication.

Please note, if you fail the CASC examination having passed 4 or less stations and/or receive 2 or more severe fails across stations, a copy of your results letter will be sent to your CASC sponsor/supervisor. The Examinations Sub-Committee strongly recommend candidates discuss results with their sponsor/supervisor and relate it to their development and training in identified areas.

9. Complaints

Candidates who wish to make a complaint regarding assessment of their eligibility to sit for any Examination should write to the Director of Professional Standards

(<u>Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk</u>). All such complaints will be discussed with the Chief Examiner.

Candidates who wish to make a complaint about an individual member of the Examinations Unit are advised to write to the Director of Professional Standards (Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk).

Candidates who wish to make a complaint about the conduct of an exam/ examiner at the examination should in the first instance ask to speak to an MRCPsych CASC Circuit Manager (CASC)/ Chief Invigilator (Written Paper), who will complete an incident report. The candidate in addition should make a formal complaint in writing to the Director of Professional Standards no later than THREE WORKING DAYS after the date of the examination. It is the responsibility of the candidate to comply within the stipulated timeframe (Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk).

The Director of Professional Standards will, in liaison with the Chief Examiner, investigate the complaint and report to the Examinations Sub-Committee.

10. Appeals Procedure

Candidates who wish to appeal against the result of any MRCPsych Examination should follow the Appeals Procedure which is available on the Examinations pages of the College website here.

The College will not release the question paper or answer key under any circumstances. In order to retain the integrity of the exam any CASC marksheets released as part of an appeal will be redacted.

11. The President's Prize

From August 2018, the Laughlin Prize which will no longer be awarded, instead the President's Prize will be awarded. A prize of £500 may be awarded to the candidate considered by the Examinations Sub-Committee to have given the best overall performance in Paper B and the CASC. The Education and Training Committee, however, reserves the right not to award the prize. Details can be found on the examinations pages of the college website.

12. The Standish-Barry Prize

A prize of £200 may be awarded annually to the Irish Graduate considered by the Examinations Sub-Committee to have given the best overall performance in Paper B and the CASC. The Education and Training Committee, however, reserves the right not to award the prize. Details can be found on the examinations pages of the college website.

13. The Alexander Mezey Prize

The Alexander Mezey Prize of £500 is awarded annually to the international medical graduate (IMG) practising in the United Kingdom who obtains the highest number of stations passed in the CASC and highest pass mark in Paper B when

completing the MRCPsych exam. The Examinations Sub-Committee identifies the successful candidate when marks from all sittings of the examination in that year are available. The Education and Training Committee, however, reserves the right not to award the prize. Details can be found on the examinations pages of the college website.

14. Membership of the College

To apply for Membership of the College, the following criteria must be met:

23 months whole time equivalent post foundation/internship experience in Psychiatry AND a pass in ALL components of the MRCPsych Examinations.

The Education and Training Committee reserve the right to make the final decision with regard to an individual's election to Membership. Consideration is given in each case to the GMC's Good Medical Practice Guidelines.

Successful candidates admitted to Membership are not permitted to use the letters 'MRCPsych' until they have completed the declaration form and returned it to the Registration Officer, accompanied by the Registration Fee. Upon receipt of these, the Registration Officer will issue a Membership Certificate which grants entitlement to the 'MRCPsych' designation.

15. Code of Conduct

Candidates are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Examination Candidates which can be found here. A breach of the Code is deemed a breach of these Regulations and may lead to disqualification. Misconduct may be taken into account when considering a candidate's application for membership of the College (see Section 15 below). Misconduct may be reported to the GMC.

16. Candidate Responsibility and College Liability

It is the responsibility of candidates to keep abreast of developments about training and examinations through the College website and to inform the Examinations Unit in writing of any changes to contact details. The College does not accept responsibility for misdirected or delayed communications due to incorrect or out of date addresses of candidates.

As stated in various sections above including in particular paragraph 5f, in remote/online examinations it is the responsibility of candidates to have adequate IT systems in place, including data connectivity. It is also the responsibility of candidates to ensure they take any online/remote examination in a suitably quiet and undisturbed location.

The College shall under no circumstances whatever be liable (whether in contract, tort (including negligence), breach of statutory duty, or otherwise) for any direct, indirect or consequential loss (including without limitation loss of earnings) suffered or incurred by the candidate resulting from or in connection with his or her failure to pass any part of the MRCPsych examination and/or the timing, process or outcome of an appeal.

17. Equality & Diversity Monitoring

The College is constantly endeavouring to ensure that all its Members and Associates are treated equitably. We believe that the College does have a good record in these areas and that we are in the vanguard of professional associations. We can only ensure equity if we have accurate information in all areas of College activities. This includes Examination details. This information is gathered solely for monitoring purposes and is treated as confidential. It is not available to Examiners.

18. Data Protection

All trainees/candidates should refer to the College's Privacy Notice for Exam Candidates which can be found **here**.

19. Release of personal data to the General Medical Council (GMC)

Candidates' attention is drawn to the College's Privacy Notice for Exam Candidates for details of the release of personal data to the GMC. Personal data, including data about exam results, of candidates who are registered with the GMC (or register at any time in the future), will be passed to the GMC (when they have been registered and not before then) in order that the GMC (as the statutory regulator of medical training) can use such personal data for quality assurance and research purposes in relation to medical education and to facilitate the awarding of certificates of completion of training (CCTs). This transfer of personal data to the GMC does not require candidates' consent and will occur as a matter of course as it is undertaken in accordance with our legal obligations, including the Medical Act 1983, and the public interest. For further information as to how the GMC will use such data please refer to the GMC's privacy notice here.

All further queries pertaining to eligibility and these regulations should be made in writing prior to any application/attempt to the Chief Examiner, Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Appendix A - Transitional Arrangements

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Changes to the MRCPsych Written Papers and Transitional Arrangements

From 2015 the number of MRCPsych Written papers will reduce from three to two. This follows extensive work undertaken by the various question writing panels and the Examinations sub-Committee. The main driver behind this was the perception of candidate examination burden. Trainee consultation through trainee representatives took place as part of this process. The Education, Training & Standards Committee agreed that the Examinations Sub-Committee should work towards reducing the MRCPsych Written Papers from three papers to two papers. An extensive rationalising and syllabus mapping programme began in 2012 which has culminated in the development of two written papers.

The new papers will be launched in April 2015. The current papers 1, 2 and 3 will cease to exist after 31st December 2014.

There is one remaining sitting of the current MRCPsych paper 1 in December 2014 and one remaining sitting of the current MRCPsych Papers 2 and 3 in October 2014.

The new papers will comprise of the same areas of assessment:

'MRCPsych Paper A': The scientific and theoretical basis of psychiatry

'MRCPsych Paper B': Critical review and the clinical topics in psychiatry

For a transitional period Paper A will be split into two sections A (i) and A (ii) and will be held on the same day. These papers are equivalent to the current Paper 1 and 2. Therefore, those candidates who currently and in 2015 only hold a pass in either Paper 1 or Paper 2 will be required to sit either paper A (i) or Paper A (ii) respectively.

The updated syllabus for MRCPsych Papers A and B can be found on the Examinations pages of the College website http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/examinations.aspx.

With effect April 2019, the papers will each comprise of 150 items made up of MCQ best 1 of 5 and EMI questions.

These changes have been approved by the GMC.

Appendix B – Written Paper Validity Periods

All Written Paper Validity Periods are published on the examinations pages of the college website

First Written Paper Passed	Results Published	1643 days from Date of Publication
Paper 3 Diet 1 2008	3 April 2008	2 October 2012
Paper 1 Diet 2 2008	1 July 2008	30 December 2012
Paper 2 Diet 2 2008	1 July 2008	30 December 2012
Paper 3 Diet 2 2008	16 September 2008	17 March 2013
Paper 1 Diet 3 2008	19 December 2008	19 June 2013
Paper 2 Diet 3 2008	19 December 2008	19 June 2013
Paper 1 Diet 1 2009	3 July 2009	1 January 2014
Paper 2 Diet 1 2009	3 July 2009	1 January 2014
Paper 3 Diet 1 2009	2 February 2009	3 August 2013
Paper 1 Diet 2 2009	7 December 2009	7 June 2014
Paper 2 Diet 2 2009	7 December 2009	7 June 2014
Paper 3 Diet 2 2009	11 September 2009	12 March 2014
Paper 1 Diet 1 2010	13 September 2010	14 March 2015
Paper 2 Diet 1 2010	13 September 2010	14 March 2015
Paper 3 Diet 1 2010	8 February 2010	9 August 2014
Paper 1 Diet 2 2010	7 February 2011	8 August 2015
Paper 2 Diet 2 2010	7 February 2011	8 August 2015
Paper 3 Diet 2 2010	12 July 2010	10 January 2015
Paper 3 Diet 3 2010	12 November 2010	13 May 2015
Paper 1 Diet 1 2011	9 September 2011	9 March 2016
Paper 2 Diet 1 2011	20 April 2011	19 October 2015
Paper 3 Diet 1 2011	20 April 2011	19 October 2015
Paper 1 Diet 2 2011	3 February 2012	3 August 2016
Paper 2 Diet 2 2011	7 November 2011	7 May 2016
Paper 3 Diet 2 2011	7 November 2011	7 May 2016
Paper 1 Diet 1 2012	28 August 2012	26 February 2017
Paper 2 Diet 1 2012	11 May 2012	9 November 2016
Paper 3 Diet 1 2012	11 May 2012	9 November 2016
Paper 1 Diet 2 2012	15 February 2013	16 August 2017
Paper 2 Diet 2 2012	9 November 2012	10 May 2017
Paper 3 Diet 2 2012	9 November 2012	10 May 2017
Paper 1 Diet 1 2013	2 August 2013	31 January 2018
Paper 2 Diet 1 2013	20 May 2013	18 November 2017
Paper 3 Diet 1 2013	20 May 2013	18 November 2017
Paper 1 Diet 2 2013	14 February 2014	15 August 2018
Paper 2 Diet 2 2013	8 November 2013	9 May 2018
Paper 3 Diet 2 2013	8 November 2013	9 May 2018

First Written Paper Passed	Results Published	1643 days from Date of Publication
Paper 1 Diet 1 2014	1 August 2014	30 January 2019
Paper 2 Diet 1 2014	16 May 2014	14 November 2018
Paper 3 Diet 1 2014	16 May 2014	14 November 2018
Paper 1 Diet 2 2014	13 February 2015	14 August 2019
Paper 2 Diet 2 2014	7 November 2014	8 May 2019
Paper 3 Diet 2 2014	7 November 2014	8 May 2019
Paper A Diet 1 2015	7 August 2015	05 February 2020
Paper B Diet 1 2015	18 May 2015	16 November 2019
Paper A Diet 2 2015	19 February 2016	19 August 2020
Paper B Diet 2 2015	6 November 2015	6 May 2020
Paper A Diet 1 2016	19 July 2016	17 January 2021
Paper B Diet 1 2016	13 May 2016	11 November 2020
Paper A Diet 2 2016	17 February 2017	18 August 2021
Paper B Diet 2 2016	4 November 2016	5 May 2021
Paper A Diet 1 2017	18 July 2017	16 January 2022
Paper B Diet 1 2017	5 April 2017	3 November 2021
Paper A Diet 2 2017	16 February 2018	17 August 2022
Paper B Diet 2 2017	3 November 2017	4 May 2022
Paper A Diet 1 2018	17 July 2018	15 January 2023
Paper B Diet 1 2018	8 May 2018	6 November 2022
Paper A Diet 2 2018	15 February 2019	16 August 2023
Paper B Diet 2 2018	9 November 2018	10 May 2023
Paper A Diet 1 2019	16 July 2019	13 January 2024
Paper B Diet 1 2019	9 May 2019	6 November 2023
Paper A Diet 2 2019	17 February 2020	16 August 2024
Paper B Diet 2 2019	8 November 2019	7 May 2024

Appendix C - Authorised Sponsors

The following list comprises of appropriate medical leads to provide sponsorship for UK trainees, UK non-trainees and Overseas candidates:

- College Tutor
- Training Programme Director
- Educational Supervisor
- Head of School
- Director of Medical Education (or equivalent)
- Head of Department of Psychiatry
- Consultant responsible for employee/trainee appraisal

This document is subject to change at any time. Last updated 18 January 2022.