

Regulations and Information for Candidates for Specialty Certificate Examinations

2015 Edition



Notice of future amendments to the Regulations

The Specialty Certificate Examination Regulations 2015 have been revised since the 2014 Regulations were published. These Regulations apply from 1 January 2015 to the Specialty Certificate Examinations and provide a regulatory framework for the Specialty Certificate Examinations.

Notice of future amendments to the Regulations and revisions following publication of the 2014 Regulations

The Specialty Certificate Examinations will continue to change to reflect developments in medicine. While every attempt has been made to ensure that the Regulations 2015 are accurate, further changes to the Specialty Certificate Examinations, the Regulations and closing dates may be implemented during this time. Candidates should refer to the Specialty Certificate Examinations section on the MRCP(UK) website (<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations>) for the most up-to-date information, where any such changes will be detailed.

MRCP(UK)
11 St Andrews Place
Regent's Park
London NW1 4LE
www.mrcpuk.org

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1. The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom

The three Royal Colleges of Physicians that constitute the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK are:

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

9 Queen Street
Edinburgh EH2 1JQ
Tel: +44 (0)131 225 7324
Fax: +44 (0)131 226 6124
<http://www.rcpe.ac.uk>

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

232-242 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G2 5RJ
Tel: +44 (0)141 221 6072
Fax: +44 (0)141 241 6222
<http://www.rcpsg.ac.uk>

Royal College of Physicians of London

11 St Andrews Place
Regent's Park
London NW1 4LE
Tel: +44 (0)20 7935 1174
Fax: +44 (0)20 7486 8401
<http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk>

Responsibility for the organisation of the Specialty Certificate Examinations has been devolved by the Federation to MRCP(UK) Central Office:

MRCP(UK) Central Office

11 St Andrews Place
Regent's Park
London NW1 4LE
Tel: +44 (0)20 7935 1174
Fax: +44 (0)20 7487 2628
<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations>

The Regulations in this document apply to all candidates entering the Specialty Certificate Examinations and custodianship is delegated to MRCP(UK) Central Office.

2. Training of a physician in the UK

The prerequisite to a career as a medical consultant physician, working in a hospital, community or research setting, is the obtaining of the appropriate level of knowledge, clinical skills and competence to be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) or a Combined Programme CESR* (CESR(CP)). The CCT and CESR award allow entry in the Specialist Register held by the General Medical Council (GMC), entitling the holder to be a Consultant in the National Health Service (NHS).

Having already gained their MRCP(UK) Diploma, trainees are further assessed as part of their career progression in their chosen specialty (gastroenterology, dermatology, etc.) in two ways:

- workplace-based assessments
- Specialty Certificate Examination

A Specialty Certificate Examination is now a compulsory component of assessment for CCT or CESR (CP) for all UK trainees where specified in the curriculum for the specialties listed in section 10 whose specialty training began in or after August 2007 (with the exception of acute medicine as specified in section 10). UK trainees take the Specialty Certificate Examination during higher specialty training and will normally have made their first attempt by the penultimate year of training.

Trainees will, as a minimum, be required to pass the Specialty Certificate Examination in their specialty before the award of a CCT or CESR (CP) can be made.

Others, for whom the Specialty Certificate Examination is not compulsory, are welcome to apply. For details on eligibility for all the SCEs, please see section 5.3.

2.1 The Specialty Certificate Examination

The Specialty Certificate Examination is a summative test designed to assess the specialty registrar's scientific and clinical knowledge of the subject in which they have decided to specialise. The Specialty Certificate Examination is a computer-based test (CBT) in a multiple choice ('best of five') format.

The Specialty Certificate Examination questions adopt the same format as MRCP(UK) examination questions, requiring choice-based ('best of five') answers to clinically orientated questions on the relevant specialty.

The purpose of these assessments is:

- to ensure that certified specialists have sufficient knowledge to practise medicine competently and safely as Consultants,
- to complement workplace-based assessments,
- to provide a rigorous national assessment to establish public confidence, and
- to offer a challenge similar to subspecialty certification examination in North America.

*Definition of CESR

CESR stands for Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration.

CESR (CP): A CESR Combined Programme (CESR(CP)) is open to trainees who wish to join an approved specialist training programme and who have previously undertaken training in other, non-approved posts. It allows the trainee to combine training undertaken in both GMC-approved and non-approved training posts, hence the phrase 'combined programme'. It may also include those doctors who have not acquired the pre-requisite entry qualifications asked for in the curriculum, but who can offer an alternative qualification that has been judged to be an acceptable equivalent by the appointing deanery/Local Education and Training Board. Additionally, doctors who have been appointed at an accelerated level in their training programme (for example at ST5 level as opposed to starting at ST3 level) because of demonstrable competencies gained outside of GMC-approved training posts, or competencies gained in a different specialty, will also qualify for the CESR (CP) award.

CESR: Doctors who want to practise as consultants in the UK health services and have not completed an approved UK training programme may apply through the specialty equivalence route for entry onto the Specialist Register with a CESR.

For more information on CESRs, visit the GMC website:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/24630.asp>

2.2 Curriculum

The Colleges' training curricula for physicians have been granted approval by the GMC. The Specialty Certificate Examinations have been developed to provide valid, reliable evidence of attainment in knowledge and are a mandatory component of assessment for the specialties listed in section 10.

Further information is published on the JRCPTB website: <http://www.jrcptb.org.uk>.

3. Academic framework: the aims and objectives of the Specialty Certificate Examination

The Specialty Certificate Examination plays an essential role in the overall educational experience and continuing professional development of specialties in the UK. It is a prerequisite for attainment of the CCT or CESR (CP) in the specialties listed in section 10.

The Specialty Certificate Examination also plays an important role in the international arena of postgraduate medical education. It provides a professional standard against which physicians working outside the UK can measure their level of knowledge attainment.

3.1 Aim

The aim of the Specialty Certificate Examination is to identify those practising physicians in the specialties listed in section 10 who, having undertaken a period of specialty training, have acquired the necessary professional knowledge and problem-solving skills essential for independent specialty practice.

3.2 Objectives

The Specialty Certificate Examinations evaluate the professional competence of medical graduates during specialty training with regard to:

- core clinical knowledge, including clinical science, epidemiology and statistics
- problem-solving ability

The standard of the Specialty Certificate Examinations takes account of the development in the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be expected during specialty training, which is in keeping with the principle of lifelong learning.

3.3 Assessment methodology

The Specialty Certificate Examinations include questions that require an understanding not only of the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic conditions managed by a specialist in the discipline, but also of the social, psychological and cultural backgrounds of diseases and evidence-based practice.

4. Constitutional framework: powers and responsibilities of the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK

The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK (Federation), in partnership with the relevant Specialist Societies:

- determines the terms and conditions of entry to the Specialty Certificate Examination. The Federation reserves the right to refuse admission to the Specialty Certificate Examination;
- recognises fulfilment of the entry requirements of the Specialty Certificate Examination, and determines when this has been completed successfully by candidates;
- confers the Certificate in the physician's specialty on persons who have passed the assessment.

To maintain the academic quality of the Specialty Certificate Examination, the Federation, in partnership with the relevant Specialist Societies, has the responsibility of:

- appointing examiners with appropriate qualifications and experience;
- ensuring examinations are in accordance with the relevant curriculum;
- monitoring candidate performance.

In the exercise of these powers and responsibilities, the Federation will comply, and ensure compliance, with the requirements of relevant UK legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

MRCP(UK) Management Board believes that equality of opportunity is fundamental to the many and varied ways in which individuals become involved with the Colleges, either as members of staff and officers, as advisers from the medical profession, as members of the Colleges' professional bodies, or as doctors in training and examination candidates.

Accordingly, it warmly welcomes contributors and applicants from as diverse a population as possible, regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

5. The Specialty Certificate Examination

5.1 Test format

The Specialty Certificate Examination is a two-paper test, each paper lasting 3 hours, and is delivered in computer-based format (referred to as CBT). Each paper is based on the MRCP(UK) written paper format and contains 100 multiple choice questions in 'one from five' (best of five) format, where candidates choose the best answer from five options. Candidates are tested on a wide range of common and important disorders in their specialty as set out in the published curriculum.

Questions for the Specialty Certificate Examination are set from the areas outlined in their specialty blueprint – see the individual specialty pages at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties>.

Drugs are referred to by their Recommended International Non-Proprietary Names (rINN) rather than by their trade names.

Biochemical and other measurements are expressed in SI units and normal or reference ranges are provided.

5.2 Marking system

The Specialty Certificate Examination is criterion referenced. In advance of the test, the difficulty of each question is considered by a Standard Setting Group, comprising practising consultant physicians who have participated in setting the Specialty Certificate Examination and those who have medical education experience relevant to this process. The standard setters assess the difficulty of the questions against the level of knowledge expected of candidates using a procedure known as the modified Angoff method.

All judgements by all standard setters on all questions are then collated into a criterion-referenced pass mark. This pass mark is combined with UK trainees' marks by using the Hofstee compromise method which will establish the final pass mark. **As a result of the standard setting process, the pass mark and pass rate may vary at each SCE.**

For more details of the marking system please see: <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/about-us/research/exam-pass-marks>.

The marking system for the Specialty Certificate Examinations is as follows:

- one mark (+1) is awarded for each correct answer
- no mark is deducted for an incorrect answer (i.e. there is no negative marking)
- no mark is awarded or deducted if a question is left unanswered

5.3 Entry requirements

There are no prerequisites for entry to any Specialty Certificate Examinations.

5.4 Candidates with constraints on their practice

1. Candidates who have been erased from the GMC (or equivalent body) register for reasons related to fitness to practise are not permitted entry to the Specialty Certificate Examination.

2. Candidates who are suspended from practice by the GMC (or equivalent body) are not permitted entry to the Specialty Certificate Examination until the suspension has been lifted.

3. Candidates who are subject to any warnings, interim orders, undertakings or conditions on their practice from the GMC (or equivalent body) must declare this information to MRCP(UK) upon application and may be permitted to enter the examination at the discretion of the MRCP(UK) Medical Director.

Candidates should note that failure to declare conditions, warnings or suspension as required:

- at the time of application,
- before the examination date for which they have entered

will result in penalties being applied as defined in the MRCP(UK) Academic Misconduct Regulations (see section 7).

Where candidates are making a declaration, the 'MRCP(UK) and Specialty Certificate Candidate Declaration Form' must be submitted. Candidates are also required to disclose information as to why the condition or undertaking has been imposed.

Candidates submitting applications via the online system are required to send the completed Declaration Form and any accompanying information to the 'conditions@mrmpuk.org' mailbox on the same day that they apply online.

Decisions will normally be communicated to candidates within 2 weeks from the date the information was received.

5.5 Centres

The Specialty Certificate Examinations are held in various centres: <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/exam-centres>.

Candidates may apply to sit the Specialty Certificate Examination at any centre with availability. Candidates should apply online at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/how-apply>.

Applicants are advised to submit their application in good time.

5.6 Fees

Details of fees, which are subject to annual revision, are published annually and can be checked on the MRCP(UK) website (<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/exam-dates-and-fees>).

Once an application is made upon pressing the Finish button on the final step of the online application system, candidates are considered as having made their application. They are then liable for the full examination fee, irrespective of whether the application is complete (e.g. whether the payment has been made or not). It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that their application is completed by the required deadline, which will be communicated to candidates after receipt of the application.

Candidates transferring fees from outside the UK should remember that banks deduct their charges from the sum being transferred. The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK must receive the full

Specialty Certificate Examination fee in pounds Sterling, so candidates must themselves pay the bank charges.

No candidate will be permitted to take the Specialty Certificate Examination unless all outstanding fees have been paid in full.

5.7 Visas

If a candidate requires a visa to sit an examination, it is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the visa application is made in sufficient time before the examination date for which it has been sought. A refund will not be given if a candidate is unable to attend the Specialty Certificate Examination as a result of visa-related problems. For more information on accessing the visa application statement, please visit the following section of the MRCP(UK) website:

<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/international/visa-information>.

5.8 Submission of documentary evidence

The Colleges reserve the right to request to see original documents.

5.9 Re-entry candidates

Candidates who wish to re-sit a Specialty Certificate Examination should re-apply online, using their original RCP code number at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/how-apply>.

Under no circumstances should a candidate create more than one online account or register for the same examination more than once using a duplicate online account. If candidates have difficulty creating an online account or are concerned about their application, they should contact MRCP(UK) Central Office. Creating a duplicate account may result in a delay to your application for the examination and you may incur additional fees.

5.10 Request for reasonable adjustments

Any candidate who has a physical disability, learning disability or any other special requirement that they believe could affect their performance in an examination may be entitled to reasonable adjustments. Full details are provided on the MRCP(UK) website.

5.11 Cancellation

On very rare occasions, it may be necessary for MRCP(UK) to cancel an examination. In these circumstances, MRCP(UK) will refund the examination fee of any candidate allocated to the affected examination centre(s). MRCP(UK) will, however, not be responsible for any expenses (such as travel or accommodation) incurred by a candidate in the event of a cancellation.

5.12 Non-attendance

Except as provided in article 5.13 of these regulations, examination fees are non-refundable. Should a candidate fail to attend an examination or withdraw after the closing date, the examination fee is forfeit.

5.13 Withdrawal from the Specialty Certificate Examination and refund of fees

Notice of withdrawal from the Specialty Certificate Examination must be emailed to the MRCP(UK) Central Office. Candidates are asked to quote their RCP code number, full name and the specialty to which they have applied in their withdrawal notice to allow Central Office staff to identify candidates easily.

Only written requests to withdraw will be accepted as official withdrawal requests. For example, candidates who are informed that they have submitted incomplete applications and are asked to complete them will not be considered as withdrawn from the Specialty Certificate Examination if they do not respond to such requests for information, and will incur the full Specialty Certificate Examination fee.

Specialty Certificate Examination applications and/or fees cannot be transferred from one examination to another.

Candidates whose withdrawal request is received on or before the closing date of the Specialty Certificate Examination will be refunded 90% of the Specialty Certificate Examination fee paid (10% of the fee is retained as an administrative charge). Requests to withdraw from an international centre must be received by the close of the international application period to be eligible for an automatic refund.

Where possible this refund will be paid in the same way as the original payment was made. Refunds will not be made where candidates submit their withdrawal request after the closing date, unless there are circumstances deemed exceptional that can be substantiated. This will normally be in the following circumstances:

- illness;
- involvement in an accident;
- death of a close relative (parent, sibling, spouse, child; the candidate must prove their relationship to the relative if they do not share the same surname).

Other cases may be considered on their own merit and at the discretion of the Head of Examinations Candidate Office, MRCP(UK) Central Office; documentary evidence is required in all cases.

Any request (accompanied by supporting evidence) must be submitted within 4 weeks of the examination date if it is to be considered. No consideration to refunding fees will be given, irrespective of the circumstances, thereafter. Decisions on these cases will be made by the Head of Examinations Candidate Office, whose decision is final.

Candidates who do not attend the examination, without notifying MRCP(UK) Central Office, will be recorded as absent. Absence will count as an attempt at the examination.

5.14 Transferring between UK centres

Candidates attending a Specialty Certificate Examination may request a transfer up to 4 weeks before the examination date. The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK cannot guarantee accommodation of any transfer request.

5.15 Late entries

Late entries cannot be accepted. Registration closing dates can be found at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/exam-dates-and-fees>.

5.16 After the Specialty Certificate Examination

5.16.1 Review of the Specialty Certificate Examination

Results are released when the Chairman of the Specialty Certificate Examining Board is satisfied that the Specialty Certificate Examination has been conducted appropriately and in accordance with the procedures of the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK, in partnership with the Specialist Societies.

The Specialty Certificate Examining Board considers each question before its appearance in the papers. In addition to the final scores obtained by the candidates, the Specialty Certificate Examining Board will also note the mean score for the Specialty Certificate Examination and the mean scores for, and the discriminatory power of, the questions that compose each paper. A detailed analysis of the responses to each item (including a separate index of discrimination for every item), and a coefficient indicating the internal reliability of the Specialty Certificate Examination as a whole, are also considered by the Chair on behalf of the Board. In the light of these analyses, the Specialty Certificate Examining Board may make modifications to the questions and answers that it deems desirable to ensure that the quality of the Specialty Certificate Examination is maintained.

5.16.2 Results

Individual candidates' results will be sent by email to the candidate approximately 4 weeks after the date of the Specialty Certificate Examination. Results cannot be collected from the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK or given over the telephone or by fax.

5.16.3 Pass result

The qualification for candidates who pass the Specialty Certificate Examination will be a 'Specialty Certificate in [Specialty]'. The postnominal 'MRCP(UK) [Specialty]' is granted by the JRCPTB to trainees who meet the required criteria: <http://www.jrcptb.org.uk/assessment/Pages/Knowledge-Based-Assessments.aspx>.

5.16.3.1 Exceptional circumstances affecting results

In exceptional circumstances, and only as a result of a procedural irregularity, there may be sufficient evidence to determine that the candidate would by every reasonable expectation have passed the examination under normal circumstances. In this situation, the candidate may be considered for the award of a condoned pass.

Such evidence could include the candidate already achieving a 'borderline pass' (i.e. being within the Standard Error of Measurement of the pass mark, or similar measure), or (in cases where a candidate has been unable to complete the entirety of the examination) performing at a clear passing standard (i.e. above the Standard Error of Measurement of the pass mark, or similar measure) in the part of the exam they did complete.

Candidates must have successfully completed at least 50% of the examination, and their results for that portion they did complete must be available, for a candidate to be eligible for consideration for a condoned pass.

5.16.4 Fail result

A candidate not achieving the pass mark in the Specialty Certificate Examination will be deemed to have failed the Specialty Certificate Examination.

6. Attendance at, and conduct during, the Specialty Certificate Examinations

Candidates presenting themselves for the Specialty Certificate Examination must have complied fully with all admission requirements, including the payment of fees. As well as the regulations listed below, they should expect to comply with additional rules determined by the test provider (Pearson VUE).

Candidates are warned that any breach of Specialty Certificate Examination rules and regulations (see 6.2) will result in severe penalties, including the risk that the candidate may be permanently debarred from taking any further Specialty Certificate Examinations and be reported to the GMC (or equivalent).

Candidates should note that the Specialty Certificate Examination start times might vary. Consequently, candidates are advised not to make travel plans that could be jeopardised if the Specialty Certificate Examination starts late or is interrupted.

6.1 Monitoring candidate behaviour

Candidates have been advised previously that MRCP(UK) Management Board has employed various systems to identify those candidates who attempt to copy, collude or perform some other act that may be regarded as academic misconduct in Specialty Certificate Examinations. Set out below is an update on the system that is currently in use and an explanation of what the Colleges intend to do with the information they collect.

The Anomaly Monitoring System (AMS) seeks to detect instances of copying or collusion by looking for anomalous patterns of responses by candidates, the answers of one candidate being more similar to those of another candidate than would be expected by chance alone. There are many different combinations of answers by which candidates can achieve a particular score. If two candidates have an unusually high number of exactly the same answers then this may be regarded as an anomaly. AMS systematically considers all possible pairs of candidates and looks at the similarity of their answers.

In comparing candidate responses, the AMS program takes into account the expected number of answers in common, relative to the examinees' performance on the assessment.

Candidates should note that in doing this:

- (1) The program does not know the centre at which candidates are sitting the exam.
- (2) The program does not know the seating plan of the candidates at the various centres.

The program is therefore inherently conservative in its detection of anomalous candidates. If a pair (or group) of candidates is identified as having an unusually high proportion of similar answers then a further independent investigation is carried out looking at the centres where the candidates sat, the seating plan and any other information that may be provided by the invigilators and staff administering the examination. Should it be determined that the matter requires full investigation then the MRCP(UK) Academic Misconduct procedures may be invoked (see section 7).

MRCP(UK) Management Board is fully aware that candidates could be implicated in an act of academic misconduct through the conduct of others. In order to avoid such allegations being levied, where there is no evidence confirming which of the candidates is the guilty party, both candidates will be informed that they have been identified by the program and may be required to sit separately from other candidates in future. There will be no assumption of guilt in making this request; it is simply a pre-emptive measure.

AMS is one tool that MRCP(UK) Management Board uses to monitor candidate behaviour in the Specialty Certificate Examinations. Further information is available from MRCP(UK) Central Office.

6.2 Specialty Certificate Examination rules and regulations

Any infringement of the following rules and regulations may be reported to the Policy Officer for Written Examinations, MRCP(UK) Central Office for consideration in accordance with the MRCP(UK) Academic Misconduct Regulations.

1 Candidates are advised to allow for any transport delays when planning their time of arrival at the examination venues as, for security reasons, candidates will not be permitted to enter the test room after the start of the Specialty Certificate Examination. If a candidate is not permitted to enter the test room because they arrive late, the candidate will be considered absent and no refund will be issued (except in circumstances as listed above in section 5.11).

2 Candidates must arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the Specialty Certificate Examination and must not enter the test room until instructed by the invigilator(s).

3 Candidates will **not** be admitted unless they produce suitable identification in addition to the Admission Document. Candidates must present two forms of identification – one from the primary list and one from the secondary list (Table 1):

Table 1

Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ A currently valid signed passport of any country containing the candidate's photograph and signature* (see note).◆ A currently valid signed UK photocard driving licence (full or provisional).
Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Any ID containing the candidate's full name and signature e.g. credit or debit card.

*A passport can be accepted as a primary form of ID for a candidate even if it does not have a signature, as long as it is determined to be valid and there is no designated place for a signature (e.g. biometric passport).

The name on the identification document must match the name the candidate provided when registering for the examination. If a candidate has changed their name (e.g. through marriage) or there are any discrepancies, the candidate must contact MRCP(UK) Central Office at least 5 working days in advance of the exam. Candidates whose name on their ID does not match the name they provided when registering will be denied access to the examination.

Admission to the Specialty Certificate Examination test room will be at the discretion of the invigilator(s). The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK and Pearson VUE observe sensitivity in the visual identification of candidates, but advance notice should be given by candidates of any anticipated difficulties.

4 Candidates must not bring into the test room any papers, bags, calculators, mobile phones, pagers, PDAs (or any electronic audio or communication device), textbooks or documents, food or drinks of any kind, or items of any kind other than those specifically allowed for that particular Specialty Certificate Examination and previously notified to them. The possession of calculators, mobile phones, pagers, personal stereos or electronic wrist watches or any other such devices that are audible, make calculations, store information or can be used for communication in the Specialty Certificate Examination is strictly forbidden. Any unauthorised material will be confiscated and a report detailing the incident and identifying the candidate will be submitted to MRCP(UK) Central Office.

5 Test centres will make a wipe-clean board and pen available for each candidate.

6 Where test centres do not have secure areas to store personal items, any coats, bags or other item(s) brought into the test room should be deposited as directed by the invigilator(s). Electronic items must be deactivated and placed in lockers.

7 With prior approval (via submission of a request for special examination arrangements), candidates may bring into the test centre aids that will enable them to remedy a disability e.g. of sight and/or hearing.

8 If a candidate has unwittingly brought any unauthorised paper or item into the test room, this should be handed to the invigilator(s) before the Specialty Certificate Examination starts or at the earliest possible opportunity thereafter.

9 Candidates must comply with all instructions given to them by invigilator(s).

10 Whilst in the test room, a candidate must not attempt to read the work of any other candidate or communicate in any way with any other candidate or any other person without the express permission of the invigilator.

11 Candidates have a responsibility to help safeguard the security of the examination and their own work. Candidates should make efforts to ensure their work cannot be seen by another candidate, particularly if leaving the test room temporarily to visit the toilet. Candidates have a duty to report (to an invigilator or MRCP(UK) Central Office) any concerns they have that another candidate was attempting to read their work, or any other instances of possible misconduct they see.

12 Where an invigilator suspects a candidate or candidates of infringing Specialty Certificate Examination Regulations/test room rules he/she shall:

- (1) Wherever possible alert another invigilator to the suspected misconduct so that they may act as witness if subsequently required;
- (2) Discreetly speak to the candidate(s) involved, making clear what is causing concern, and reminding them of the relevant regulations and instructions;
- (3) Confiscate any unauthorised material in the possession of the candidate(s);
- (4) Record details of the alleged infringement;
- (5) Allow the candidate(s) in question to continue the Specialty Certificate Examination;
- (6) Inform the candidate(s) in question at the end of the Specialty Certificate Examination that a written report of the incident will be submitted to the Policy Officer for Written Examinations, MRCP(UK) Central Office;
- (7) Arrange for details of the incident to be recorded, including details of any witnesses and any confiscated materials, and ensure these are sent to MRCP(UK) Central Office.

13 Any invigilator or examiner present is empowered to refuse to allow a candidate to continue with the Specialty Certificate Examination on grounds of misconduct. Ejection from the test centre should normally take place only in the event of a candidate's conduct causing disruption to other candidates.

14 Candidates who wish to attract the attention of the invigilator(s) during the Specialty Certificate Examination should do so by raising a hand.

15 Candidates should bring to the attention of the invigilator any factor (e.g. distracting noise) that is adversely affecting them during the Specialty Certificate Examination. Where necessary they should communicate the same in writing to the Head of Examinations Candidate Office, MRCP(UK) Central Office immediately following the Specialty Certificate Examination concerned.

16 Once admitted to each part of the Specialty Certificate Examination, candidates must stay for the full duration of each paper. Candidates may not leave the test room as a result of finishing the Specialty Certificate Examination paper early. Those who attempt to do so will be deemed to have breached the Specialty Certificate Examination Regulations.

17 Candidates must not leave the test room temporarily, during the period of the Specialty Certificate Examination, unless given express permission by the invigilator(s) to do so. If such permission is given, they must not attempt to contact any other person or consult any material relating to the Specialty Certificate Examination whilst outside the test room. They should report to the invigilator(s) on returning to the test room.

18 Candidates may not temporarily leave the test room during the first 30 minutes of any paper or in the 10 minutes before the scheduled end of each paper.

19 There is a scheduled break, usually of 1 hour, between papers 1 and 2. Candidates will be permitted to leave the test centre during this period. Candidates returning to the test centre late after this scheduled break will not be re-admitted to the test room and an incident report will be submitted to the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK. The paper 2 report time will not alter, even if paper 1 ends after the scheduled time stated.

20 Candidates should not remove from the test room any materials. Questions, or any part of them, must not be copied or removed from the test room. All Specialty Certificate Examination questions are confidential and are under the copyright of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK. A candidate may not communicate any question or part of a question to any other person or organisation. To do so would be a serious breach of copyright and of these Regulations.

21 When authorised to do so by the invigilator(s), candidates should leave the test room in an orderly manner.

22 Candidates are asked to note that any allegation of academic or professional misconduct that is sustained against a candidate is likely to be reported to employers, sponsors and relevant professional bodies, such as the GMC.

23 Candidates should note that if any information comes to light at a later stage that indicates that Specialty Certificate Examination Regulations have been breached, the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK reserves the right to invoke the Academic Misconduct Regulations retrospectively.

7. Procedures

Details of other MRCP(UK) regulations for candidates are available on the MRCP(UK) website at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/regulations>. These are as follows:

- Examination Appeals Regulations
- Examination Complaint Procedure
- Academic Misconduct Regulations
- Reasonable Adjustments Procedure

8. Language requirements

The Specialty Certificate Examination is conducted in English.

Candidates are advised that in order to be sufficiently prepared to sit the Specialty Certificate Examination, their English language ability should be equivalent to International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7.5. However, candidates do not need to have taken IELTS, or any other language examination, to sit the Specialty Certificate Examination.

The Specialty Certificate Examination cannot be used to demonstrate competence in the English language.

9. Preparation for the Specialty Certificate Examination

The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK recommends that candidates prepare for the Specialty Certificate Examination by gaining clinical experience in hospital posts involving the care of patients with clinical conditions relevant to the specialty, whether adults or children, and by studying up-to-date postgraduate clinical textbooks and current medical journals.

An awareness of the content of UK national guidelines used in clinical practice (e.g. NICE, see <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/published?type=cg>; SIGN, see <http://www.sign.ac.uk/guidelines/index.html>) should form part of the preparation for this examination.

There are published curricula for the Specialty Certificate Examination:

<http://www.jrcptb.org.uk/trainingandcert/ST3-SpR/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

The examination blueprint and sample questions are available on the MRCP(UK) website:

<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties>.

The Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK does not provide lists of recommended training courses. Details of courses are available in the medical press.

10. Specialties involved in Specialty Certificate Examinations

Specialties involved in the Specialty Certificate Examinations comprise:

Acute medicine
Dermatology
Endocrinology and diabetes
Gastroenterology
Geriatric medicine
Infectious diseases
Medical oncology
Nephrology
Neurology
Palliative medicine
Respiratory medicine
Rheumatology

10.1 Acute medicine

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Acute medicine has been developed in partnership with the Society for Acute Medicine (UK) (<http://www.acutemedicine.org.uk/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/acute-medicine>.

Note: For UK trainees who started CCT training to the new AIM curriculum on or after 1 August 2009 the Specialty Certificate Examination in Acute Medicine will be the mandatory knowledge-based assessment. For those appointed to programmes before the introduction of the AIM curriculum and who are still following the curriculum for GIM(Acute) the Specialty Certificate Examination remains optional; trainees may take it if they wish.

10.2 Dermatology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Dermatology has been developed in partnership with the British Association of Dermatologists (<http://www.bad.org.uk/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/dermatology>.

10.3 Endocrinology and diabetes

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Endocrinology and diabetes has been developed in partnership with the Association of British Clinical Diabetologists (<http://www.diabetologists-abcd.org.uk/home.htm>) and the Society for Endocrinology (<http://www.endocrinology.org/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/endocrinology-and-diabetes>.

10.4 Gastroenterology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Gastroenterology has been developed in partnership with the British Society of Gastroenterology (<http://www.bsg.org.uk/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/gastroenterology>.

10.5 Geriatric medicine

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Geriatric medicine has been developed in partnership with the British Geriatrics Society (<http://www.bgs.org.uk/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at

<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/geriatric-medicine>.

10.6 Infectious diseases

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Infectious diseases has been developed in partnership with the British Infection Association (<http://www.britishinfection.org/>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/infectious-diseases>.

10.7 Medical oncology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Medical oncology has been developed in partnership with the Association of Cancer Physicians (<http://www.cancerphysicians.org.uk>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/medical-oncology>.

10.8 Nephrology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Nephrology has been developed in partnership with The Renal Association (<http://www.renal.org>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/nephrology>.

10.9 Neurology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Neurology has been developed in partnership with the Association of British Neurologists (<http://www.theabn.org>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/neurology>.

10.10 Palliative medicine

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Palliative medicine has been developed in partnership with the Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland (<http://www.apmonline.org>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/palliative-medicine>.

10.11 Respiratory medicine

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Respiratory medicine has been developed in partnership with the British Thoracic Society (<http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/respiratory-medicine>.

10.12 Rheumatology

A Specialty Certificate Examination in Rheumatology has been developed in partnership with the British Society for Rheumatology (<http://www.rheumatology.org.uk>). Candidates are referred to the more detailed information at <http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/specialty-certificate-examinations/specialties/rheumatology>.

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