

MRCP(UK) Code of Conduct for Examination Applicants and Candidates

Candidates (including applicants) for all MRCP(UK) and Specialty Certificate examinations (SCEs) are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout their dealings with MRCP(UK), and to conduct themselves as is appropriate for a Member of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK¹. This includes behaviour during the examination, and in all their contact with examiners, invigilators and staff of MRCP(UK) before, during and after the examination.

This Code of Conduct has been developed to provide a framework against which allegations of misconduct related to behaviour will be judged. In the event of any allegation of misconduct MRCP(UK) will undertake an investigation governed by the principles given in the MRCP(UK) Misconduct Regulations. This code applies to all examinations from 1 August 2016.

Candidates should note that by virtue of applying to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by all relevant regulations, including this Code of Conduct.

General standard of behaviour

MRCP(UK) acts to maintain the safety and security of all individuals associated with its examinations. Candidates are expected to behave in a professional manner, befitting a member of one of the Royal Colleges, in all activities associated with the examination. Adherence to the principles and values within General Medical Council (GMC) 's Good Medical Practice² is expected at all times.

MRCP(UK) expects all candidates to treat everyone they encounter during their MRCP(UK) experience with dignity and respect.

This code applies equally to behaviour of candidates and applicants when

- dealing directly with personnel involved in the examinations (in person, on the telephone, in correspondence) and
- publishing or posting comments on websites and social media.

Interacting with MRCP(UK)

Candidates are expected to act with respect for those running the examination at all times. MRCP(UK) examiners, invigilators and staff have the right to undertake their role without fear of abuse or harassment. Physical or verbal abuse, or the threat of such abuse, will be regarded as a form of misconduct, and investigated accordingly.

- Candidates should not attempt to harass or bully MRCP(UK) officers or staff.
- Harassment includes any unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of MRCP(UK) officers or staff, which is demeaning and unacceptable to the individual.

¹ <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/about/governance>

<http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/about-rcpe/top/about-rcpe>

<https://www.rcpsg.ac.uk/the-college/about-us/people-and-governance.aspx>

² <http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp>

- Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient ³.
- Failure to comply with written or verbal instructions of MRCP(UK) and its staff, including the examination regulations, may also be considered as misconduct.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, but are not confined to: shouting, threats of harm (either to self or staff), inappropriate written communications, email and telephone conversations, and physical contact.

Interacting with other candidates

MRCP(UK) strives to ensure that the examination experience is as calm and pleasant as possible for everyone.

- Candidates are expected to act with respect for fellow candidates.
- Candidates are expected to ensure that their behaviour is not disruptive and does not affect other candidates attempting the examination at the same time.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour may include, but are not restricted to, threats, unwanted advances, questioning the fairness of another candidate's success in getting a space or passing the examination.

Interacting with patients

Candidates for the clinical examination will be required to interact with real and simulated patients.

- Candidates should maintain an awareness of patient comfort and safety at all times during this interaction.
- Candidates should obtain verbal consent from patients or surrogate patients prior to examining them, and should cease their examination if requested to by the patient or examiner.
- The dignity and modesty of all patients must be respected at all times.
- Candidates are reminded to maintain strict confidentiality and must not divulge the identity or details of patients used in the examination.
- Candidates should observe the appropriate hygiene protocols, specifically regarding hand washing.

Academic misconduct

MRCP(UK) regards any attempt to cheat with the utmost seriousness. Academic misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- the introduction into any examination of any materials, audio or communication devices (including mobile phones and 'smart' watches), other than those specifically permitted for the examination;
- any attempt to remove materials or content from an examination other than those specifically permitted, except by a person with authority to do so;
- the use of any recording equipment (including all photographic, video and audio recording equipment);
- any attempt to release content from any examination to a third party/commercial organisation;
- any attempt to communicate with another candidate;
- any attempt to gain access to, read or copy the work of another candidate;
- any attempt to gain or pass on information about the contents of the examination (written or clinical) in advance of the date of the examination;

³ <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

- impersonation or attempted impersonation of a candidate;
- bribery (of another candidate, examination official, actual or simulated patient);
- failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or other examination official, or breaching of Examination Regulations;
- falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification;
- any other form of cheating or conduct likely to give an unfair advantage to the candidate or others;
- aiding or abetting any of the above.

If a candidate has any concern about the conduct of a fellow candidate this should be brought to the attention of the examination organisers as soon as is practicable.

Copyright and use of materials

The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK assumes the copyright of all materials prepared for any part of the MRCP(UK) examination. Candidates must not discuss, publish or in any other way attempt to share any material which they have encountered in the MRCP(UK) examinations.

GMC (or equivalent) reporting

Candidates should promptly inform the MRCP(UK) if any limitations on practice are placed on them by the GMC (or the equivalent regulatory body in the country in which they practice).

Appeals and complaints

MRCP(UK) receives appeals against examination results from candidates, and complaints about the conduct of the examinations. MRCP(UK) is committed to investigating any such cases in a fair and transparent manner in line with the MRCP(UK) Examination Appeals Regulations and MRCP(UK) Examination Complaint Procedure (see <https://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/regulations>).

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

Candidates should be assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate concern, and that making an appeal or complaint will not put candidates in danger of conduct violations.