

Becoming an MRCPCH Clinical Senior Examiner

This document is for doctors interested in applying to become MRCPCH clinical senior 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

Please note that at this time, only UK MRCPCH Clinical examiners are eligible to apply to become senior examiners.

Terminology

Senior Examiner Elect	Title given once submitted senior examiner application is approved by Examiner Review Panel (ERP). Senior examiner elects begin training and assessment toward appointment as senior examiner.
Senior Examiner	Title given once a senior examiner elect has completed training and mentoring and been approved by the Examiner Review Panel and Examinations Board. Senior examiners examine on both MRCPCH and DCH and may be chose to examine overseas.

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 senior examiners for UK MRCPCH clinical examinations.

For MRCPCH Clinical examinations, the processes requiring senior examiner input include:

- Participating in clinical examinations as examiners (both UK and overseas)
- Participating in clinical examinations as senior examiners
- Hosting of clinical examinations
- Participation as facilitators for examiner training sessions
- Attendance at examiner training sessions when required
- Attendance at Senior Examiner Boards and Appeals/Review of Marks meetings when required or invited.

All clinical exam activities are coordinated through the RCPCCH Clinical Assessment team with support provided by the Theory & Standards team.

MRCPCCH clinical senior examiners are also expected to participate in question and scenario generation and review as well as DCH clinical exams. These tasks include:

- Collating suitable examination material for use as a written question for MRCPCCH FOP/TAS/AKP theory exams (including DCH FOP) or for use as a clinical scenario for MRCPCCH/DCH clinical exams
- Generating/writing video, communication, history scenarios for use in the MRCPCCH and DCH clinical exams

Question and scenario writing activities are coordinated through the RCPCCH Theory and Standards Team.

Senior Examiner Specific Duties and Responsibilities

Senior examiners have specific duties and responsibilities not shared with other types of examiners. In the UK, when acting as a senior examiner, their role includes:

- Working closely with the host team at the centre where they have been allocated to act as a senior examiner to ensure that they are supported appropriately and that all necessary preparations are being made. This includes discussing with hosts in advance the selection of patients/cases for the examination, ensuring they are in touch with the examiner team, that they understand the circuit timing and have enough helpers for the exam day(s).
- Review the scenarios to be used in advance and communicate with the RCPCCH team if there are any significant issues.
- To assess the process and conduct of the MRCPCCH Clinical examination to ensure there is a uniform and fair standard applied by all examiners, and that there is no discrimination in relation to any of the protected characteristics described in equality and diversity legislation.
- To ensure that candidates that have been identified by the RCPCCH Clinical Assessment team as requiring reasonable adjustments during their examination are accommodated and that any required additional time or other support is provided in full and to the required standard.
- To ensure that all examiner documentation is completed correctly and clearly, and candidate scores are clearly justified.
- To support the exam host and host team to trouble shoot and manage any issues that arise during the exam day.
- To contribute to the appraisal and performance review of examiners by observing examiners in stations and providing feedback using the appropriate forms.
- To provide feedback on the conduct of the examination / examiners they are responsible for to the relevant Senior Examiner Board/Appeals Panel.

- To be available to attend the relevant Senior Examiner Board (SEB) meeting to raise and discuss issues as well as contribute to review of candidate complaints and feedback.

Senior examiners may not act in the same capacity if they are allocated a spot to examine on an overseas MRCPCH exam. The Principal Regional Examiner for an overseas area typically acts as the senior examiner in a given country. Therefore, the role for a senior examiner who is allocated to an exam overseas is:

- To assess the process and conduct of the examination to ensure there is a uniform and fair standard applied by all examiners, and that there is no discrimination in relation to any of the protected characteristics described in the equality and diversity legislation.
- To ensure that all examiner documentation is completed correctly and clearly, and candidate scores are clearly justified.
- In the absence of the senior examiner or overseas PRE, to liaise with the exam host during preparation for the examination on the selection of cases and any other pertinent issues.
- To support the exam host and host team to trouble shoot and manage any issues that arise during the exam day.
- To contribute to the training, mentoring, appraisal, and performance review of overseas examiners elect.
- In the absence of the senior examiner or overseas PRE to provide feedback on the conduct of the examination / examiners they are responsible for.
- In the absence of the senior examiner or overseas PRE to be available to attend the relevant Senior Examiner Board (SEB) meeting to raise and discuss issues and how those issues were managed.

For more information related to the specific duties and responsibilities for all RCPCH examiners please refer to the RCPCH website 'Becoming an MRCPCH Clinical UK Examiner' guidance. For further information on criteria for selection as an RCPCH senior examiner representing exams overseas, please refer to page 12 '**Criteria to Attend an Overseas MRCPCH Clinical Exam**'.

2. Eligibility requirements

Please review the eligibility requirements listed in this section before proceeding to the following section that details the process of becoming an examiner, including how to apply.

MRCPCH Clinical Senior Examiner

The following 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 or act as a senior examiner.

To be eligible for appointment as a senior examiner, an applicant must fulfil all the following criteria.

Essential Criteria

1. Must be on the GMC Specialist register with a license to practice and be in good standing with the GMC (see the examiner retirement document for those who have demitted clinical practice)
2. Currently be clinically active
3. Have been an active MRCPCH examiner for three or more years. Active means that the applicant will have examined at least once every year to remain current. If examiners are not able to remain active, they are asked to contact the Clinical Assessment team to provide updates including reasons for inactivity.
4. Have examined at least 8 days within a 3-year period. Examiners may have a combination of hosting, DCH and MRCPCH examining but must have at least 5 days of MRCPCH examining and the other 3 may be constituted by hosting or DCH examining.
5. Have completed DCH examiner training or acted at least once as a DCH examiner within the last 3 years.
6. If there is evidence of feedback that would suggest further training or experience might be required due to concerns or complaints in relation to duties as an examiner or exam related faculty member, the application will not be put forward for consideration.
7. Must demonstrate that they comply with equality, diversity and inclusion training requirements relevant to examining.
8. Complete senior examiner training after approval as a senior examiner elect.
9. The College must receive three positive substantive references for the applicant.
10. Be holders of the MRCPCH, having successfully passed all elements of the examination or equivalent qualification from Royal College of Physicians
11. At the time of appointment as an examiner, be a member in good standing of the RCPCH.
12. The RCPCH must receive three positive substantive references for the applicant.
13. Evidence leadership skills and the ability to identify issues and take appropriate action when required. This is an essential criterion as senior examiners must take charge of situations and manage concerns at exam events. Applicants must be confident in their ability to manage exam day issues promptly and in a professional manner and must document all important discussions, agreements, and disagreements in the Senior Examiner report. They must also inform any other stakeholders involved in those discussions that information will be included in the Senior Examiner report.

14. The ability to handle challenging people and situations effectively and sensitively.
15. Able to act as mentor and support examiners and senior examiners through their shadowing and live marking process in a professional and sensitive manner.
16. Ability to step into the role of senior examiner on any exam due to unexpected absence of the assigned senior examiner.
17. Awareness of all current guidance and new developments with the MRCPCH and DCH exams.
18. For patient based Clinical stations: Display good understanding of appropriate case selection of patients for MRCPCH clinical examinations and be able to confidently raise concerns during bench marking and respond with sensible informed proposals.
19. Ability to follow standardised approach to all aspects of the exam in terms of timings, introductory statements/tasks for candidate, marking to the standards required, maintaining accurate records, making clear comments, appropriate flagging of concerns etc.
20. Display sound examiner reliability indices.
21. 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 examiners and senior examiners will be expected to embrace the learning of new skills and approaches to examining appropriately on the MRCPCH clinical examination.

Desirable criteria

1. Have experience hosting or organising DCH or MRCPCH examinations.
2. Have experience of contributing to other relevant RCPCH Education and Training activity (question setting, scenario writing, membership of groups or committees, appeals panel, DCH examiner, START assessor or scenario writing, College exam course faculty, Angoff judge etc)
3. Culturally aware/sensitive to local practices across multiple centres and countries where MRCPCH clinical exams are held.

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 Senior Examiner Application Process

Please be aware that applications from consultants who are within 3 years of demitting regular clinical practice may not be considered/ approved. GMC and Academy guidelines regarding retired doctors examining for medical colleges limit the ability of faculty about to retire to contribute effectively to the operational delivery of the exam. We do not wish to discourage anyone from applying, particularly those with years of assessment experience as it provides countless benefits to the College and the examinations process. However, we are unlikely to consider application from individuals within 3 years of demitting all clinical practice due to the RCPCH investment in the process. For senior 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

Appointed examiners 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 meeting 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 a Senior Examiner

If you are interested in becoming an MRCPCH senior examiner, please get in touch with us at examinerapps@rcpch.ac.uk to register your interest. We accept applications on a rolling basis for those wanting to become UK MRCPCH senior examiners. Further information about how to become an MRCPCH senior examiner can be found below.

MRCPCH Senior Examiner Application Process:

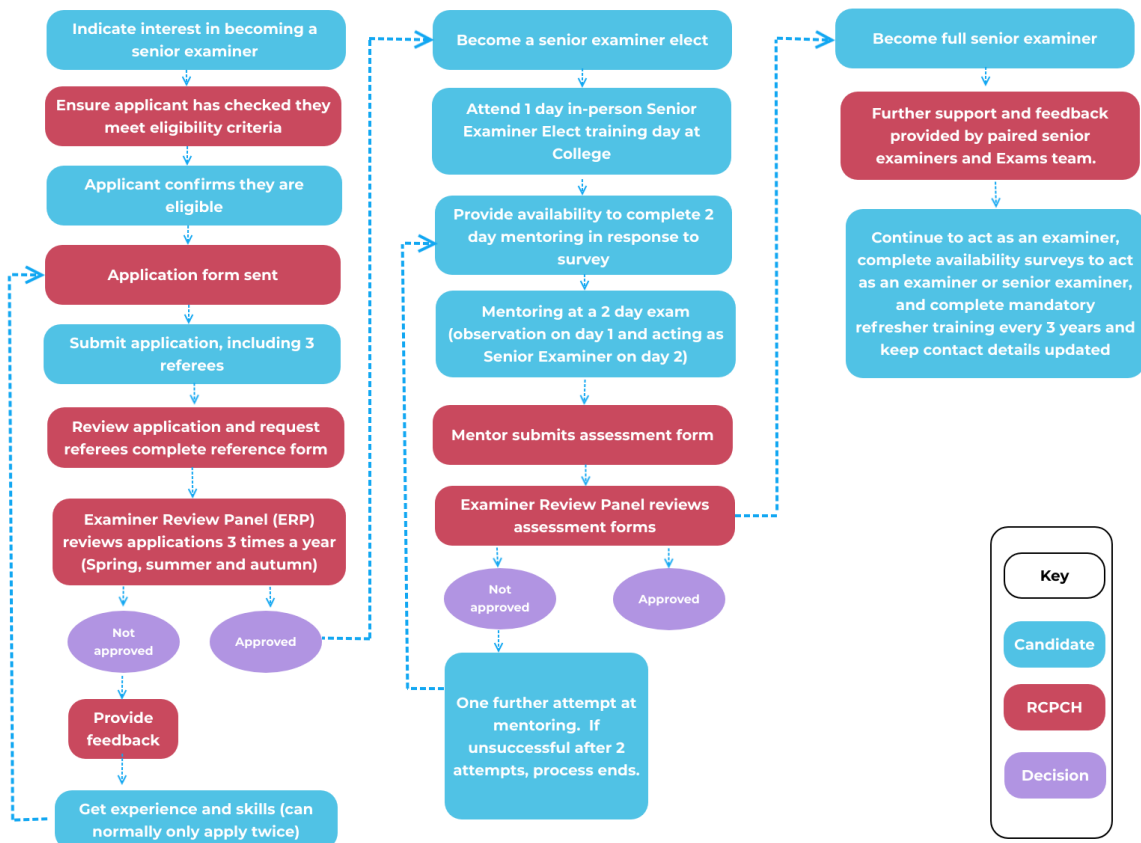
1. Applicant emails the team and indicates interest in becoming a senior examiner
2. Applicant is asked to review this document and email the team back to confirm they meet the essential criteria.
3. Applicant is then sent the application form via email from Clinical Assessment team.
4. Applicant completes 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 application in preparation for the Examiner Review Panel.
9. All application materials are made available to members of the Examiner Review Panel (ERP) in advance of it meeting, so panel members can review.
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 senior examiner elects and their outcome letter will provide information about senior examiner elect training.
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 senior examiners elect about the opportunity for face-to-face training.
17. Senior examiner elects who have completed training will be allocated to a 2-day exam centre (based on their availability) to undertake observation/shadowing with a senior mentor-examiner who will complete an assessment form in conjunction with the senior examiner elect, based on their performance over the exam days.
18. Where a senior examiner elect or their mentor feels the elect could do with a further round of mentoring, that will be agreed and included in the assessment forms.
19. Mentor assessment forms will be sent back to the Clinical Assessment team and reviewed.
20. The assessment form recommendations will be presented at the next ERP meeting after the senior examiner elect completed their mentoring process.
21. The ERP will review and make their decisions based on the assessment forms and any other relevant information.
22. The Clinical Assessment team will draft ERP outcome letters for the senior examiners elect and email them soon after the ERP meets.
23. Unsuccessful senior examiner elects will be given the option to undertake the mentoring process again at an upcoming exam. If the live assessment of readiness to act as a senior 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 senior examiner elect will not be provided with an opportunity to repeat the process again.

24. Unsuccessful senior 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.
25. Should a senior examiner elect be unsuccessful after 2 attempts or appeal a decision and be unsuccessful in appeal, then the senior examiner elect will be removed from the active list.
26. Senior examiner elects who successfully complete the mentoring process and are made full senior examiners will be added to our database of senior examiners.
27. They will then receive emails from the Clinical Assessment team about their availability in advance of MRCPCH Clinical UK exams.
28. Once new senior examiners have acted independently on at least 3 occasions as a senior examiner in the UK, they will then be considered for overseas MRCPCH examiner activity. Completion of a minimum of 3 exams as independent senior examiner does not in itself guarantee that a senior examiner will be selected to represent the College at overseas MRCPCH clinical exams. Please note that the allocation of overseas examiners is done at the discretion of the RCPCH Clinical Assessment team and whilst we try to fairly and transparently allocate overseas examiner spots, there are limited opportunities across all centres/regions.
29. Newly appointed senior examiners will be required to demonstrate that they are capable of proactively liaising with the relevant host teams in advance of exam days, effectively manage any issues that arise on exam days, handle difficult situations and produce a detailed and comprehensive report etc.
30. Senior examiners are expected to continue to act as MRCPCH examiners when not needed to act as seniors. They should examine regularly (twice a year) either as senior or examiner, undertake regular refresher training, examine for the DCH clinical exam, undertake hosting of clinical exams, if possible, as well as to help with question and scenario writing.

Becoming an MRCPCH Senior Examiner Process



4. Examiner Conduct, Feedback and Other Key Principles

Feedback

The performance of examiners/senior examiners will be routinely monitored to ensure consistency and fairness. To support the development of all MRCPCH Clinical Assessment faculty, 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/senior 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/senior examiner could be actioned immediately. Concerns of a less serious nature will often lead to the examiner/senior examiner being provided with the opportunity to address them. If any examiner/senior 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/senior examiner.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Examiners/senior 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/senior 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.

Conflicts of Interest and Examiner Conduct

Examiners/senior examiners are expected to inform the Clinical Assessment team if they are aware of any risks to the confidentiality and integrity of the exam.

Examiners/senior examiners should 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/senior 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 the 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 examiners/senior examiners.

Examiners/senior examiners should 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.

Code of Conduct/Misconduct Policies and Examiner Performance Concerns

All RCPCH examiners/senior 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/Senior Examiner Appointment

There is no stipulated length of service for an MRCPCH examiner/senior examiner provided that the examiner/senior 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/senior examiner. If the length of their inactivity exceeds 2 years or occurs during a change to the examination or its delivery, examiners/senior examiners will be required to complete re-training. All MRCPCH examiners/senior examiners must continue to be members in good standing of the RCPCH.

Examiner Retirement

Examiners/senior 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/senior examiners. Examiners/senior 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.

Criteria to Attend an Overseas MRCPCH Clinical Exam

There are limited places each year at overseas MRCPCH clinical exam centres for UK examiners to attend.

The role of a UK examiner attending an overseas MRCPCH clinical exam can be varied and may include being a senior examiner, mentoring a local examiner elect, and supporting the senior examiner and host team.

Being a senior examiner is not in itself sufficient criteria to determine suitability to represent MRCPCH overseas. Additional criteria include:

Essential Criteria

- Experience as Examiner/Senior Examiner in the UK within last two diets and be volunteering consistently (minimum 2 diets per year)
- Be a Senior Examiner and have acted independently in role of SE on at least three occasions in UK before being eligible for consideration
- Evidence of problem-solving on the day and submitting a timely (within 1 week) and appropriate (peer-reviewed) Senior Examiner report
- Proven track record of being supportive to host teams (before, during and after) as evidenced from Senior Examiner reports, examiner/candidate/host survey feedback, and any other correspondence that the Clinical Assessment team receives (including complaints)
- Experience as an Examiner Elect mentor in UK (this necessitates being asked – Senior Examiners must request this opportunity in order to meet eligibility criteria)

Desirable Criteria

- Evidence of providing feedback to examiners during exams – evidencing ability to troubleshoot during any number of unpredictable/unforeseen situations during clinical exam
- Participated in SEB/appeals/Review of Marks procedures (this necessitates being asked – Senior Examiners must request this opportunity in order to meet eligibility criteria)
- Acted as Host/co-Host Examiner in UK on at least one occasion before being considered