

MRCPsych Examiner Code of Conduct



1. Introduction

1.1 MRCPsych examinations rely on the commitment and professionalism of all Members and Fellows of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in all aspects of MRCPsych examinations both in the UK and Overseas. This code of conduct is applicable to all examiners.

1.2 To maintain the quality and standards of our examinations, all aspects are monitored including the appointment and performance of examiners; ensuring a rigorous initial training programme and subsequent assessment. There is also examiner refresher training which must be undertaken every 3 years to maintain active examiner status. Failure to complete refresher training means that an examiner's status will be reviewed. The examiner training programme ensures all examiners are compliant with relevant equality and diversity legislation. Examiners will be informed of any significant changes to the examinations during their tenure on the Board of Examiners.

1.3 Additionally, examiner performance is monitored at each clinical examination and all examiners are given this feedback with a comparison to the overall group of examiners. Additional feedback may arise from candidate complaints or findings at an Appeals Panel in order to further quality assure the process of examining.

1.4 MRCPsych examiners are expected to follow the Code of Conduct for RCPsych examiners which provides the framework against which any allegations of misconduct will be judged. In the event of any allegations of misconduct being made the RCPsych will follow the process in accordance with the appropriate College policy.

1.5 When examining at an overseas centre, examiners are required to adhere to high standards of professionalism, including respect for the hosting organisation, local examiners, staff and candidates involved in the exam. Examiners should also make themselves aware of local laws and customs and endeavour to avoid any actions that could put them at risk.

2. General standard of behaviour

2.1 MRCPsych Examiners are expected to behave in a professional manner, befitting a Member/Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, whilst undertaking all duties associated with the examination. Adherence to the principles and values within GMC's Good Medical Practice (<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice>) (or equivalent overseas regulators) is expected at all times. No examiner should be involved in disciplinary/regulatory/legal/court proceedings involving their professional conduct.

2.2. Examiners should demonstrate attitudes and behaviours that do not discriminate against candidates on the basis of their attitudes, beliefs, appearance or perceived abilities.

2.3. Examiners are expected to adhere to the above standards while using social media. Examiners may post about examining on their social media accounts. The posts should reflect professionalism and not include any extraneous or confidential information including anything relating to exam content or candidates.

3. Interacting with candidates

3.1. It is the responsibility of all examiners to refer to the Examiner Instructions and Information Booklet.

3.2. Examiners should be aware that candidates may be nervous and should behave in a manner that does not increase their anxiety and which encourages a positive examination experience.

3.3 The role and expectation of each examiner is to provide a consistent approach to each candidate's exam experience. Examiners should allow the candidate to complete their clinical examination without interruption or direction, unless they are causing the role player discomfort.

3.3. Examiners should not make any remark to the candidate about their performance. Examiners must not teach or coach candidates during their assessment.

3.4. Examiners should not discuss any aspect of the examination or a candidate's performance with a candidate at any point during or after the MRCPsych Clinical examination.

3.5. Examiners should avoid making any physical contact with the candidate, for example, to guide them from one station to another.

3.6. MRCPsych candidates are from across the world and may be unfamiliar with local customs and practices in the centre at which they sit the examination. Examiners should be sensitive to this fact but should not provide guidance to candidates on how they should approach simulated patients.

4. Interacting with role players

4.1. Examiners should maintain an awareness of role player comfort and safety at all times.

4.2. If a role player is for any reason uncomfortable about participating in the examination, either before the circuit starts or during the circuit, examiners should facilitate the withdrawal of the role player by informing the chief invigilator.

4.3. The dignity and modesty of all role players must be respected at all times. Examiners should ensure that the degree of exposure of a role player is acceptable and is maintained throughout the circuit.

4.4. Examiners should be polite, courteous and professional in their approach to all role players during exam days.

5. Interacting with colleagues

5.1. Examiners are expected to act with respect for fellow examiners, clinical invigilation team and other staff within the team running the examination at all times.

5.2. If an examiner has any concern about the conduct or performance of a fellow examiner this should be brought to the attention of the chief invigilator on the day as soon as is possible.

6. Handling personal and sensitive data

6.1. Examiners are reminded to maintain strict confidentiality and not divulge the content of scenarios used in the examination, results, candidate performance or any other information relating to a candidate.

6.2. Candidates - Examiners are expected to maintain the confidentiality of candidate results. This includes general indications of performance, as well as specific marks and grades.

6.3. Examination material - Examiners are expected to ensure the security of all scenarios, and station information before, during and after the examination.

7. Completion of marksheets

7.1. Examiners should use the standard statements in the feedback section of the marksheet. Examiners should also complete personalised feedback, particularly, for all candidates who they mark as borderline or failing the station, whilst avoiding making any judgemental statements on candidate performance, protected characteristics of appearance.

8. Participation in commercial activities

8.1. It is not acceptable for MRCPsych examiners to take part in commercially run (i.e. for profit) training courses. If a non-examiner takes part in such courses and is invited subsequently to become an examiner, it is on the understanding that such activity will cease.

8.2. It is not acceptable for examiners to write or contribute to non-College books or other materials, or any digital formats, or to re-edit or revise existing texts or other publications where the specific purpose is to help candidates prepare for any or all parts of the MRCPsych examinations unless it is through a deanery or trust training programme.

8.3 Examiners are encouraged to participate in candidate support through their training programme, deanery or college. Examiners should not use their College status to market non-College courses or products. Examiners should not use their status on the Board of Examiners to make commercial gain.

9. Copyright and use of materials

9.1. Copyright of questions used in MRCPsych Examinations belongs to the RCPsych. The MRCPsych questions are prepared and revised through the hard work of many College members and staff. Our aim is to produce valid, appropriate and well-prepared questions so that our examinations are fair and reflect a high

standard. Reliability, fairness and validity of the exam suffers a detrimental impact by unauthorised copying of exam questions. Examiners must report instances of infringement of copyright. Examiners should not divulge examination questions to outside organisations. The penalties for examiner misconduct regarding examination security will be considered by the College Disciplinary and Complaints Committee.

9.2 Examiners must agree not to publish any material which they have prepared for, or reviewed, in connection with the MRCPsych examinations for non-College products.

10. GMC reporting

10.1. Examiners should promptly inform the Head of Examinations if they are subject to any professional or disciplinary process or any limitations on practice are placed on them by the GMC or the equivalent regulator in the country in which they practice.

10.2. Examiner misconduct can be reported to the GMC if the actions are deemed to be falling short of GMC professional standards.

11. Appeals and Complaints

11.1. Any allegations of examiner misconduct will be investigated in a fair and transparent manner in line with the College Disciplinary and Complaints Committee.

11.2. It is often necessary to approach examiners for comment on candidate appeals and complaints, and examiners are expected to respond to any such approaches in an open and timely manner.

Examinations Committee 2025