

Becoming an MRCPCH UK Clinical Examiner

This document is for doctors interested in applying to become MRCPCH Clinical UK examiners. This document contains information about:

1. The role
2. Eligibility requirements
3. Process of becoming an examiner
4. Conduct, feedback and other key principles

Terminology

Examiner Elect (EE)	Title given once a submitted MRCPCH examiner application is approved by the Examiner Review Panel (ERP). The examiner elect begins training and assessment towards appointment as an examiner.
Examiner	Title given once an examiner elect has completed training and mentoring and been approved by the Examiner Review Panel and the Examinations Board. Examiners examine on both MRCPCH and DCH.

1. About the Role

Introduction

Examinations offered by the RCPCH are conducted by the Examining Boards of the Education and Training Executive Committee for Council. This section covers the duties and responsibilities of examiners for UK MRCPCH clinical examinations.

Clinical exam activities are for the most part coordinated through the RCPCH Clinical Assessment Team. MRCPCH examiners are required to provide support in the following areas:

- Participating in clinical examinations as examiners (MRCPCH & DCH) at least twice a year.
- Attending examiner training sessions.
- Hosting of clinical examinations (if hospital management are supportive and where there is a suitable venue).
- Collating suitable examination material for use as a written question for MRCPCH FOP/TAS/AKP theory exams (including DCH FOP) or for use as a clinical scenario for MRCPCH/DCH clinical exams.
- Production and review of theory questions by attending or convening question-setting sessions regionally or held at the RCPCH offices.
- Generating/writing scenarios for use in the MRCPCH and DCH clinical exams.

If there are any concerns around being able to commit to these activities, then examiner elect applicants and examiners should notify the Clinical Assessment team as early as possible. Question and scenario writing activities are coordinated through the RCPCH Theory and Standards Team.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

MRCPCH examiners are responsible for assessing the performance of candidates taking part in MRCPCH examinations.

1. Full commitment to the requirements of the post and the examination processes
 - a. To remain in good standing with the RCPCH, including maintaining Membership and hold full registration with the GMC.
 - b. Attendance at a minimum of two MRCPCH exam diets per year. Ideally this will involve examining over two exam days within each diet (4 days of examining per year).
 - c. To actively participate in ensuring the examinations are of the highest standards.
2. To provide assessment of candidates and to provide clear feedback
 - a. To examine all candidates in accordance with MRCPCH regulations, marking schemes and examiner guidance.
 - b. To complete all marking processes in accordance with guidelines and standard documentation.
 - c. To give full and fair consideration to equality and diversity whilst ensuring the integrity and validity of the examination is upheld.
 - d. To provide clear and concise feedback to candidates regarding poor performance completing documentation in full for all candidates.
3. Participation in examiner training and ongoing re-training programmes
 - a. To participate in the mandatory examiner elect training programme.
 - b. To engage in re-training as required (minimum of once every 3 years) or earlier if there should be a need due to an identified issue/complaint or a major change to the exam itself.
 - c. To undertake examiner equality and diversity training during examiner elect training and examiner re-training (minimum of once every 3 years).
 - d. To constructively take on board any feedback provided relating to examining and utilise it as an opportunity for learning.
4. To uphold all examination regulations, policies, and principles
 - a. To be fully conversant with all MRCPCH examinations regulations and changes to the exam.
 - b. To observe and maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the RCPCH examinations.
 - a. To observe the confidentiality and copyright of examination content at all times.

5. Reporting Concerns, Conflicts of Interest and Examiner Conduct:
- Examiners are expected to inform the Clinical Assessment team if they are aware of any risks to the confidentiality and integrity of the exam.
 - To not engage in the **running or administration** of commercial (**paid**) MRCPCH Clinical exam preparation courses aside from those which are run or sanctioned by the RCPCH. Examiners are permitted to act as course faculty in a commercial capacity but must ensure that courses do not make reference to the inclusion of active or inactive RCPCH examiner faculty. They must also ensure that courses that they are engaged in make no reference to the involvement of RCPCH examiners contributing to courses. If RCPCH Clinical Assessment team or Exam Board are informed of faculty involvement in courses issuing such claims or of faculty running their own commercial courses this could lead to an individual being suspended as an examiner.
 - To avoid activities or actions that would cause the RCPCH reputational damage. Please see the MRCPCH & DCH examiner code of conduct and performance and MRCPCH/DCH examiner misconduct policies for further information.

2. Eligibility Requirements

Please review the eligibility requirements listed here before proceeding to the following sections.

MRCPCH UK Clinical Examiner

Where noted, all requirements are essential and will remain as requirements throughout the examiner's term of service. You must notify the RCPCH Clinical Assessment team of any change in status that would make you no longer eligible to examine.

To be eligible for appointment as an MRCPCH examiner in the UK, an applicant must fulfil all the following criteria.

Essential Criteria

- Be on the GMC Specialist register with a licence to practise (see the examiner retirement document for those who have demitted clinical practice).
- Currently be clinically active.
- Be in a substantive consultant (or equivalent) post for at least two (2) years. Locum consultant roles do not count towards the 2 years.
- Be able to demonstrate awareness of the training standard required of the candidates before becoming an examiner, including familiarity with the Progress+ Core training curriculum.
- Have experience and understanding of all areas of specialty covered by RCPCH examinations.
- Have experience with OSCEs or practical examinations (e.g. examiner, assessor, organiser, question writing).

7. Have experience with teaching and training of undergraduate and postgraduate students (be a recognised trainer and/or educational supervisor for example) – move this to essential.
8. Must demonstrate that they comply with equality, diversity, and inclusion training requirements relevant to examining.
9. Be holders of the MRCPCH (or equivalent), having successfully passed all of elements of the examination although applicants may apply without it.
10. At the time of appointment be a member in good standing of the RCPCH.
11. The RCPCH must receive three positive substantive references for the applicant.
12. Evidence the ability to take on and respond positively to feedback provided both by senior colleagues and RCPCH staff. Constructive feedback is necessary to examine successfully, and all examiner elects and examiners will be expected to embrace the learning of new skills and approaches to examining appropriately on the MRCPCH clinical examination.

Consultants Through Portfolio Pathway as Examiners for MRCPCH Clinical Examinations

1. Evidence that they meet the other minimum standards for examiners as referenced above.
2. GMC specialist registration and must have completed 2 years in a substantive consultant role post CCT/ Portfolio Pathway – OR – Must have 2 years in a substantive specialist contract in SAS leadership role.
3. Registered with the GMC without limitation on their practice.
4. Be in good standing with the RCPCH.
5. Ideally be holders of the MRCPCH (or equivalent) having successfully passed all of elements of the examination but applicants may apply without it.

Desirable Criteria

1. Able to demonstrate understanding of the principles of adult learning (completed a 'Training the Trainers' course or equivalent).
2. Have experience hosting or organising OSCE/other practical exams.
3. Have some experience voluntarily contributing to courses as a faculty organiser (MRCPCH courses, DCH courses, APLS, NLS, PALS faculty).
4. Have some experience voluntarily contributing to other relevant RCPCH Education and Training activity (theory questing writing, MRCPCH or DCH clinical scenario writing, membership of scenario writing groups or committees, appeals panel, DCH examiner, START assessor or scenario writing, College exam course faculty (FOP/TAS, AKP or Clinical), AAC assessor, Angoff judge, international work).
5. Have acted as (or currently acting as) an educational supervisor.

Standing with the GMC

Where a medical practitioner has been referred to the GMC for investigation, they should not examine if an interim order has been issued, conditions have been placed on their practice or they have been suspended. The examiner must notify the Clinical Assessment team as soon as possible in these situations.

Retirement and the Examiner Application Process

Please be aware that we are unlikely to consider applications from individuals within 3 years of demitting all clinical practice due to the RCPCH investment of time and resources in the examiner application and training process. For all examiner applicants, the application, training, and assessment process will typically take 12-18 months to complete. Please ensure that this has been considered before submitting your application and please provide detail on any known, planned, or likely retirement date where possible.

Examiners who have retired and ceased all clinical work have a maximum of 3 years post full retirement to continue to support the MRCPCH clinical examination. Examiners in these circumstances will need to demonstrate that they meet the further additional requirements for retired faculty. Please see the examiner retirement document on the Becoming an Examiner web page for more details.

3. Process of Becoming an Examiner

If you are interested in becoming an MRCPCH examiner in the UK, please get in touch with us at examinerapps@rcpch.ac.uk to register your interest. We currently accept applications on a rolling basis for those wanting to become UK MRCPCH examiners. From time to time, we pause acceptance of applications and put interested individuals on an interest list. When we later open the application window, individuals on the list will be notified and asked to submit an application. Further information about how to become a UK MRCPCH examiner can be found below.

If you do not yet have an RCPCH account, please follow the instructions on this webpage to set one up prior to completing an application.

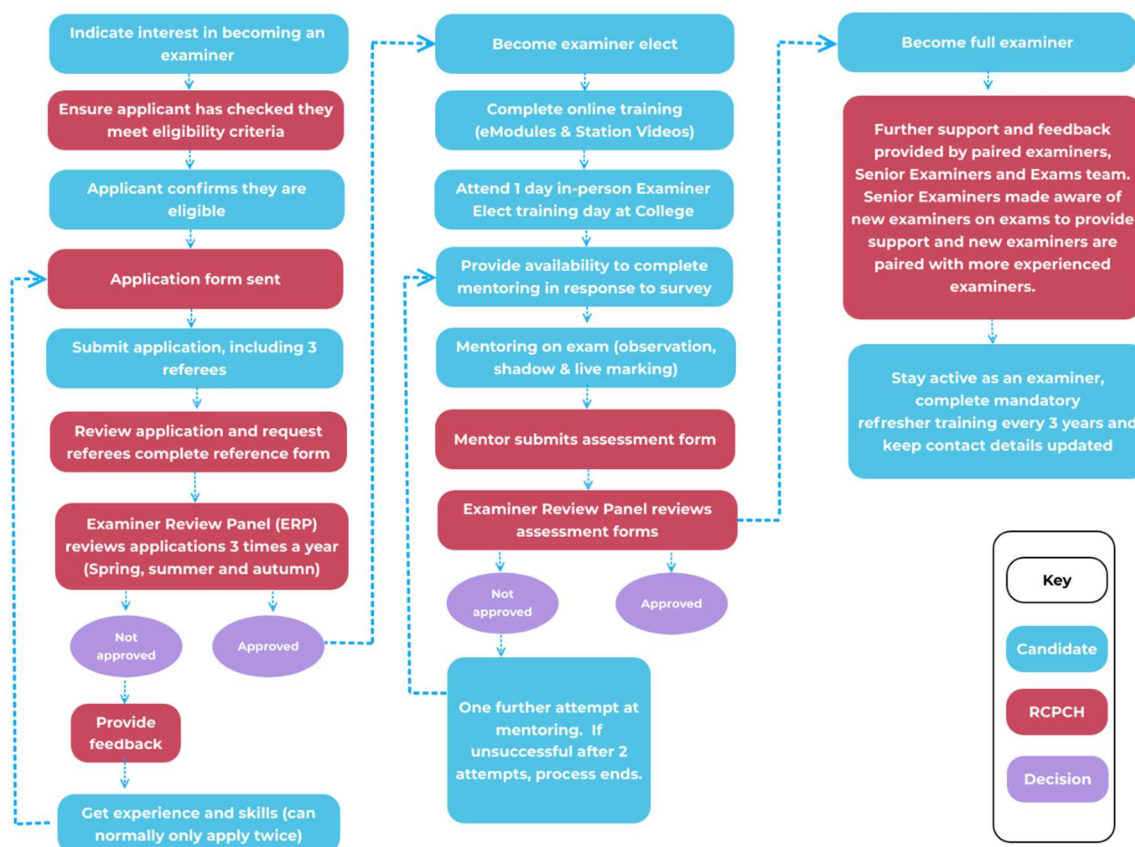
<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/user/signup>

MRCPCH UK Examiner Application Process:

1. Applicant emails the team and indicates interest in becoming an examiner
2. Applicant is asked to review this document and email the team back to confirm they meet the essential criteria.
3. Applicant is then sent the application form via email from Clinical Assessment team.
4. Applicant fully completes the application and returns to examinerapps@rcpch.ac.uk
5. Clinical Assessment team reviews the application for completeness.
6. Clinical Assessment team emails a reference form to the referees listed on the application with a deadline.
7. Referees email the completed reference form back to examinerapps@rcpch.ac.uk
8. Clinical Assessment team reviews the references for content and completeness.
9. All application materials, including references, are made available to members of the Examiner Review Panel (ERP) in advance of it meeting so panel members can review and score all applications.
10. Examiner Review Panel meets and discusses each application and decides outcomes.
11. Clinical Assessment team will draft outcome letters on behalf of the ERP incorporating their decisions and recommendations.
12. Application outcome letters will then be emailed to applicants.
13. Successful applicants will be added to our database as examiner elects and their outcome letter will provide information about online examiner training as well as their examiner number.
14. Unsuccessful applicants' outcome letters will provide information about the areas that need more experience prior to re-submitting their application.
15. If a re-submission of an application is rejected for a second time due to the required evidence not being provided, then the Examiner Review Panel / Examination Board may determine that any future applications from the unsuccessful applicant will either not be considered or not be considered for a time limited period. Reference to this will be included in outcome letters.
16. The Clinical Assessment team will contact new examiners elects about the opportunity for face-to-face training. Examiner elects must complete the online e-Modules and station marking training in RCPCH Learning prior to attending the face-to-face training day.
17. Examiner elects who have completed both online and face-to-face training will be allocated to live exams (based on their availability) to undertake observation and shadow marking. The UK observation and shadow marking process is undertaken over 1 day with examiners elect observing all station types in the morning and shadow/live mark with their mentors in the afternoon.

18. Shadow marking time involves examiner elects being paired with an experienced mentor who will assess their ability to benchmark and examine. The mentor will complete an assessment form in conjunction with the examiner elect, based on their performance over the exam day.
19. Where an examiner elect or their mentor feels the elect could do with a further day of mentoring, that will be agreed and included in the assessment forms.
20. Mentor assessment forms will be sent back to the Clinical Assessment team and reviewed.
21. The assessment form recommendations will be presented at the next ERP meeting after the examiner elect completed their mentoring process.
22. The ERP will review and make their decisions based on the assessment forms and any other relevant information.
23. The Clinical Assessment team will draft ERP outcome letters for the examiners elect and email them soon after the ERP meets.
24. Unsuccessful examiner elects will be given the option to attempt their observation and shadow marking process again at an upcoming exam.
25. If the live assessment of readiness to act as an examiner is not successful on the second attempt due to the required approach/performance not being evidenced, then the Examiner Review Panel / Examination Board may determine that the examiner elect will not be provided with an opportunity to repeat the process again.
26. Unsuccessful examiner elects have the right to appeal a decision by writing to the RCPCH Clinical Assessment team addressing it to the RCPCH Examinations Board. This will be taken to Examination Board for review. A decision may not be available until after the next Examination Board meeting being held. Examination Board meetings are generally held during mid-March, July, and November.
27. Should an examiner elect be unsuccessful after 2 attempts or appeal a decision and be unsuccessful in appeal then the examiner elect will be removed from the active list.
28. Examiner elects who successfully complete the observation and shadow marking and are made full examiners will then be added to our database of examiners.
29. They will then receive emails from the Clinical Assessment team about their availability in advance of MRCPCH Clinical UK exams.
30. They will also be contacted from time to time by the DCH administrator about their availability to examine on the DCH exam.
31. UK examiners are expected to examine regularly (twice a year – 4 days of exams), undertake regular refresher training (every 3 years or if major changes are made to the exam), examine for the DCH clinical exam, undertake hosting clinical exams if possible, as well as to help with question and scenario writing.

Becoming an MRCPCH Clinical Examiner Process



4. Examiner Conduct, Feedback and Other Key Principles

Feedback

The performance of examiners will be routinely monitored to ensure consistency and fairness. To support the development of all RCPCH examiners, feedback will be provided. Types of feedback can include:

- Direct/indirect feedback from relevant senior examiner on the day of the exam or through their Senior Examiner Report provided to the Clinical Assessment team after an exam event.
- Post-examination survey.
- Complaints (from candidates, patients and parents, host and host team, fellow examiners etc.).
- Senior Examiner Board (SEB) review meetings.
- Appeals Panel meetings.
- Clinical Assessment Team staff feedback based on issues with marksheets, candidates, scoring, justification of marking and standard of candidate feedback.

Feedback of a negative or constructive nature will be reviewed according to the MRCPCH & DCH examiner code of conduct and performance and MRCPCH/DCH examiner misconduct policies.

Examiner elects, examiners and senior examiners will often receive constructive feedback as it is embedded as a normal part of the process.

RCPCH Examination Board are aware of the challenges of delivering the MRCPCH clinical examination, particularly in relation to the number of variables that can occur at each exam event. Feedback provided must be received professionally, reflected upon and, where necessary, acted upon. Should any volunteer faculty not actively address concerns, then the Examination Board may take the difficult decision to remove examiners from the list of active faculty. To ensure that the exam maintains its standards, faculty will always be given the opportunity to address the areas of concern. However, if additional or similar concerns are raised on more than one occasion, then they will be taken to Examination Board for review.

Repeated negative feedback, or gross misconduct, could lead to an individual being suspended as an examiner. Typically, any concerns will be sent in writing to examiners after post-exam event evaluation. All faculty are expected to respond to feedback in writing. Should the concerns be of a serious nature, it is possible that suspension from the role of examiner could be actioned immediately. Concerns of a less serious nature will often lead to the examiner being provided with the opportunity to address them. If any examiner has concerns raised regarding their performance on more than one occasion, then Examination Board will be consulted on appropriate next steps which may also include suspension as an examiner.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Examiners must not disclose details about examination questions/scenarios, clinical cases, or candidate performance to anyone other than the appointed senior examiner (on exam day/at exam centre) or members of the Clinical Assessment Team at the RCPCH. The only exception to this is when sanctioned by the Clinical Assessment Team/Examinations Board. It is strictly prohibited for examiners to discuss exam content or performance with exam candidates that they have assessed.

Please see the Examiner Privacy Policy on the 'Becoming an Examiner' web page.

Code of Conduct/Misconduct Policies and Examiner Performance Concerns

All RCPCH examiners are expected to adhere to the principles listed in the MRCPCH & DCH Examiner Code of Conduct policy. The MRCPCH/DCH examiner misconduct policy outlines the process for any allegations of examiner misconduct being made. Both documents are available on the 'Becoming an Examiner' web page.

Length of Service of Examiner Appointment

There is no stipulated length of service for an MRCPCH examiner provided that the examiner continues to fulfil the eligibility criteria for appointment. Those who do not continue to fulfil these criteria or are inactive for more than 2 years will be asked if they wish to continue as an RCPCH examiner. If the length of their inactivity exceeds 2 years or occurs during a change to the examination or its delivery, examiners will be required to complete re-training. All MRCPCH examiners must continue to be members in good standing of the RCPCH.

Examiner Retirement

Examiners fully retiring from clinical practice (no longer undertaking any clinical work) must notify the Clinical Assessment team. There are regulations governing retired doctors acting as examiners. Examiners may continue to examine for no more than three years after retirement from active NHS clinical practice as long as they meet the required criteria. Please see the Examiner Retirement document on the 'Becoming an Examiner' web page for more details. <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/user/signup>