

Exam Regulations Policy – Academic Programmes (LID-Pol-078)

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| Document Title | Exam Regulations Policy- Academic Programmes |
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| Department | Learning, Innovation and Development |
| Owner/Responsible for Implementation | Head of Function |
| Scope: | RCPI Academic Programmes. This policy does not pertain to MRCPI or Faculty Examinations. |
| Approving Body | Academic Board |
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| Related Documents | LID-Pol-076 - Assessment Policy LID-SOP-077 – Assessment and Grading Procedure LID-SOP-079 – Programme Exam Board Procedure LID-SOP-080 – External Examining Procedure LID-Pol-063 – Academic Integrity Policy for Learners LID-Pol-064 – Academic Integrity Procedure for Learners LID-POL-239 – Policy on the acceptable use of Generative AI in Assessments LID-Pol-084 – Reasonable Accommodation Policy |

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the regulations governing written examinations, synchronous online examinations, video-based submissions and online oral examinations. It ensures fairness, integrity, and accessibility in the assessment process, for all examinations outside of MRCPI and Faculty Examinations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all RCPI staff and faculty involved in the design and delivery of examinations for academic programmes, as well as Programme Exam Boards and Programme Boards. This policy does not pertain to MRCPI or Faculty Examinations.

3. Responsibilities

The Learning, Innovation & Development Manager is responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy.

4. General Examination Regulations

4.1 Examination Details

- Learners must familiarise themselves with the date(s), time(s), and venue or platform of their examinations.
- Technical requirements for online assessments must be in place and tested before the examination. Each RCPI examination under this policy will have Regulations and Information for Candidates specific to their examination which

4.2 Conduct During Examinations

- Learners must not communicate with others during an examination unless explicitly permitted.
- Unless otherwise specified, RCPI examinations are closed book and candidates may not bring any study materials, including electronic devices into an exam environment unless specified in examination instructions to candidates.
- Any breach of examination regulations will be addressed in line with the Academic Integrity Policy (LID-Pol-063).
- The use of Generative AI in RCPI coursework and assessment is detailed in the Policy on the acceptable use of Generative AI in Assessments (LID-POL-239).

5. Written Examinations

5.1 Attendance

- Candidates must present themselves at the Examination Centre at least 20 minutes prior to the commencement of the examination.
- Candidates must provide valid identification and sign the attendance register before beginning the examination.
- Candidates who arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination may not be permitted to sit the examination.

5.2 Permitted Items

- The following items are generally permitted in examinations:
 - Personal identification, placed visibly on the desk.
 - Writing instruments stored in a pencil case.
 - A non-alcoholic drink
 - Materials explicitly authorised by the examination instructions.
 - Wristwatches. Please note, candidates may be asked to remove smartwatches.
- All mobile phones and electronic storage and retrieval devices must be switched off, with alarms cancelled and placed in a bag at the candidate's feet.
- If a candidate is found to be in possession of electronic storage or retrieval devices (including Smart devices), either at the examination desk or on their person, the following steps shall be taken:
 - The time when the device was found is to be noted in the report of the examination and in the candidate's submission.
 - Any item suspected to be a smart device will be inspected by an invigilator and may be confiscated for the duration of the examination
 - The learner shall be allowed to finish the examination

Notwithstanding the above, candidates found to have unauthorised materials in their possession in the Examination Centre, or during an accompanied absence from the examination, shall be deemed to be in breach of examination regulations and subject to disciplinary action under Academic Integrity Policy for Learners (LID-Pol-063).

5.3 Conduct

- Silence must be maintained in the Examination Centre at all times.

- Candidates must comply fully with the instructions provided by invigilators.
- Candidates requiring assistance should raise their hand; an invigilator will come to the desk. Candidates must not leave their examination desk without the permission of an invigilator.
- Candidates wishing to leave the Examination Centre temporarily may do so only with the permission of, and if accompanied by, an Invigilator. Any unaccompanied departure from the Examination Centre during an examination will cause the learner to be disqualified.
- At the end of the examination, learners will be asked to remain seated and silent until all answer books (including rough work) are collected. No answer books may be removed from the Examination Centre.
- Candidates are prohibited from removing examination materials from the Examination Centre.

6. Online Examinations / Interviews

6.1 Examinations Environment

- Candidates must ensure they undertake the examination in a private and distraction-free environment.
- Devices used for the examination must be fully charged, and internet connectivity secured. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have tested their IT equipment in advance of the examination, and in the same environment in which they will sit the examination.
- Only software applications required for the examination may be active on the candidate's device.

6.2 Online Proctoring

- RCPI utilises online proctoring services from approved providers to maintain assessment integrity.
- Candidates may be required to install software which enables proctoring services to monitor and record their computer usage, computer screen, web camera and microphone.
- Candidates may be required to demonstrate the security of their environment by moving their web camera to enable the online proctor to view their entire exam environment.
- By presenting to an online assessment, candidates consent to proctoring providers and RCPI recording and viewing their examination attempt for the purposes of assuring the integrity of the examination.
- Candidates must adhere to all instructions given by online proctors.

- Failure to comply with proctoring protocols may result in disqualification from the examination.

6.3 Attendance & Timing

- Candidates must log in at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled examination start time.
- Late arrivals will not be granted additional time to complete the examination.
- Technical issues must be reported to the proctor
- Candidates are responsible for ensuring submission of their work within the allocated time frame.

7. Video Based Assessment

7.1 General Requirements

- Candidates may be required to record and submit video-based assessments in which they role-play medical scenarios with a volunteer actor.
- All recordings must be submitted through the designated RCPI platform in the specified format.
- Scripts must not be used during the recording; all role-plays should be performed in a natural and improvised manner to demonstrate clinical competency.
- Minors (individuals under the age of 18) must not be used as actors in any capacity.
- Patients may not be used under any circumstances.
- Any scenario or content that could cause distress to actors or assessors must be avoided.

7.2 Actor Consent and Confidentiality

- The candidate must obtain explicit consent from the actor before recording and submitting the video.
- The actor must be informed about how the recording will be used, stored, and evaluated.
- All video submissions must respect confidentiality and must not include real patient data, identifiable individuals, or sensitive personal information.

7.3 Technical and Submission Requirements

- Candidates must ensure that recordings are clear, with good audio and video quality.
- Videos must be unedited, with no post-production alterations.

8. Online Oral Examinations / Interviews

8.1 Examination Environment

- Candidates must undertake the oral examination in a quiet, well-lit room with a clear desk.
- Candidates must be alone when participating in an oral examination / interview.
- All unauthorised materials must be removed from the examination environment.
- Candidates may not have any communication devices during the examination / interview.

8.2 Conduct

- Candidates must enter the online waiting room at least 10 minutes before their scheduled examination / interview.
- Candidates are not permitted to record the examination / interview.
- In the event of a connectivity issue, candidates must remain at their workstation and await further instruction.

9. Procedures in the event of IT / Connectivity Failure

9.1 IT / Connectivity Failure experienced by the Candidate

- Candidates are responsible for ensuring their equipment, internet connection, and power supply are stable before the examination.
- Candidates experiencing technical difficulties must attempt to reconnect immediately.

All IT failures must be reported through the online provider's Technical Support.

- Requests for rescheduling due to individual technical issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.2 IT/ Connectivity Failure experience by RCPI

- In the event of a widespread IT failure affecting multiple candidates, the examination may be rescheduled at the discretion of the relevant Board.
- Examination recordings and logs may be reviewed to determine the impact of the failure and ensure fairness in assessment.
- Additional attempts or alternative assessment formats may be considered by the relevant Board if the IT failure significantly disrupts the examination process.

10. Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances refer to unforeseen and exceptional situations that significantly impact a candidate's ability to undertake or complete an assessment. These circumstances must be beyond the candidate's control and could not have been anticipated or mitigated in advance.

10.1 Application Process

- Candidates seeking consideration under extenuating circumstances must submit a formal application as soon as the issue arises and, where possible, in advance of the examination date.
- Retrospective applications may only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the candidate was unable to submit the application prior to the examination.

- Applications must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates, bereavement evidence, or other relevant verification).
- Requests will be reviewed by the relevant Board, and decisions will be communicated to candidates in a timely manner.
- Candidates unable to attend an examination due to extenuating circumstances may request a deferral in accordance with the Deferral Policy (LID-Pol-052)

10.2 Outcomes and Possible Adjustments

- If an application is approved, possible outcomes may include:
 - Deferral of the examination without academic penalty.
 - Additional time or an alternative assessment method.
 - Any other reasonable accommodation deemed appropriate given the nature of the circumstances.
- Candidates should be aware that approval of an application does not guarantee a specific adjustment and that all decisions will be made in alignment with academic integrity principles and RCPI policies.

11. Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are modifications made to assessment conditions to ensure that candidates with already known or long-term conditions are not disadvantaged in assessment attempts. Such adjustments must be applied for in advance and are designed to provide an equitable, rather than preferential, assessment experience.

11.1 Application Process

- Candidates requiring reasonable adjustments must submit a formal request no later than 90 days in advance of their examination.
- RCPI Wellbeing Department is available to guide candidates as to how to make their request.
- Applications must be supported by verifiable evidence, such as a medical report, psychological assessment, or other professional documentation confirming the need for adjustment.
- Each application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the relevant Board, ensuring that the adjustments do not compromise the integrity or essential requirements of the examination.

- Candidates who fail to apply for reasonable adjustments in advance may not be eligible for retrospective consideration under extenuating circumstances unless they can demonstrate an exceptional reason for the omission

11.2 Possible Adjustments

- Adjustments granted under this policy may include, but are not limited to:
 - Additional time for completion of the examination.
 - Use of assistive technology or alternative examination formats.
 - Provision of a separate examination space.
 - Other reasonable accommodations in line with the candidate's documented needs.

The granting of adjustments does not imply a modification of academic standards but rather an adaptation of the examination environment to facilitate equitable participation.

12. Data Management

RCPI will retain personal data related to assessments and assessment submissions in accordance with the RCPI Data Retention Policy (DP-Pol-170). This includes, but is not limited to, examination scripts, online proctoring records, and assessment-related communications. Data will be stored securely and processed only for the purposes necessary to maintain academic integrity, facilitate assessment administration, and comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.