

Update for International MRCPCH Candidates 21 June 2021

We want to thank all of our overseas candidates for the patience and understanding you have shown the College as we work to restart overseas exams during the Covid pandemic. We have some further updates to share.

Having successfully run two MRCPCH Covid Adapted Clinical and two DCH Clinical exams online, we now understand how labour intensive the preparation and running of these exams are in contrast to running face to face exams, where the work is devolved to each country's host centre. We have determined that it is not feasible to run individual online exams for each overseas host country. However, we hope to run a mix of online exams open to applicants from all countries as well as some adapted face-to-face exams (where Covid conditions permit) in specific countries. We will also have some exams specifically to accommodate deferred overseas candidates.

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact our normal running of exams, face-to-face exams can be run using either our normal face-to-face exam circuit or the online Covid Adapted Exam circuit. In both, all stations are based around scenarios that are written by examiners and reviewed and approved by our scenario writing groups, our Scenario Lead and the Clinical Examinations Chair. This is in contrast to normal face-to-face exams where the 4 clinical and 1 development station are based around patients. The Covid Adapted Online Clinical Exams we have been running in the UK also rely on scenarios for all stations and they have been found to be discriminatory with positive feedback from examiners.

What format of exam is able to be run in a given host country will be dependent upon the Covid situation in that country, the needs and capacities of the host/lead, and any regulations, laws or other government advisories relating to the pandemic. We continue to be in contact with our overseas leads and partners about options for delivering the MRCPCH Clinical Exam overseas. The situation in each country as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic varies, and continues to change within countries over time.

We are providing a summary below of where things stand for overseas exams. We refer to deferred candidates in a number of places below, by this we mean candidates who had been allocated a seat and paid for their exams for early 2020. These are candidates who have been waiting patiently for nearly a year and a half to sit the exam for which they secured a seat and made payment.

Far East

Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia all successfully completed face-to-face exams without patients in May and June. The local hosts and leads put in a

huge amount of work to ensure these exams were able to run safely and fairly. There was a mix of two centres running the Covid Adapted Clinical circuit and one centre which ran our normal face-to-face circuit, all without patients and with scenario-based stations. The leads in each country are working with us on scheduling further face-to-face exams without patients. When we have agreed dates for these exams, we will post them to the How to Apply webpage.

Saudi Arabia - Jeddah - Deferred Candidates and New Applicants

We have agreed a plan with our host/lead in Jeddah and have dates for two sets of exams. The first set of exams will run across three days and is set for 25-27 August 2021. The second set of exams also runs across three days and is set for 8-10 December 2021. The exams will be our normal face-to-face circuit with no patients and all stations will be scenario-based. The August exams will be reserved entirely for the deferred candidates from last year's cancelled exams in Jeddah. The December exams will have a normal application window and will be open to all applicants as usual. The Exams team will be in touch soon about next steps. Any candidates from the deferred Jeddah exam who are unable to attend the first face-to-face exam reserved for deferred candidates will continue to have their booking carried over until the next face-to-face exam can be offered.

Deferred 2020 Bookings in Egypt

We have agreed a plan with our host/lead in Egypt and agreed dates for an exam. The exam will run across two days and is set for 10-11 September 2021. This exam will be reserved entirely for the deferred candidates from last year's cancelled exams in Egypt. Any future exams that are scheduled for Egypt will be open to all applicants. The exams will be our normal face-to-face circuit with no patients and with scenario-based station. The Exams team will be in touch soon about next steps. Any candidates from the deferred Egypt exam who are unable to attend the first face-to-face exam reserved for deferred candidates will continue to have their booking carried over until the next face-to-face exam can be offered.

Deferred 2020 Bookings in Sudan

We are working closely with our host/lead in Sudan to agree dates for an exam. Once arranged, this exam will be reserved entirely for the deferred candidates from last year's cancelled exams in Sudan. Any future exams that are scheduled for Sudan will be open to all applicants. We have not yet agreed which circuit to run for the Sudan exams, however, once this decision is made, we will post a further update. The Exams team will be in touch soon about next steps. Any candidates from the deferred Sudan exam who are unable to attend the first face-to-face exam reserved for deferred candidates will continue to have their booking carried over until the next face-to-face exam can be offered.

A small number of Sudanese candidates might meet the technical specifications for being able to sit the online exam and they will be contacted directly. See the next section for further information.

Deferred 2020 Bookings in Nepal/UAE/Sudan

We will be running a four-day Covid Adapted Clinical online exam from 27-30 September 2021. This exam will be reserved entirely for the deferred candidates from Nepal and UAE as well as a small number from Sudan who have met the technical specifications to be able to sit the exam online. We will work with candidates prior to the exam to test their connections. Candidates will be contacted about this connection testing in a few weeks' time. The exams will be online with no patients and with all stations based on scenarios. The Exams team will be in touch soon about next steps. Any candidates from the deferred Nepal, Sudan or UAE exams who are unable to meet the minimum technical requirements or who wish to not take the exam online will continue to have their booking carried over until the next face to face exam can be offered in a location that is accessible to them.

Candidates who are allocated a seat on the Overseas Covid Adapted Clinical Exam (online) should visit the MRCPCH Covid Adapted Clinical Information webpage. This page is the hub of all candidate guidance about sitting the exam online and provides information about the changes made to run the exam in an online environment. There are videos of mock stations, a podcast, links to webinars, and information about how to prepare yourselves. Please be mindful that the guidance on this page was originally developed for the UK exams, so please ignore references to UK in the documents.

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/mrcpch-covid-adapted-clinical-exam-information-hub>

There will also be a candidate webinar in the week or two prior to the exam. Once that is scheduled, all candidates with seats for this exam will be sent a link/invite. For those unable to attend live, a link to the video recording will be shared with all candidates after the webinar takes place.

All Other Countries

After the first Overseas Covid Adapted Clinical exam for online candidates in September, we will review whether it will be feasible to deliver further online exam options for overseas candidates in the coming months. If we find this to be the case, our hope is to then run further Covid Adapted Clinical online exams for overseas candidates. We do not yet have dates for these. As soon as we decide if it is feasible to continue to deliver online exams for candidates based overseas, we will post them both on this webpage as well as on the How to Apply webpage.

We recognize that overseas candidates from all countries have patiently continued to wait for the College to be in a position to deliver exams overseas again while Covid continues to pose a risk and where we cannot return to face-to-face exams in the short term. We know many of you have applied for the UK MRCPCH Covid Adapted Clinical exams and not obtained a seat. Because of the labour-intensive nature of preparing for and running the online adapted exam, we can only run 10 days at a time, which means there are fewer seats available. This means we do not currently have extra seats for overseas candidates.

We have gained considerable experience and knowledge from running the first two diets of both the MRCPCH and DCH Covid Adapted Clinical exams. While we understand the frustration of those candidates not in countries who are attempting to run exams in a face-to-face manner or those who are not permitted to sit the first diet of the overseas Covid Adapted Clinical online exam, we hope you understand we must prioritise the deferred overseas candidates.

Guidance for Face-to-Face Exams

For deferred candidates who will be offered a seat on the face-to-face Egypt, Jeddah or Sudan exams, we will be creating and updating guidance for you that reflects the changes in the circuit and stations and that will help you prepare for your exam. We are conducting two weeks of UK Covid Adapted Clinical Exams. Once UK exams have been delivered, we will prioritise working on this guidance and hope to have it ready by the end of July. We will create a special Overseas Covid Adapted Web page with instructions on how to access guidance specifically for Overseas candidates sitting a face-to-face exam. We recognize it is vital that candidates have as much information as possible as early as possible so they can properly prepare for the exam.

Some of the guidance that has been created for the Covid Adapted MRCPCH Clinical online exams is relevant to your preparation. Therefore, you can consult these materials right away to begin your preparation for the exam. The primary change is not having patients. In the absence of being able to do a physical examination of a child, candidates will be asked to describe how they would undertake a physical or development examination and will be provided with the signs (called cues) they would have elicited in a real exam, by the examiner. This change is described in the two documents below. Additionally, there is a mock development station which illustrates how the station works and how the description of an exam and the provision of signs/cues happens.

- Development Mock Station - <https://vimeo.com/538671447/1c3a5adbd6>
- Describing Examinations and Understanding Cues - <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/DESCRIBING%20EXAMINATIONS%20AND%20CUES.pdf>

- Clinical Exam Technique
- <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/Covid%20Adapted%20Clinical%20Exam%20Technique%20Updated%20AM%20030421.pdf>
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We continue to be committed to returning to face-to-face, patient-based clinical exam delivery as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we must explore ways to both meet the current demands and provide the best assessment we can with the limitations we currently all face.

Again, we want to assure all overseas candidates who are nearing the end of their 7-year registration period that we will continue to extend their registrations while their ability to take the exam is negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We will continue to update candidates as we have more information, so please continue to check our websites, Twitter feed and Facebook stories.

We also want to remind all candidates that if circumstances change and the pandemic worsens, exam dates might have to be cancelled or changed. We will update candidates about any cancellations or changes as soon as we make them.