Royal College of Physicians Assessment Unit

Additional examination policies and procedures

This document covers all examinations administered solely by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Assessment Unit. These are as follows:

- The Certificate in Geriatric Medicine (CGM)
- The Diploma in Geriatric Medicine (DGM)
- The Diploma in Global Health (DGH)
- The Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA)

The following policies and procedures for the examinations listed above are included:

- Code of conduct for examination applicants and candidates
- Examination appeals regulations
- Examination complaints procedure
- Misconduct regulations
- Reasonable adjustment policy

The above policies and procedures apply from 24 November 2026.

Candidates requiring the regulations, policies and procedures for the MRCP(UK) PACES examination should visit the MRCP(UK) website.

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Code of conduct for examination applicants and candidates

Candidates (including applicants) for examinations are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout their dealings with the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). This includes behaviour during the examination, and in all their contact with examiners, invigilators, and staff of the RCP Assessment Unit before, during and after the examination.

This code of conduct has been developed to provide a framework which sets expectations and against which allegations of misconduct related to behaviour will be judged. In the event of any allegation of misconduct the RCP Assessment Unit will undertake an investigation governed by the principles given in the RCP Assessment Unit misconduct regulations. This code applies to all examinations from 24 November 2026.

Misconduct is classified under two categories:

1. Academic misconduct, for example attempting to access examination materials before, during or after an examination has taken place

2. Non-academic misconduct, for example verbal or physical threats towards an individual involved in the administration of an examination.

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

The RCP Assessment Unit acts to maintain the safety and security of all individuals associated with its examinations. Candidates are expected to behave in a professional manner, in line with the RCP Code of Conduct, during all activities associated with the examination.

The RCP Assessment Unit expects all candidates to treat everyone they encounter during their examination 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, or in correspondence) and/or publishing or posting comments on websites and social media.

Interacting with the RCP Assessment Unit

Candidates are expected to act with respect for those running the examination at all times.

RCP Assessment Unit examiners, invigilators, staff and patients have the right to undertake their role without fear of abuse, harassment or distress. Physical or verbal abuse, the threat of such abuse, or threats of self-harm, will be regarded as a form of misconduct, and investigated accordingly.

- Candidates should not attempt to harass or bully RCP Assessment Unit examiners, invigilators, staff or patients.
- Harassment includes any unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of RCP Assessment Unit examiners, invigilators, staff or patients, which is demeaning and unacceptable to the individual.

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- Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient[1].
- Failure to comply with written or verbal instructions of the RCP Assessment Unit 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 others), aggressive or abusive written, email or telephone communications and inappropriate physical contact.

Interacting with other candidates

The RCP Assessment Unit strives to ensure that the examination experience is as calm and welcoming 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, or questioning the fairness of another candidate's success in passing an examination.

Interacting with patients

Candidates for clinical examinations will be required to interact with real and surrogate patients and should observe the following:

- 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, or attempt to interact with patients outside of an examination
- Candidates should observe the appropriate hygiene and infection control protocols.

Academic misconduct

The RCP Assessment Unit 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 or copy materials or content from an examination other than those specifically permitted, except by a person with authority to do so

[1] https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment

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- the use of recording equipment (including all photographic, video, audio and computerised recording equipment)
- any attempt to release content from any examination to a third party (individual or 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 examination
- any attempt to access the internet, AI tools or written textbooks during an examination
- impersonation or attempted impersonation of a candidate
- allowing or facilitating the presence of unauthorised individuals during the examination
- bribery (of another candidate, examiner, invigilator, member of staff or patient)
- failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or other member of staff, or breaching of the 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 RCP Assessment Unit as soon as is practicable.

Copyright and use of materials

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

Appeals and complaints

The RCP Assessment Unit receives appeals and complaints about the conduct of the examinations and is committed to investigating any such cases in a fair and transparent manner in line with the RCP Assessment Unit examination appeals 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 can raise matters of legitimate concern, and that making an appeal or complaint in good faith will not put candidates in danger of conduct violations.

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Examination appeals regulations

1. Introduction

1.1 These regulations apply to all candidates for all examinations from 24 November 2026 (when these regulations came into effect).

1.2 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 these appeals regulations.

1.3 Throughout these regulations, the RCP Assessment Unit may delegate any of the duties to an appropriate member of staff.

1.4 Any dispute about the interpretation of these regulations shall be referred to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, whose decision in the matter shall be final.

2. Definitions

2.1 These regulations are to be used to investigate all academic and examination appeals. An 'appeal' is defined as a request for a review of a decision made by or on behalf of an examination board about the performance in an examination of a candidate or group of candidates.

2.2 Appeals will only be considered if they are based on procedural error or exceptional circumstances.

Procedural error is an irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) which had the potential to adversely affect a candidate's performance, for which evidence must be provided.

Candidates who believe their examination performance was affected by procedural irregularity should inform the RCP Assessment Unit on the day of the examination. Candidates must not wait until after they receive their results to highlight a procedural irregularity they have experienced.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as illness or any other extenuating circumstance (for which clear documentary evidence must be provided) which adversely affected a candidate's performance in the examination, and which they were not aware prior to commencing the examination. Candidates are advised to submit details of any such circumstances as soon as possible (i.e., within three working days) of the examination and must not wait until after they receive their results.

2.3 Each examination's regulations make clear that there is the right of withdrawal from any examination up to its start due to exceptional circumstances. Candidates who sit the examination are deemed to be certifying themselves fit and healthy to do so. The RCP Assessment Unit will not accept appeals from candidates who were aware of exceptional or extenuating circumstances before the examination and subsequently chose to sit[2].

[2] Candidates who require support with attending their examination due to sudden illness or accident should refer to the reasonable adjustment policy for further guidance.

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2.4 Appeals will not be accepted on any other grounds, for example that a candidate:

- considers their efforts were under-marked
- failed the examination by a narrow margin
- did not understand or was unaware of the examination regulations
- seek to question the exercise of professional or academic judgement.

2.5 It is recognised that on occasion it may be initially unclear whether a case constitutes an appeal or a complaint. As such the RCP Assessment Unit reserves the right to reclassify appeals to complaints or vice versa at any stage in proceedings, in consultation with the person(s) appealing or complaining. This will always be done so that the matter can be considered in the most appropriate way.

3. Procedure

3.1 Where an appeal is related to an alleged procedural irregularity, candidates must make the RCP Assessment Unit aware of this as soon as practicable. Wherever possible, this should be whilst the examination is in progress, or as soon as possible thereafter.

3.2 Where it is not possible to inform the RCP Assessment Unit on the day of the examination, appeals should be submitted within 5 working days of their examination, including supporting evidence where relevant.

3.3 Where 3.1 or 3.2 are not possible, candidates should submit appeals via email within 30 days of receiving their results, including supporting documentary evidence where relevant. Candidates must also provide an explanation as to why it was not possible to submit their appeal prior to results release.

3.4 Any appeal submitted after the period outlined in 3.3 must include an explanation and evidence as to why it could not have been submitted sooner and will only be accepted at the sole discretion of the RCP Assessment Unit.

3.5 The appeals procedure is normally expected to take no more than 60 days from the date of the appeal being received by the RCP Assessment Unit. Candidates will be kept informed if the process is likely to take longer than this for any reason.

3.6 Candidates are assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate concern through these appeal regulations without risk of disadvantage or criticism. As such, candidate anonymity will be maintained as far as is possible during any investigation.

3.7 On receipt of an appeal the RCP Assessment Unit Development & Standards team will investigate to ascertain whether an appeal has grounds, as defined in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2.

3.8 If, following this initial review, the RCP Assessment Unit consider that the appeal does not have grounds, it will be rejected and the candidate informed.

3.9 If it is considered that the appeal is vexatious or malicious, or that the appellant has used false information, the appeal procedure will also be at an end but in this instance the appellant may be liable for action under the Academic Misconduct Regulations.

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3.10 If, following this initial review, an appeal is considered to have grounds as defined in section 2.2 above, it will be referred to the senior examiner for consideration on behalf of the relevant examination board. The senior examiner may discuss the case or direct the RCP Assessment Unit to undertake further investigations, as they deem necessary.

3.11 If, following their initial review, it is considered by the senior examiner that there is a case in support of the appeal, they may arrange for an immediate remedy to be offered to the candidate. Alternatively, if the senior examiner is unable to initially determine whether there is a case in support of the appeal, or (particularly in the absence of precedent, or in any case involving the possible correction of results and/or marks) decides the appeal requires wider discussion, they may refer the appeal to the next scheduled meeting of the relevant examination board for consideration.

3.12 The decision of the senior examiner, on behalf of the examination board, will be communicated to the candidate within 10 working days of it being made.

3.13 Candidates should note that examiners cannot accurately or numerically determine the effects of any procedural irregularity or extenuating circumstance on a candidate's performance. As such it is not normal practice to revise a candidate's result even if an appeal is upheld and the likely effects of the circumstances on a candidate's performance are judged to be severe. Instead, the senior examiner may expunge the attempt from a candidate's record and/or offer some other remedy, so that the candidate may demonstrably meet the standard required for the examination at a subsequent attempt.

3.14 If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of any appeal, they must contact the RCP Assessment Unit via email within 10 working days of being notified of it to request that their case be reconsidered by the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment.

3.15 Candidates whose appeals have been upheld cannot ask for the decision to be reviewed if they are not satisfied with the remedy offered by the senior examiner.

3.16 Candidates whose appeal has not been upheld cannot ask for the appeal to be reviewed simply because they do not agree with the decision. In correspondence with the RCP Assessment Unit, they must either demonstrate that the process outlined in the appeals regulations has not been followed and/or provide additional evidence that was not available to the senior examiner when they initially reviewed the appeal, including details as to why it was not available during the initial appeal.

3.17 This additional evidence will be reviewed in the first instance by the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards[3], who will decide whether the above grounds have been met and the appeal should be referred to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment.

3.18 If the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards deems that there are no grounds for the appeal to be reviewed by the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, the candidate will be informed accordingly and the appeal case closed.

[3] Or their nominee

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3.19 If the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards deems that there are grounds for the appeal to be considered further, the case will be referred to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, who will confirm an alternative remedy to be offered or request that the appeal be considered by an appeal hearing panel.

4. Conduct of an appeal hearing panel

4.1 An appeal hearing panel shall be convened at the discretion of the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, and established by the RCP Assessment Unit, which will nominate a Procedural Officer to the panel.

4.2 The panel shall meet as soon as is practicable, and constitute one member from each of the following categories, provided that none have been previously involved with any academic assessment of the candidate:

- The RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment[4]
- Two members of another of the RCP Assessment Unit's examination boards)[5]
- A lay representative.

4.3 The RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment shall act as chair of an appeal hearing panel.

4.4 The Procedural Officer's role shall be to record the proceedings and deliberations of the panel, and they may advise on procedural or regulatory matters. They may not influence the decisions of the panel in any way.

4.5 The candidate shall have the right to be present at all proceedings of the panel subject to the procedures detailed below in section 5, and to present written or oral evidence to the panel.

4.6 Proceedings of the panel shall not be invalidated by reason of the absence of the candidate, provided that the procedure detailed below has been observed.

4.7 The candidate has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a friend. The friend may advise and counsel the candidate, but may not make any statements to, or cross-examine, any other person present at the hearing. If the candidate wishes to be accompanied by a friend, they must provide the Procedural Officer with the name, contact details and roles of the nominated person, and the reasons for their involvement, at least 5 working days before the hearing.

4.8 The Procedural Officer shall inform the candidate of the scheduled date of the appeal hearing panel as soon as possible and not less than 15 working days before the date of the hearing. The Procedural Officer will then arrange for a copy of each document that is to be presented to the panel to be sent to the candidate not less than 10 working days before the date set for the hearing. Such documents shall include any statement(s) provided by the candidate, whose responsibility it is to ensure any such documents and list of witnesses they intend to call in support of their appeal are received by the Procedural Officer at least 12 working days before the date set for the hearing.

4.9 No documents or witnesses may be presented to or referred to by the panel, unless details have been circulated in this manner, except with the consent of both the panel and the candidate. All

[4] Or their nominee

[5] See note 3

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documents will also be circulated in advance to members of the panel so that they may familiarise themselves with the details of the case before the date of the hearing.

Appeal hearing panel procedure

4.10 The panel may, at its discretion, meet before the scheduled start of the hearing for preliminary discussions. The Procedural Officer shall be present and keep a record of proceedings.

4.11 At the start of the hearing all panel members present shall introduce themselves. The chair shall then invite the candidate to present their appeal, together with any documentary evidence and all any witnesses in support of their case. The panel may then question the candidate and their witnesses. The appeal hearing panel may, at its discretion and at any time, interrupt proceedings to ask questions.

4.12 Before the candidate is dismissed, the chair shall give them the opportunity to make a closing statement. Before leaving, the candidate shall be reminded that they will be notified of the outcome within five working days.

4.13 The panel shall then consider the matter, whether there are sufficient grounds and evidence for the appeal to be upheld, and what, if any, remedy should be offered to the candidate. The comments and decisions of individual panel members shall always be treated as confidential.

4.14 Following the meeting the Procedural Officer shall prepare a written report summarising the proceedings and the decisions of the panel. This shall be sent to the candidate within five working days of the hearing, and a copy presented to the next meeting of the relevant examination board for its information and action, if appropriate. The candidate shall be reminded that the decision of the appeal hearing panel is final, and that the appeals procedure is at an end.

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Examination complaints procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Assessment Unit is committed to delivering a high-quality service. As part of this commitment, it is recognised that on occasion candidates may be dissatisfied with the way in which something has been done, and that complaints arising from this should be handled in a clear, fair, and consistent way.

1.2 These procedures apply to all candidates who consider that they have grounds for complaint regarding the provision of a service by the RCP Assessment Unit, that do not amount to a request to review a decision made about their performance in an examination (see paragraph 2 below). These procedures may also be used to consider complaints by prospective candidates or any other party, if deemed appropriate by the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment.

1.3 Complaints will not be considered if they are submitted:

- anonymously
- on behalf of another party, without that party's explicit consent in writing.

1.4 Candidates should note that by virtue of entering to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by all relevant regulations, including this complaints procedure. All those submitting complaints are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by this complaints procedure.

1.5 Any dispute as to the interpretation of these regulations shall be referred to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment[6], whose decision in the matter shall be final.

2. Definitions

2.1 A 'complaint' is defined as an expression of a specific concern about the provision or quality of a service by the RCP Assessment Unit, including issues such as staff conduct, disputes about the regulations, other procedures, or the application thereof.

2.2 Any request for a review of a decision made by or on behalf of an examination board about the performance in an examination of a candidate or group of candidates is defined as an 'appeal' and as such will not be considered under these procedures (but may instead be handled in accordance with the examination appeals regulations).

2.3 It is recognised that on occasion it may be initially unclear whether a case constitutes a complaint or an appeal, hence the RCP Assessment Unit reserves the right to reclassify complaints to appeals or vice-versa at any stage in proceedings, in consultation with the person(s) complaining or appealing. Such reclassification will always be done so that the matter can be considered in the most appropriate and fair way, and candidates will not be required to resubmit their cases following any reclassification.

[6] Or nominee.

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2.4 These procedures are not applicable in the following circumstances:

I. If the complaint concerns a person or activity not subject to the jurisdiction of the RCP Assessment Unit
II. If the complaint amounts to an allegation of criminal activity (which will be referred to the police for separate consideration)
III. If the complaint appears to be intended to delay or prevent the consideration of an allegation of academic misconduct
IV. If the complaint is related to formal disciplinary action being taken against any member(s) of staff, as disciplinary procedures take precedence over this procedure.

3. General

3.1 It is expected that complaints will be raised as quickly as possible and no more than three months from the date in which the incident occurred.

3.2 It is a principle of this procedure that an informal and flexible approach to resolution of complaints will be adopted wherever possible.

3.3 Candidates are assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate concern through this complaints procedure without risk of disadvantage or criticism. To this end, the RCP Assessment Unit recognises the importance of confidentiality when handling complaints and will maintain this as far as is possible during any investigation. The RCP Assessment Unit will endeavour to anonymise complainants when considering complaints. However, it will occasionally be necessary to disclose a complainant's identity to progress an investigation. Candidates who are not willing for their identity to be disclosed in this way should make this clear in their letter of formal complaint.

3.4 The RCP Assessment Unit will take all necessary steps to support all parties involved in a complaint and undertake all investigations sensitively and expeditiously.

3.5 All complaints will be considered on their individual merits, and all complainants will be treated equally.

3.6 If it is considered by the Deputy Director for Education that the complaint is vexatious, or malicious; or the complainant has used false information in a complaint, the complainant may be liable for action to be taken under the misconduct regulations.

4. Procedure

4.1 All complaints must be raised informally in the first instance with the individual or team the candidate has been dealing with. Most complaints can and should be resolved in this way.

4.2 If a complaint remains unresolved, complainants should contact the RCP Assessment Unit. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing to assessment.policy@rcp.ac.uk and state the following:

I. the nature of the complaint
II. what has / has not been done to resolve it
III. why the complainant is not satisfied with what has / has not been done, and
IV. what the complainant would like to be done to resolve the matter to their satisfaction.

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4.3 Complainants must make clear in the letter that it is a formal complaint they are submitting.

4.4 All complaints will be acknowledged. The RCP Assessment Unit may ask the relevant team to try again to resolve the issue or may ask a member of the senior management team to consider the complaint. Wherever possible a full response will be made within 20 working days of receipt, unless extenuating circumstances exist in which case the complainant shall be informed of this and notified of the revised deadline for the response. Reasons shall be given for the decision reached.

5. Appeals about the outcome of complaints

5.1 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint, they may appeal in writing to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment[7] (or the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards where the complaint is about a member of staff).

5.2 All appeals about complaints will be acknowledged and wherever possible a full response will be made within 20 working days. If extenuating circumstances exist which affect this timeframe, the complainant shall be informed and notified of the revised deadline for the response.

5.3 The decision of the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment or Head of Development & Standards is final. Candidates will be notified of the final decision, and that the complaints procedure is at an end.

[7] Or the nominated individual stated during section 1.5

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Misconduct regulations

1. Introduction

1.1 These regulations apply to candidates for all examinations and assessments delivered by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Assessment Unit from 24 November 2026. For the purposes of these regulations, applicants for any examination that has not yet been attempted are also regarded as candidates.

1.2 These regulations do not apply to anyone employed by or acting in any official capacity on behalf of the RCP, including invigilators, examiners, or examination centre staff. In such cases staff and officials should expect their conduct to be investigated under the appropriate staff disciplinary procedures/examiner code of conduct, and/or for the facts to be reported to their manager, supervisor or equivalent.

1.3 Candidates should note that by virtue of applying to sit an examination or assessment they are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by all relevant regulations, including the candidate code of conduct and these misconduct regulations.

1.4 These regulations are to be used to investigate all aspects of misconduct in RCP Assessment Unit examinations (see candidate code of conduct for definitions of misconduct).

1.5 Where a candidate is suspected of misconduct, they may have their examination results withheld until the procedures for investigation as detailed in paragraph 4 are complete.

1.6 While an investigation is underway candidates may not apply to resit the relevant examination component.

1.7 Candidates are permitted to apply for any other relevant component of any examination for which they are eligible, in accordance with the relevant regulations.

1.8 The RCP Assessment Unit reserves the right to refuse such an application from a candidate under investigation on the basis that allowing them to sit is deemed to be a potential risk to the academic content of an examination or potentially poses a risk to the safety of patients, staff, or other individuals associated with an examination.

1.9 Depending on the outcome of the investigation, results may be amended or annulled. The RCP Assessment Unit reserve the right to conduct retrospective investigations, which may lead to results being amended or annulled after they have been confirmed, and to withdraw eligibility to make an application to the relevant regulator or membership organisation after such eligibility has been awarded.

1.10 Throughout these regulations, the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards may delegate any of their duties to an investigating officer within the RCP Assessment Unit.

1.11 In pursuit of protecting the examinations and assessments, the candidates who sit them, staff and patient safety, the RCP acknowledges that the process of investigation and false allegations can have an impact on candidates' reputations and careers. For this reason, the RCP will maintain the candidate's anonymity as far as is possible during any investigation.

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1.12 Should the allegation against the candidate be upheld, the details of the case will be shared with the candidate's regulatory body and, where applicable, the individual responsible for overseeing the candidate's training and/or clinical practice.

2. Definitions

2.1 Guidance of what may constitute misconduct is given in the candidate code of conduct. It includes, but is not restricted to:

- attempts to gain an unfair advantage in the examination (academic misconduct)
- abuse, threats or other unprofessional behaviour directed at RCP staff, invigilators, patients, other candidates and examiners.

3. Reporting procedures

3.1 Suspected misconduct may be reported to the RCP Assessment Unit by examiners, invigilators, examination staff, candidates, patients, surrogate patients, and any other person who becomes aware of suspected misconduct.

3.2 In addition to direct reporting, the RCP also reserves the right to use computer monitoring software and live proctoring to detect possible misconduct, both during and after every examination.

3.3 Anonymous reports of misconduct will be acted upon only if there is supporting evidence. In such cases invigilators and any other relevant officials may be informed of the allegation and asked to comment.

Reporting procedure for academic misconduct in online knowledge-based assessments and written examinations

- Where there are grounds to suspect that a candidate has attempted to acquire information about the content of the examination in advance of it commencing, the RCP Assessment Unit must be notified immediately. After consultation with the senior examiner, the RCP Assessment Unit shall determine what action is necessary to safeguard the integrity of the exam.
- Where an invigilator suspects a candidate or candidates of infringing examination regulations they must speak to the candidate(s) involved, making clear what is causing concern, and reminding the candidate(s) of the relevant regulations and instructions.

3.4 Invigilators are instructed to compile a written report of the examination for the RCP Assessment Unit, including any incidents of suspected misconduct.

3.5 Invigilators are empowered to refuse to allow a candidate to continue with the examination on the grounds of misconduct.

3.6 Where misconduct is suspected after the examination, including where an invigilator or other representative of the RCP Assessment Unit has grounds to suspect that a candidate has attempted to pass on information about the content of an examination to another candidate or other third party, they must notify the RCP Assessment Unit immediately. A written report of the incident shall be submitted to the RCP Assessment Unit within 3 working days.

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Reporting procedure for academic misconduct in clinical examinations

3.7 Where there are grounds to suspect that a candidate has attempted to acquire information about the content of the examination in advance of it commencing, the RCP Assessment Unit must be notified immediately. After consultation with the senior examiner, the RCP Assessment Unit shall determine what action is necessary to safeguard the integrity of the exam.

3.8 Where an examiner considers that a candidate is acting in a way contrary to the regulations at any point during their examination, they shall alert the chief examiner or chief invigilator as soon as possible. If necessary, and if in the view of the examiner the candidate's conduct is likely to endanger, distress or disrupt patients or any other individual(s), the examination may be suspended by the chief examiner. The candidate must be informed at the end of the examination that a written report of the incident shall be submitted to the RCP Assessment Unit within 3 working days.

3.9 Where misconduct is suspected after the examination, including where an examiner or other representative of the RCP Assessment Unit has grounds to suspect that a candidate has attempted to pass on information about the content of an examination to another candidate or other third party, they must notify the RCP Assessment Unit immediately. A written report of the incident shall be submitted to the RCP Assessment Unit within 3 working days.

All other instances of misconduct

3.10 The person(s) identifying the misconduct shall prepare a written report on the alleged incident and send it with any supporting evidence to the RCP Assessment Unit as soon as possible.

4. Procedures for investigation

4.1 A member of RCP Assessment Unit staff will be appointed as investigating officer. The staff member will not be the person making the allegation. The investigating officer shall review the alleged case of misconduct, and, after consulting with other members of staff where necessary, shall determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a prima facie case to be answered.

4.2 Within 10 working days of receiving a report of suspected misconduct, the investigating officer will inform the candidate in writing that an allegation has been made about them and provide them with a copy of these regulations. Where appropriate the candidate will be informed that their examination results will be withheld pending the outcome of the investigation.

4.3 Where informing the candidate within 10 working days may reasonably disrupt preparation for an examination to be undertaken during the same assessment window, the RCP may defer notification. In such cases, the candidate must be informed on the next working day after the relevant component has been undertaken.

4.4 On completion of the investigation the investigating officer will inform the candidate of the detail of the allegation. The candidate shall be asked to comment on the allegation and invited to admit or deny the allegation.

4.5 The candidate shall provide their response in writing to the allegations within 10 working days from the date of the investigating officer's letter.

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4.6 If no response is received within 10 days, a reminder will be sent. If no response is received after a further five days it will be assumed that the candidate has denied the allegation, and the process will move to the next stage.

5. Completion of investigation

5.1 Where a candidate admits in writing to the allegations, full details of the case shall be passed to the senior examiner of the examination board (in cases of academic misconduct) or the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards (in all other cases) for a final decision, along with a recommendation of an appropriate penalty based upon established guidelines. The candidate shall have the opportunity to include with their response a written statement that may be taken into account; they must provide this within ten working days of admitting to the allegation. Candidates who admit allegations of misconduct cannot appeal against any penalties imposed.

5.2 Where a candidate denies the allegations (in whole or in part) the investigating officer will convene a Misconduct Hearing panel is as soon as possible (usually within 12 weeks of the investigation concluding) to formally consider the case.

5.3 Candidates can still admit the allegation in writing at any stage during the organisation of the misconduct hearing panel. If the candidate does this, the procedure outlined in paragraph 7.9 will be followed, although the initial denial of the allegation will be taken into account by those considering the matter. Candidates who have committed misconduct should note that promptly admitting guilt, taking responsibility, and expressing contrition for their actions is viewed by the RCP Assessment Unit as an important and appropriate step, and that this will be kept in mind whenever any penalty is being determined.

5.4 Decisions will be reached on cases as soon as possible, and candidates should normally have received notification of the action to be taken in regard to their case within five working days of a decision being made. In exceptional circumstances a decision may be deferred until the next scheduled meeting of the relevant board of examiners, but candidates will be informed of this and then be notified of the action to be taken in regard to their case within five working days of the examining board meeting.

5.5 The timescale for the investigative process is outlined below:

Stage	Time period	Who is responsible?
Initial report		
Candidate informed that allegation of misconduct has been made and that results will be withheld	Within 10 working days of receiving report of misconduct[8]	RCP Assessment Unit (investigating officer)
After investigation completed, candidate informed of detail of allegation	Within 10 working days of initially contacting candidate	RCP Assessment Unit Development & Standards team (investigating officer)
Response to formal allegation of misconduct	Within 10 working days or receiving allegation	Candidate
Response to formal allegation	Within 5 working days of	Candidate

[8] See section 4.3

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of misconduct (follow up)	receiving reminder	
(If no response is received from the candidate the matter will automatically be referred to a misconduct hearing panel)		
If candidate admits allegation		
Details of allegation and any statement provided by candidate submitted to relevant examination's senior examiner for decision	Decision communicated within 5 working days of being made	RCP Assessment Unit Development & Standards team (investigating officer)

6. Establishment of a misconduct hearing panel

6.1 A misconduct hearing panel (the panel) shall be convened if a candidate denies an allegation in whole or in part.

6.2 Proceedings of the panel shall not be invalidated by reason of the absence of the candidate, provided that the procedure detailed below has been observed.

6.3 The purpose of the panel is to examine the facts of a case, and the strength and veracity of the evidence being presented. The panel fulfils two main roles:

a. To determine on the balance of probabilities (rather than beyond reasonable doubt) whether the allegation of misconduct has been proven to the satisfaction of the majority of the panel.

b. Where an allegation is proven, it is to determine an appropriate penalty based upon established guidelines and precedent.

6.4 The process for arranging the Misconduct Hearing panel and the timescale for each stage is as follows:

Stage	**Time period**	**Who is responsible?**
Candidate informed of date of hearing panel	As soon as possible, but at least 6 weeks before date of panel	RCP Assessment Unit (investigating officer)
Let RCP Assessment Unit know if they are being accompanied by a friend who is a legal professional	20 working days before panel	Candidate
Provide RCP Assessment Unit with any documents to be submitted to panel and list of witnesses they wish to call at the hearing	20 working days before panel	Candidate
Documents being considered by panel sent to candidate	15 working days before panel	RCP Assessment Unit Development & Standards team (Procedural Officer)
Documents sent to panel members	10 working days before panel	RCP Assessment Unit Development & Standards team (Procedural Officer)

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6.5 Decisions will be reached on cases as soon as possible, and candidates should normally have received notification of the action to be taken in regard to their case within five working days of a decision being made. In exceptional circumstances a decision may be deferred until the next scheduled meeting of the relevant board of examiners, but candidates will be informed of this and then be notified of the action to be taken in regard to their case within five working days of the examination board meeting.

6.6 The misconduct hearing panel shall be constituted with one member from each of the following categories, or their nominee:

I. The RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment or a nominee
II. The senior examiner of the relevant examination board (in academic misconduct cases)
III. Senior RCP Assessment Unit staff member (in non-academic misconduct cases)[9]
IV. member of another of the RCP Assessment Unit's examination boards
V. A lay representative.

6.7 The candidate has the right to be present at the panel subject to the procedures detailed in paragraph 7 and following, and to present written or oral evidence to the panel. Such evidence may include references attesting to previous good character (a maximum of three), although candidates are advised to keep in mind that those approached to supply such references may then subsequently expect the candidate to provide them with details of the outcome of the Hearing.

Misconduct Hearing panel Roles:

Role	Take on by	Responsibilities
Investigating officer	Member of RCP Assessment Unit staff, delegated by Head of Development & Standards; usually a member of the Development & Standards team.	• Conducting investigation into alleged misconduct including compiling evidence and collating documents. • Communicating with candidate about progress of investigation and establishment of hearing panel if required.
Presenting officer	Member of RCP Assessment Unit staff, delegated by investigating officer; usually a member of the Development & Standards team.	• Presenting RCP Assessment Unit's case to hearing panel, including questioning witnesses. • Cannot attend panel deliberations.
Procedural Officer	Member of RCP Assessment Unit staff, delegated by Head of Development & Standards; usually a member of the Development & Standards team.	• Contact with candidate about arrangements for hearing panel. • Records evidence presented by presenting officer and candidate,

[9] See Misconduct categories for further details

			deliberations of panel, and outcome of panel. • Can advise the panel on regulatory matters but cannot contribute to their decision. • Communication of panel's decision to candidate.
panel Members			
(a)	Chair	RCP Clinical Lead for Assessment	• Chairs the panel and facilitates discussion. • Can ask presenting officer, candidate, and witnesses questions.
(b)	Representative of relevant examination board	Senior Examiner, or their nominated deputy, from the examination board for the examination in which the alleged misconduct took place.	• Represents the Examining Board and contributes to discussion. • Can ask presenting officer, candidate, and witnesses questions.
(c)	Representative of another examination board	Member of another of the RCP Assessment Unit's examination board	• Represents the other Examining Boards and contributes to discussion. • Can ask presenting officer, candidate, and witnesses questions
(d)	Senior RCP Assessment Unit staff member	Nominated by Head of Development & Standards. Only in cases of non-academic misconduct, i.e., breach of Candidate Code of Conduct.	• Represents RCP Assessment Unit and contributes to discussion. • Can ask presenting officer, candidate, and witnesses questions.
(e)	Lay representative	Lay (i.e., non-medical) member of one of RCP Assessment Unit's boards and committees	• Represents the interests of patients and the public. • Can ask presenting officer, candidate, and witnesses questions.
Friend		Accompanies the candidate to the panel. They can be a legal professional, but RCP Assessment Unit must be informed of this in advance.	• Can advise the candidate during the panel. • Cannot contribute to discussions or ask questions of anyone else present.
Witnesses		Can be called by RCP Assessment Unit or the candidate to provide support	• Can only give evidence that has been distributed in advance.

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	for their case.	• Can respond to questions asked by the presenting officer, candidate or panel. • Cannot contribute to discussions or ask questions of anyone else present. • Will be asked to leave after giving their evidence.
Legal adviser	Can be called by the RCP Assessment Unit to give advice to the panel if required.	• Can advise panel during deliberations. • Cannot ask questions of candidate, presenting officer or witnesses.
Observers	RCP Assessment Unit staff or external observers.	• Observing proceedings. • Cannot contribute to proceedings in any way.

panel members and candidates will be informed in advance of all people who will be present.

6.8 No confirmation of whether the candidate has passed or failed the examination in question shall be provided to the members of the panel.

7. Misconduct hearing panel procedure

7.1 All proceedings will be strictly confidential.

7.2 At the start of the hearing the panel may engage in preliminary deliberations. The Procedural Officer shall be present to keep a record of proceedings.

7.3 The candidate, their friend, any witnesses, and the presenting officer will be invited into the room and all present shall introduce themselves. The chair shall ask the presenting officer to outline the allegations and then ask the candidate whether they admit or deny misconduct. If, at this stage, the candidate decides to admit to the allegations in full, the panel has the authority to proceed immediately to consideration of the penalty to be imposed as detailed below in paragraphs 7.8 and following.

7.4 In all cases other than those covered by 7.3 above, the chair shall then invite the presenting officer to present their documentary material and call witnesses. The chair shall then invite the candidate to question the presenting officer and their witnesses, after which members of the panel may do the same.

7.5 The chair shall then invite the candidate to present their documentary material and call witnesses in support of their case. The presenting officer may then question the candidate and their witnesses, after which members of the panel may do the same.

7.6 The validity of proceedings shall not be affected by the unwillingness or inability of any party to reply to questions or to appear before the panel. Where the panel concludes that an individual is unwilling to reply to a question, it may make reasonable inferences from that refusal.

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7.7 The misconduct hearing panel may, at its discretion and at any time, interrupt proceedings to ask questions, or to instruct the room to be vacated for private deliberations. Neither the presenting officer, the candidate, their friend, nor any witnesses are entitled to be present at such times, although the Procedural Officer shall be present and keep a record of proceedings.

7.8 Before they are dismissed, the chair shall give the presenting officer and the candidate the opportunity to make a closing statement.

7.9 The chair shall commence final deliberations by reminding the panel of its role and purpose as detailed in 6.2. The Procedural Officer shall be present but may not attempt to guide or influence the discussions or decisions of the panel in any way.

7.10 The decisions of individual panel members shall always be treated as confidential.

7.11 Previous behaviour, exceptional or mitigating circumstances shall not be considered by the panel when determining whether an allegation has been proven but may be referred to when an appropriate penalty is being discussed.

7.12 The decision of the panel does not need to be unanimous. Where the panel is composed of an odd number of members, a majority decision is permissible. In the event of an even split where the panel is composed of an even number of members (e.g., for academic misconduct cases), the Chair of the panel will make the final decision.

7.13 Following the meeting the Procedural Officer shall prepare a written report summarising the proceedings, deliberations, decisions of the panel and their reasoning, and any penalties to be imposed (including where the decision is that no misconduct has been committed). This shall be sent to the candidate within 5 working days of the hearing, and a copy presented to the next meeting of the relevant examination board.

8. Appeals procedure

8.1 Appeals against the decision of the examination board or misconduct hearing panel must be received in writing by the Head of Development & Standards no later than 10 working days after the date of the email which notified the candidate of the decision. Appeals must be based on either or both of the grounds outlined in paragraph 8.2. Candidates cannot appeal because they disagree with the panel's decision

8.2 An appeal hearing panel shall only be convened on the following grounds:

a) Where there is evidence of administrative or procedural irregularity in the establishment or conduct of the misconduct hearing panel
b) Where there is new evidence of extenuating circumstances that could not reasonably have been presented before.

8.3 The Head of Development & Standards (or their nominee) will conduct an initial review of the submission from the candidate to determine whether either of the above criteria have been met. If they determine that this is the case, the process outlined below will be followed. If the criteria have not been met, the candidate will be informed that the misconduct proceedings are at an end and the penalties communicated to them will be imposed.

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8.4 An independent adjudicator10, who shall have no prior involvement in the case, will review the appeal and determine whether there is sufficient evidence for an appeal hearing panel to be convened based on the grounds set out in 8.2.

8.5 The decision of the independent adjudicator will be communicated to the candidate within 10 working days of it being made. If it is concluded that there are no grounds for establishing an Appeals Hearing panel, then the penalties decided by the panel will be implemented, and the misconduct process is at an end. The RCP Assessment Unit will not enter into any further correspondence with the candidate about the misconduct case after this.

8.6 The establishment and conduct of an appeal hearing panel will follow the same procedure as set out in these regulations for a misconduct hearing panel, except that no member of the panel or the Procedural Officer may have been previously involved with the case.

8.7 The Appeals Hearing panel will be advised that a Misconduct Hearing panel has taken place but will not be informed of the outcome.

8.8 The role of the appeal hearing panel will be to hear afresh the evidence presented to the misconduct hearing panel. They may also hear and consider fresh evidence presented by either side as long as it is circulated in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.3.

8.9 The appeal hearing panel shall then have the power to confirm, reverse or amend the original decision of the misconduct hearing panel.

9. Guidelines for penalties

9.1 No candidate whose misconduct has been proven shall be permanently barred from entry to any future RCP examinations.

9.2 Where an allegation of misconduct is sustained, the relevant RCP Assessment Unit authority will decide the appropriate penalty. In making these decisions, all involved are expected to have regard to established precedent. These are guidelines for normal circumstances and not binding, and do not preclude the relevant authority from determining a lesser or more severe penalty to be appropriate should the circumstances warrant this.

9.3 However, in all cases the responsible authority shall consider:

a) the risks to patient safety/staff welfare of the candidate's actions
b) the need to preserve the integrity of the examination
c) natural justice and consistency with previous penalties
d) evidence of contrition and an understanding of the gravity of the offence.

9.4 **Summary of standard penalties**

a) No further action
b) A written warning
c) Results for an examination or part of an examination under investigation, and in severe cases any previous attempts, annulled/withheld
d) Candidate barred from entry for a specified period

[10] A lay representative with no prior knowledge of the investigation but with a good understanding of the Regulations

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e) Any combination of any of the above, apart from (a)

9.5 In all cases where misconduct is found proven (either partially or in full), the RCP Assessment Unit will provide a copy of the final report, including the penalties imposed, to the candidate's regulator body and, where applicable, the individual responsible for overseeing the candidate's training.

10. Anomalous results investigation

The RCP Assessment Unit treats its responsibility to protect patient safety with utmost seriousness. Integral to this is ensuring that the public can have full confidence that its qualifications reflect the highest standards of UK clinical practice. As a result, a series of reviews and checks are conducted after each examination to confirm the accuracy of results but also identify possible anomalies in candidate performance.

The RCP Assessment Unit will withhold candidates' results and conduct an investigation (in accordance with the procedure outlined below), if it is presented, during results processing, with:

- sufficient evidence that the security of any part of the examination has been compromised (e.g., that any candidate or group of candidates has gained access, or been exposed, to examination content before sitting the examination).
- statistical evidence, based on expert psychometric analysis, which suggests an unusual pattern of performance which is sufficient to cast doubt upon the reliability of the candidate's results (e.g., an unusual variation in performance between two examination papers).
- any other evidence that suggests that the results for any individual candidate or group of candidates are anomalous (i.e., do not conform to expected patterns of performance).

The procedure for investigation is as follows:

10.1 Evidence that an anomaly has been identified during results processing should be presented to the RCP Assessment Unit policy team (which comprises the development & standard and research & psychometrics teams) as soon as possible, who will decide whether it is necessary to conduct an investigation.

10.2 Candidates whose results are to be withheld will be informed of this decision ahead of the published date for the release of results for the relevant examination.

10.3 If at any stage during the investigation the RCP Assessment Unit is presented with evidence that the anomaly has occurred as a result of candidate misconduct, then the investigation will be conducted under the RCP Assessment Unit misconduct regulations. Candidates will be informed of any decision of this nature.

10.4 The investigation will be based on statistical analysis of relevant results and the review of any supporting documentary evidence. It will not require an immediate meeting with affected candidates.

10.5 The RCP Assessment Unit recognises that it is important for results to be released quickly and will endeavour to complete the investigation as quickly as possible (usually within 30 working days) Candidates will be kept informed if the process is likely to take longer.

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10.6 Candidates will be given the opportunity to comment on the anomaly at this stage, and any statement provided will be included in any report compiled on the issue.

10.7 Following review of the evidence, the RCP Assessment Unit policy team will prepare a report for the Senior Examiner of the relevant examination. The Senior Examiner may seek the advice of independent psychometric experts if appropriate.

10.8 Once the Senior Examiner's review has been completed, they will recommend one of the following options:

a) That there is insufficient evidence of an anomaly occurring and that candidate(s)' results (including their overall score) will be allowed to stand. In these circumstances results will be released to candidates as soon as possible.

b) That the evidence collected strongly suggests that, on the balance of probability, an anomaly has occurred. Candidate(s)' results for their original attempt will be annulled and they will be required to re-sit the relevant part of the examination. Future attempts may also be subject of additional security measures, such as increased invigilation.

10.9 The RCP Assessment Unit may on occasion be presented with evidence to suggest that the integrity of an examination has been compromised to the extent that the results of the entire cohort of candidates cannot be considered an accurate reflection of their performance. In such instances, the RCP Assessment Unit will recommend that the entire examination be declared null and void and that all candidates from the diet would be required to re-sit.

10.10 This decision will be communicated to the candidate(s) within five working days and will include a full report indicating why this decision has been made.

10.11 If it is decided that candidates are required to re-sit an examination as a result of an anomalous results investigation, they will not be charged an additional fee. Where possible, candidates will be accommodated at the next available sitting of the relevant examination.

10.12 Candidates can appeal against this decision, within ten working days of being informed. Appeals cannot be based on the fact that a candidate does not agree with the decision: an irregularity in the investigative process must be identified or additional evidence that was not considered during the investigation must be provided.

10.13 Appeals will be considered by the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment. Their decision will be final and will be communicated to candidates within five working days of it being made.

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Reasonable adjustment policy

1. Introduction

1.1 If any candidate is unable, through disability, neurodiverse condition, long-term medical condition, or other special need, to be assessed by the methods set out in the regulations, the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Assessment Unit may make reasonable adjustments to the examination. In line with the Equality Act 2010, disability includes (but is not limited to) people who have:

- physical or sensory impairments
- neurodiverse conditions or cognitive impairments
- mental health issues
- hidden impairments (e.g., epilepsy, respiratory problems or heart conditions)
- ongoing or fluctuating medical conditions, including unforeseen medical circumstance.

1.2 The nature of these adjustments will vary in terms of the nature and extent of the candidate's difficulty or disability, and the individual requirements of the examination, but will be to the purpose that no candidate is disadvantaged in their examinations by virtue of their disability, neurodiverse condition, long-term medical condition, or other special need.

1.3 In considering requests for adjustments, the RCP Assessment Unit also has a responsibility to ensure that the integrity of the examination is preserved; that special arrangements made for any candidate do not give that candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates or could give rise to a misleading impression of that candidate's performance in the examination.

2. Procedures

2.1 Any candidate who has a disability, neurodiverse condition, long-term medical condition or any other condition that they believe would disadvantage them compared with other candidates in an examination, may be entitled to reasonable adjustments.

2.2 It is the candidate's responsibility to notify the RCP Assessment Unit of any reasonable adjustment request at the time of application via the relevant section of the online application form, including uploading any supporting evidence.

2.3 Candidates whose need for reasonable adjustments only occurs after the submission of their application (due to sudden illness or accident) must contact the RCP Assessment Unit via email as soon as possible.

2.4 Candidates are advised that failure to contact the RCP Assessment Unit promptly may mean that there will be insufficient time for some or all of any permitted arrangements to be put in place.

2.5 Where a request is due to a long-term medical condition/disability supporting evidence must be from an individual familiar with the candidate's underlying disability/diagnosis, for example the candidate's GP, physiotherapist or other healthcare professional who has been involved in their care.

2.6 Where a request is due to a neurodiverse condition, a report from an approved assessor must be submitted. This assessment must be undertaken and provided in English and must have been conducted when the candidate was 16 years of age or older.

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2.7 Approved assessors include specialist teachers who hold a practising certificate in assessing specific neurodiverse conditions from their relevant professional body (such as Dyslexia Action or PATOSS), or practising chartered or educational psychologists who are registered with the Healthcare Professionals Council.

2.8 Candidates may verify if an assessor has the appropriate qualifications by checking with the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) or the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

2.9 Documents such as statements of need, university support plans or other documents which do not contain original evidence of a candidate's disability, neurodiverse condition(s), long-term medical condition(s) or other special need, will not be accepted.

2.10 Candidates should not assume that previously agreed reasonable adjustments will be carried forward to a future examination. Candidates must notify the RCP Assessment Unit of any request at each examination attempt.

3. Consideration of arrangements

3.1 It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure they have requested all the adjustments they require for an examination.

3.2 Where the RCP Assessment Unit has an established precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need the case will be considered by the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards[11].

3.3 It is accepted that the following adjustments may be approved if the candidate's circumstances justify such action:

- Extra time
- Additional time for rest breaks
- Informing an examiner that a candidate may not be able to undertake a specific physical examination skill due to a physical disability, or that they will do so via an adapted technique.
- Adapting the layout of a station to ensure it is accessible
- Access to medication/food/drink

This is not an exhaustive list, but indicative of the most common adjustments made for RCP Assessment Unit examinations.

3.4 Where the RCP Assessment Unit has no precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need, or where the adjustment requested is more significant than any previously permitted for that disability or special need, then the case must be considered by the senior examiner for the relevant examination. To ensure consistency, the senior examiner of another examination board must also support the adjustment before it may be approved.

3.5 Candidates will be notified in writing of any adjustments that have been proposed for their examinations and are required to confirm acceptance of these before they are implemented by the RCP assessment Unit

[11] In these procedures, all RCP Assessment Unit staff referred to may nominate an appropriate person to act on their behalf.

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3.6 Where no confirmation is received by the deadline stated, the proposed adjustments will be withdrawn.

3.7 Where a candidate does not believe the adjustment(s) they have been granted are reasonable, or the requested adjustments are not granted (either partially, or as a whole), they may ask for their case to be reviewed by the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, whose decision will be final.

3.8 Appeals must be received at least 10 working days prior to the examination(s) that the reasonable adjustments apply to.

3.9 Clinical examinations are regarded as competence tests, assessing skills and behaviours as well as clinical knowledge. As such the method of assessment is a crucial element of these examinations, and any adjustments made for a clinical examination must maintain the integrity and validity of this assessment.

3.10 Any adjustment that would involve a change to the format of any part of any RCP Assessment Unit examination shall be considered by the RCP Educating Board. Similarly, the RCP Assessment Unit may seek the advice of the RCP Educating Board if a case raises issues of policy.

3.11 In all cases the RCP Assessment Unit reserves the right to take independent advice to ensure that any proposed arrangements are appropriate and in accordance with any applicable legislation.

3.12 Details of all requests for adjustments and the adjustments that were approved (if any), shall be regularly reported to the relevant examination board and/or development group for the purposes of monitoring and review.

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