

Eligibility Criteria and Regulations

for

**MRCPsych Written Papers
and
Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies
(CASC)**

March 2023

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SECTION 1: Eligibility Criteria

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

A candidate will be eligible for entry to sit the MRCPsych Paper A provided they:

- A. Hold full registration as a medical practitioner.

A candidate will be eligible for entry to sit MRCPsych Paper B provided they:

- A. Hold full registration as a medical practitioner **and**
- B. Are training/working in psychiatry.

It is recommended that you have 12 months experience in psychiatry 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 do not count towards eligibility requirements for Paper B or the CASC.
- c. Re-sitting Exams
Unsuccessful candidates may re-sit exams. Candidates should 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.

4. Written Paper Validity Period

a. Written Paper Validity Period

Effective from 1 January 2011 the validity of all written papers are time limited from the date of passing the first written paper. This regulation supersedes 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 (4.5 years) from the date of publication of results of that written paper to complete all remaining components of the MRCPsych, including the CASC ("the Written Paper Validity Period"). The date of publication of results counts as day 1. Written Paper Validity Dates can be found on the [College website](#).

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 to validity periods

Requests can be made for special adjustments to the Written Paper Validity Period. Submissions in writing should be made to the Chief Examiner and sent to examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk. The College reserves the right to request submission of any additional documentation in support of the request.

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 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

Trainees must inform the Examinations department in advance if they are going out of programme and therefore require an extension, 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 permitted a maximum of six attempts within their individual Written Paper Validity Period at any one component of the MRCPsych examinations.

In exceptional circumstances, candidates can apply for approval for additional attempts. Candidates 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 considered 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)

With effect from 1 January 2020, no more than two attempts at the CASC are permitted in each calendar year, regardless of venue or training status. For the avoidance of doubt this rule does not affect the Written Paper Validity Period (see paragraph 6a above), nor the 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 4 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.

Candidates must also be aware that attempts at each examination are limited to six, irrespective of any renunciation of their written paper validity period.

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

Eligibility

A candidate will be eligible to enter the CASC provided they:

- a. Have 23 months whole time equivalent post foundation/internship experience in Psychiatry by the time of the exam. **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

A pass in Papers A and B

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

b. 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

c. 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)

6. Sponsorship Requirements

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

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 appropriate 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.

7. Overseas Candidates and UK Candidates not in GMC approved training programme

Candidates who are not in a GMC approved UK training programme 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.

8. Locum Posts

a. LAT

Locums approved for training (LAT) 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 posts do not count towards LAS eligibility.

9. 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.

10. 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.

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 Team 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.

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. 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 07:00 – 10:00 UK time. Should a 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 re-book 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 [Pearson VUE 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 a Pearson VUE test centre, you need to bring two forms of ID. The primary ID should be a passport, driving license or a nationality card with a photo, your name as it appears on your government documents and in date. Electronic/scanned or photocopied ID will not be accepted.

The secondary ID must have the exact same name as the primary ID and a signature, such as a bank card.

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 reasonable adjustments

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 pandemic, 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
- January 2023

From September 2023 the CASC will only be delivered face to face.

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) Face to face 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/>).

Candidates working outside of the UK 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 department 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 completed and 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:
 - Candidates who applied but were not allocated a place at the most recent sitting (on a first-come first-served basis, if required)
 - All other candidates on a first-come first-served basis.
- Applicants will receive automatic emails confirming receipt of application and payment of fees. The Netbanx receipt for payment is almost instantaneous and

indicates an application has been successfully submitted. 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 team 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. 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 they think there may be other grounds for withdrawal - for example, illness/bereavement or personal problems of a very serious nature - they should inform the Examinations Department.

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 Head of Examinations as soon as possible and before any further attempts at MRCPsych examinations.

Please refer to paragraph e below for information on refunds.

c. Withdrawal during an Examination

Candidates who attend an examination and are or become unwell on the day of the examination should contact the Examinations Team. If the candidate wishes to continue the examination, it should be noted that 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 Head of Examinations 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 they 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 grounds for appeal under the MRCPsych Appeals Procedure.

Candidates are strongly advised to avail themselves of any on-boarding sessions 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 grounds for appeal under the MRCPsych Appeals Procedure.

e. Refunds

Candidates who withdraw prior to the closing date of applications will receive a full refund. All withdrawals must be made in writing by email to examinations@rpsych.ac.uk.

Candidates who withdraw after the closing date will forfeit their examination fee. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Examinations will consider requests to refund a candidate's examination fee, subject to receipt of written documentation (e.g.: detailed medical certificate, death certificate of close family member for a bereavement). Written submissions should be made to the Head of Examinations NO LATER THAN 30 DAYS after the date of the examination. 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. Reasonable adjustments for Candidates Taking the MRCPsych Examination

a. Reasonable Adjustments

The College works to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged in their examination due to their disability by making reasonable adjustments.

Candidates must submit their request for adjustments or access arrangements by the application closing date for the relevant examination.

Candidates should set out how their ability to perform in the examination is affected by their disability and must provide documentary evidence from an appropriate professional. All medical evidence must be provided by your registered medical professional and cannot be provided by a relation, friend or colleague. Documentation must be on headed paper and should include the details of the medical professional for verification purposes.

It is also helpful for candidates to provide details of adjustments they have been granted in the workplace and in previous examinations. Examples of

examination adjustments which may apply to candidates with a disability/impairment:

- Extra time
- Additional time for rest breaks
- Informing the examiner that a candidate may not be able to undertake specific physical movements due to a physical disability
- Any possible screen adjustment
- Access to toilet facilities as needed
- Access to medication/food/drink

In the event that a candidate requires access arrangement at an examinations centre outside of the application period due to unforeseen circumstances they should contact the Examinations Department 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 access arrangements.

Specific learning difficulties and neurodiversity

Candidates with a specific learning difficulty or neurodiverse condition requiring reasonable adjustments will be required to submit a report from a registered chartered educational psychologist or a specialist teacher with a practicing certificate, which needs to be undertaken in English after the age of 16.

Candidates should submit the full unabridged report, which should detail the recommended reasonable adjustments for examinations. Examples of examination adjustments which may apply to candidates with specific learning difficulties:

- Extra time
- A scribe
- A reader
- Additional time for rest breaks

Candidates are also required to provide a letter of support from their College Tutor/Educational Supervisor (or supervising consultant of equivalent standing if applying from overseas or are in a UK non-training post).

Please note the College is not liable for any costs incurred in connection with the production and delivery of supporting documentation.

Candidates should note that adjustments can only be made to the arrangements of the examination, not to the standard required to pass the examination.

Late diagnosis

Candidates who have had a late diagnosis (for example of autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and have sat an MRCPsych exam without their agreed reasonable adjustments, may have grounds for applying for additional attempts at the exam. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Examiner.

b. Pregnancy and breast feeding

The College wishes to support pregnant and nursing candidates in taking their examinations. Candidates who will be pregnant or have given birth within the prior 26 weeks at the time of the examination can request reasonable adjustments according to their specific needs and these will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of reasonable adjustments for pregnant candidates could include additional time to allow increased comfort breaks, permission for in-exam snacks in Pearson VUE test centres.

Candidates requiring facilities to breastfeed or express (for children of any age) while they are at their examination centre should contact the Examinations Department so that arrangements can be facilitated as best as possible.

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 as set out 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 may 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) Face to face 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 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.**

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.

8. Publication of Results

Dates for publication of results are published with the Examinations Calendar on the College website [here](#).

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

Results will not be given over the telephone.

For candidates in 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 (Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk). All such complaints will be discussed with the Chief Examiner.

Candidates who wish to make a complaint about an individual member of the Examinations Department 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 who will complete an incident report. In addition, the candidate should make a formal complaint in writing to the Head of Examinations no later than THREE WORKING DAYS after the date of the examination. (Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk).

The Director of Professional Standards or their nominated deputy 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 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 Department 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 stakeholders 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 Head of Examinations, Examinations@rcpsych.ac.uk.

Appendix A- 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 27 March 2023.