

RCPI Additional Attempt Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the limits at attempts for the MRCPI examinations and Occupational Medicine examinations.

Scope

This policy applies to MRCPI examinations in General Medicine, Paediatrics, and Obstetrics and Gynaecology taking place from 19 February 2026 onwards and replaces the previous policy introduced in 2019. It applies to all Parts of an MRCPI examination, both written and clinical/OSCE.

This policy applies to Occupational Medicine examinations taking place from September 2024 onwards and replaces the previous policy.

A candidate applying to sit an MRCPI examination or Occupational Medicine examination based in Ireland or overseas must agree to this policy and all applicable policies and regulations.

Policy Overview

From 27 February 2023 candidates sitting MRCPI examinations will be allowed a maximum of six attempts for each component i.e., 18 attempts in total if the examination consists of three parts. From September 2024 candidates sitting Occupational Medicine examinations will be allowed a maximum of six attempts for each component.

Candidates who reach six attempts at any examination will be allowed to apply for one final additional attempt. To allow for sufficient additional training and education there must be a minimum of six months or one examination diet between the sixth and the additional (seventh) attempt. The maximum time allowed between the sixth and the additional (seventh) attempt for MRCPI examinations is three examination diets and for Occupational Medicine examinations is one examination diet. Only one additional attempt will be permitted.

The number of attempts is counted from a candidate's first sitting of an MRCPI examination, not from the effective date of this policy. For Occupational Medicine candidates the limited length of time and attempts policy will apply from when the policy will come into effect in September 2024.

Following a sixth unsuccessful attempt, a candidate can request one additional attempt only, if their trainer/educational supervisor confirms that the candidate has demonstrated an improvement in knowledge and skill, so that a pass result is highly likely at the next attempt.

Withdrawals and/or deferrals (as per the RCPI Cancellation Policy) will not be deemed an attempt. However, if a candidate does not attend an MRCPI examination or Occupational Medicine examination and is recorded as absent, this will be counted as one attempt. If a candidate encounters extenuating circumstances on the day of the examination and cannot attend, they must contact the RCPI examinations team (exams@rcpi.ie) preferably on the day of the examination or in any circumstances within three working days of the examination.

Definition of Trainer/Educational Supervisor

An RCPI Trainer oversees RCPI trainees' development and education at all training levels, through their involvement in teaching, training, evaluation, and supervision.

If a candidate is not on an RCPI training programme, their application for an additional attempt can be supported by a Consultant (or equivalent)/Educational Supervisor. The Consultant/Educational Supervisor must be involved in the process of reviewing and agreeing the candidate's additional learning.

How to apply for one additional attempt

Candidates applying for an additional attempt (seventh) must complete an MRCPI/ Occ Med Additional Attempt Form and send it to their trainer/educational supervisor for their completion and submission to the Examinations team on behalf of the candidate.

By signing the form, the trainer/educational supervisor confirms:

- they and the candidate have reviewed the candidate's previous attempts and have implemented an educational plan.
- candidate has demonstrated such an improvement in knowledge and skill, so that a pass result is highly likely at the next attempt.

The trainer/educational supervisor emails the Additional Attempt Form to exams@rcpi.ie no later than four weeks before the published closing date for the requested exam.

MRCPI and Occupational Medicine will not accept requests for additional attempts based on exceptional circumstances. The MRCPI and Occupational Medicine regulations make it clear that any candidate who starts an examination is declaring themselves fit to sit it.

Candidates who have already undertaken attempts at the examinations and receive a late diagnosis of any condition which requires reasonable adjustments to support them, and which they had not previously received, should contact RCPI to discuss the situation by the closing date for the exam application.

[Link to Form](#)

Additional attempt requests for each examination will be reviewed and approved by the following:

- General Medicine - Director of Examinations for the Institute of Medicine
- Paediatrics - Associate Dean of Examinations, Paediatrics
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Chair of Obstetrics & Gynaecology Examinations Board
- Occupational Medicine – Chief Examiner

Examinations Coordinator can refuse a request for additional attempts if a candidate has already taken one additional attempt (seventh attempt).

Time limit extension

Requests for time limit extensions can be submitted based on humanitarian grounds, for example, candidates sitting in armed conflict areas, natural disasters and other emergencies.

Requests must be sent into the Examinations Team (exams@rcpi.ie) and they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the approver for the Examination.

Number of attempts and time limits for the MRCPI General Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Occupational Medicine (LFOM and MFOM) examinations

Examination	Maximum Number of Attempts	Time limit to Pass	Additional Attempt	Maximum Time limit for completing Additional Attempt
Part I Written	6	Unlimited	1	3 diets from the 6 th attempt
Part II Written	6	6 years	1	3 diets from the 6 th attempt
Part II Clinical/OSCE	6	3 years	1	3 diets from the 6 th attempt
Occ Med	6	6 years	1	1 diet from the 6 th attempt

Additional Information

Restricting attempts at professional examinations is in the best interest of candidates.

We want to ensure that candidates give themselves the best chance of successfully completing their MRCPI and Occupational Medicine examinations.

International evidence suggests that restricting attempts at professional examinations is the most ethical approach, and in the best interest of candidates.

Candidates who attempt examinations in rapid succession without gaining at least three months additional experience following an unsuccessful result are unlikely to be successful on subsequent attempts.

In addition, candidates are significantly less likely to pass the examination following three unsuccessful attempts without remediation of their clinical skills. This is reflected in the data on pass rates that RCPI has gathered since the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) review of the MRCPI in General Medicine in 2011.