



FACULTY OF
PAIN MEDICINE
of the Royal College of Anaesthetists

FFPMRCA Examinations

Regulations and Appeals

May 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Regulations which follow govern the content and conduct of the examinations leading to the award of the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. They specify:

- eligibility requirements
- application procedures
- limitations on the number of attempts
- exam structure and marking systems
- Statement on Equality and Diversity
- the requirement for guidance in the event of failure
- procedures for making representations, complaints and appeals,
- Commendation and Prize criteria
- policies on electronic devices, mobile phones and smart watches, misconduct, disability requests and candidate feedback

Edition Date: May 2023
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List of Amendments

Date	Description of change	New
Aug 15	Candidate Feedback Policy added.	New Appendix 13
Jan 16	Paragraph 4 – amendment to prioritisation of applications. Paragraph 5 – amendment to eligibility for FFPMRCA examinations Paragraph 6 – amendment to eligibility for DFPMRCA examinations	Prioritisation amended to fit new eligibility categories Eligibility for FFPMRCA and DFMRCA amended to categorise each type of applicant expected to apply for examinations.
May 16	Paragraph 4 – amendment to prioritisation of applications. Paragraph 5 – amendment to eligibility for FFPMRCA examinations Paragraph 6 – amendment to eligibility for DFPMRCA examinations	Prioritisation amended to trainees. Eligibility for FFPMRCA and DFMRCA amended to include Fellowship Applicant at 5.1.5.8 and 6.1.5.8.
Oct 17	Regulation 5.1.2 FRCA exam as eligibility criterion removed Regulation 6 DFPMRCA eligibility removed. Regulation 6.5: 14-day rule for admin charges applied. Regulation 7.7 added to reflect special arrangements for temporary medical conditions Appendix 4: Normal exam judgements for dyslexic candidates removed. Appendix 4: New policy: Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy added. Appendix 9: Amended to include 'smart watches' throughout policy. Appendix 11: Disability Policy removed Appendix 11 reads: AET Feedback Form (moved from Appendix 12): Appendix 12 reads: Candidate Feedback policy (moved from Appendix 13).	New: all reference to DFPMRCA removed throughout the regulations New paragraph 7.7 New policy at Appendix 4

Aug 18	Regulation 5.2 – Not allowed to apply/sit exams whilst matters under review/appeal/complaint unresolved. Regulation 9 - Change to Guidance – Candidates asked to undertake mandatory guidance at fourth attempt. Regulation 15 – Equality analysis added	
Feb 21	Regulations 5.1.5.4, 5.1.5.5 and 5.1.5.6 Line removed about registration as covered by regulation 5.1.2 Regulation 5.1.5.7: MTI eligibility requirements updated to be consistent with other training routes by requiring RAPM support Regulation 6: amendments made to application and payment process to reflect current practice	
Mar 22	Regulations 5.1.5.4, 5.1.5.5 updated to clarify substantive consultant Regulation 5.1.5.8 eligibility requirements updated to require prospective RAPM support as per 5.1.5.2, 5.1.5.3	
May 23	Regulations 5.1.5.1, 5.1.5.7, 5.1.5.8 updated to remove time stipulation Regulations 5.1.5.2, 5.1.5.3, 5.1.5.7, 5.1.5.8 updated to require prospective RAPM confirmation that the post provides the appropriate level of training	

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REGULATIONS

1 Definitions

- 1.1 **TRAINING.** For the purpose of these regulations a trainee is someone who has received 'approved training' in the UK.
- 1.2 For the purpose of these regulations 'approved training' means training
- (a) which is part of a UK GMC approved programme of training in Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine.
 - (b) which has been approved by the Royal College of Anaesthetists/Faculty of Pain Medicine.
 - (c) which, in certain circumstances, has been approved as part of the Medical Training Initiative.
 - (d) which is appropriate to the part of the examination for which the candidate is applying.
- 1.3 **GENERAL.** The words and phrases in the left-hand column below shall have the meanings assigned to them in the right-hand column:

Appeal	Has the meaning assigned to it in Regulation 13.1 of these Regulations
Board	The Board of the Faculty of Pain Medicine
College	The Royal College of Anaesthetists
Council	The Council of the Royal College of Anaesthetists
Director	The Education, Training and Examinations Director of the Royal College of Anaesthetists
Examiners	The Court of FFPMRCA Examiners
Faculty/FPM	The Faculty of Pain Medicine
Panel	An appeal panel set up in accordance with Regulation 13.2
Representation	Has the meaning assigned to it in Regulation 12.3 of these Regulations
Review	Has the meaning attached to it in Regulation 11.2 of these Regulations
Review Clerk	A member of the College staff with responsibility for administering examination appeals.

2 Commencement and Revocation

- 2.1 These regulations shall come into force on 1 March 2022 and will apply to examinations commencing on or after that date.
- 2.2 These regulations are agreed by the Board of the Faculty of Pain Medicine and the Council of the Royal College of Anaesthetists and supersedes any previous regulations which are hereby revoked.

3 Examinations

- 3.1 **SITINGS.** The examination for the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FFPMRCA) will normally take place twice in each academic year. The Board

may at any time decide, subject to adequate notice, to alter the number of sittings of the examination. Clinical examinations will normally be held at the Royal College of Anaesthetists, 35 Red Lion Square, London. Written examinations will be delivered online.

- 3.2 **SUBJECT MATTER.** The examination will be set according to the Pain Medicine and generic module of the CCT in Anaesthetics. The curriculum is based on spiral learning and each successive level of training builds on previous level(s). The examination therefore is based on the Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3 and Special Interest Area (SIA) in Pain training modules. The optional modules of the SIA level of the curriculum, namely spinal cord stimulation, intrathecal drug delivery, cancer pain and paediatric pain medicine will not be examined as per the competencies of the individual options, however the examinee does require knowledge of these areas as described in the non-optional parts of the curriculum.
- 3.3 **EXAMINATION STRUCTURE, MARKING SYSTEMS, COMMENDATIONS, AND PRIZES.** The structure of the examination, together with details of the marking systems used and the commendations and prizes which may be awarded are described in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this regulatory document.
- 3.4 **FORMAT.** The FPMRCA comprises two examinations:
- Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) paper
 - Structured Oral Examination (SOE)
- 3.5 **APPLICATION.** Candidates must pass the MCQ paper before they can apply to sit the SOE. A pass in the MCQ paper will be valid for three years, after which time if the whole examination has not been passed, the MCQ must be re-taken.
- 3.6 **NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS.** Candidates will be allowed six attempts at each section subject to remaining eligible under Regulations 5 and 6. Candidates will be required to provide evidence of additional educational training for the sixth attempt at each section, see Regulation 3.8.
- 3.7 **ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAINING.** In addition to remaining eligible under Regulations 5, at the sixth attempt at any component of the FPMRCA examinations, a candidate must provide evidence of additional educational experience/training as follows:
- 3.7.1 Prior to application for further attempts after the fifth attempt a candidate must:
- (a) Discuss their final attempt and suitability for Special Interest Areas (SIA) in Pain with their Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine. Their Regional Advisor must support a further attempt in writing through the submission of the 'Additional Educational Training form; AET Form 1' at Appendix 11.
 - (b) The form must be submitted to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations at the Faculty address, at least three months in advance of the date of the next intended sitting.
- 3.72 A candidate must attend a guidance interview before sitting at the final attempt of the SOE.
- 3.7.2 Re-application at the sixth attempt can only be made after a period of additional training which has been discussed and agreed by the Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine following consultation with the in-house anaesthetic/Pain Medicine Training team. A full training programme is mandatory and is set out on the form as follows:
- (a) Attendance/planned attendance at an FPM Tutorial held at the Faculty or similar event held locally.
 - (b) Details of examination practice for the relevant component.
 - (c) Details of further clinical exposure and training as discussed with the Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine which is appropriate to the relevant examination component.

4 Prioritisation of Applications (FFPMRCA)

- 4.1 There is no prioritisation applied for MCQ examinations.
- 4.2 Where a capacity issue arises for SOE examinations and subject to their being eligible in all other respects to sit the examination, priority will be given to approved programme trainees.

5 FFPMRCA Eligibility

- 5.1 A person is eligible to enter the FFPMRCA Examination who:
 - 5.1.1 is currently registered with the General Medical Council (United Kingdom) and,
 - 5.1.2 is a member of the Faculty of Pain Medicine and remains in good standing, and,
 - 5.1.3 satisfies the requirements of these Regulations with regard to application procedures and other matters, and,
 - 5.1.4 if applying for the SOE, has passed the MCQ paper within the last three years on the date of the examination applied for. And
 - 5.1.5 satisfies ONE of the following regulations (5.1.5.1 to 5.1.5.8):
 - 5.1.5.1 **TRAINEE:** A trainee who is currently registered with the Royal College of Anaesthetists as a trainee in Deanery / Health Education England approved training post on a GMC approved training programme in Anaesthetics or Pain Medicine. If applying for the SOE, the trainee must obtain support from their local Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine (RAM). We would also recommend that the trainee has completed at least six months of the Special Interest in Area in Pain by the date of the examination applied for.
 - 5.1.5.2 **POST-CCT TRAINEE (UK):** A doctor in a post-CCT Pain Medicine Fellowship with the support of their RAPM. Support should be given prior to starting the Fellowship in order to ensure appropriate assessment and review. The RAPM will consider the level of training, experience in the practice of pain medicine and evidence of continuing professional development before supporting a prospective candidate's application. The RAPM must also provide confirmation that the post provides the appropriate level of training.
 - 5.1.5.3 **POST-CCT TRAINEE (OVERSEAS):** A doctor who has achieved CCT (or equivalent) training in Anaesthetics in the UK and is now in a post-CCT Pain Medicine Fellowship overseas with the support of their RAPM. Support should be sought and given prior to starting the Fellowship in order to ensure appropriate assessment and review. It is the trainee's responsibility to inform the RAPM about any overseas training plans. The RAPM will consider the level of training, experience in the practice of pain medicine and evidence of continuing professional development before supporting a prospective candidate's application. The RAPM must also provide confirmation that the post provides the appropriate level of training.
 - 5.1.5.4 **CONSULTANT (UK):** A UK NHS or Defence Medical Services substantive consultant in Pain Medicine / Anaesthetics or Pain Medicine.
 - 5.1.5.5 **CONSULTANT (OVERSEAS):** A substantive consultant in Pain Medicine / Anaesthetics or Pain Medicine, who has undertaken College and GMC approved training in Pain Medicine in the UK.

- 5.1.5.6 **SPECIALTY/SAS GRADE:** An NHS or Defence Medical Services consultant specialty / SAS grade doctor who is currently practicing Pain Medicine in the UK and has the support of the RAPM.
- 5.1.5.7 **MEDICAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (MTI):** A doctor currently sponsored under the MTI International Programme who is employed in Pain Medicine in an NHS at the time of the examination applied for and who holds a relevant and satisfactory NHS appraisal. The doctor must have the support of their RAPM. The RAPM will consider the level of training, experience in the practice of pain medicine and evidence of continuing professional development before supporting a prospective candidate's application. The RAPM must also provide confirmation that the post provides the appropriate level of training. If applying for the SOE, we would advise that the doctor has completed at least six months of Special Interest Area in Pain by the date of the examination applied for.
- 5.1.5.8 **FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT:** A doctor who is now in a UK Pain Medicine Fellowship role with the support of their RAPM. Support should be given prior to the starting the fellowship in order to ensure appropriate assessment and review. The RAPM will consider the level of training, experience in the practice of pain medicine and evidence of continuing professional development proportionate to the level of the examination before supporting a prospective candidate's application. The RAPM must also provide confirmation that the post provides the appropriate level of training. Applicants should be aware that the application for the MCQ sitting must be submitted whilst they remain in the UK Pain Medicine Fellowship post supported by the RAPM. If applying for the SOE, we would advise that the fellow has completed six months of equivalent Special Interest Area in Pain.

5.2 A person who has already attempted and failed the exam applied for six times is not eligible to enter the MCQ or SOE examination. A person shall not be eligible for any FPMRCA examinations where a matter for review, appeal or complaint remains unresolved.

5.3 The MCQ paper must be completed prior to taking the SOE.

6 Application Procedures

- 6.1 **APPLICATIONS.** Applicants apply for examinations online through EventsForce. The FPM examination calendar, details of online application/payment are available on the Faculty website www.fpm.ac.uk.
- 6.2 Applications to an examination must be received by the Faculty on or after the published opening date and not later than 5pm on the published closing date of the sitting applied for, as shown in the examination calendar. An applicant will receive an automatically generated email confirming booking has been successful and payment has been processed.
- 6.3 Any certificates required to support an application must be sent to and received by the Faculty in advance of online application. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- 6.4 The fees payable for admission to each part shall be those fixed by the Board and the Council and published in the examinations calendar and should be paid as part of the online application process.
- 6.5 **WITHDRAWALS.** To withdraw from an exam, send an email to exams@rcoa.ac.uk stating the name and date of the exam from which you wish to withdraw. An administration fee of £40 may be charged. Please see terms below.

If withdrawing an application for admission to an examination before the closing date for applications, you may receive back the full amount of the fee paid, providing the withdrawal request is within 14 days of booking the exam.

If greater than 14 days or after the booking window has closed, the refund is subject to an administration fee (the 14-day rule).

If withdrawing in any other circumstances within 7 working days of an exam date, including non-issue of entry visas (with the exception of those described in Section 9, Special Arrangements), you will not be entitled to any refund of fee. This rule also applies to candidates who do not appear for an exam on the exam day.

Candidates who are forced to withdraw from an examination after the closing date due to a situation beyond their control, such as illness, bereavement or other extenuating circumstances, may be entitled to a refund, less the admin charge on receipt of written evidence.

Fees cannot be deferred from one exam to another and candidates must prove their eligibility for each exam sitting they apply for.

7 Special Arrangements

- 7.1 **PREGNANCY.** Regulations 7.2 to 7.3 apply only to candidates whose pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness, or condition renders them unable to attend the examination. These Regulations do not apply to any other situations. This special treatment in relation to candidates is permitted under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- 7.2 Any prospective candidate should notify the Faculty via the Examinations Department as soon as possible of the fact of the pregnancy and the expected week of confinement. Such details should be sent by email to exams@rcoa.ac.uk.
- 7.3 A prospective candidate should also notify the exams department if:
- 7.3.1 there is any pregnancy-related problems or illness; or
 - 7.3.2 the confinement is due shortly before or around the date of the examination; or
 - 7.3.3 the condition gives sufficient discomfort which you consider will have a detrimental effect upon your performance.
- 7.4 In such circumstances, should such a candidate be unable to sit for the examination, withdrawal will be permitted, and the examination fee will be refunded (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses, if applicable 14-day rule applies).
- 7.5 A candidate who does not inform the Examinations Department of the pregnancy will not normally be allowed to withdraw the application after the closing date without forfeiting the examination fee. However, when the pregnancy is diagnosed after applying but prior to the examination, and the candidate is subsequently unable to attend for the examination due to pregnancy-related reasons, the candidate may withdraw from the examination and the fee will be refunded (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses, if applicable 14-day rule applies).
- 7.6 **DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT.** The Faculty is committed to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability in all FPMRCA examinations and will make reasonable adjustments to examination arrangements as appropriate for individual disabled candidates. The definition of 'disability' and 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act 2010 and the procedure to follow for candidates seeking examination adjustments are set out at Appendix 4.
- 7.7 **TEMPORARY MEDICAL CONDITIONS.** The Faculty will consider special arrangements in the form of 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates who have a temporary, ongoing, or fluctuating medical condition that does not meet the definition of a disability as set out in the Equality Act 2010 but does affect a candidate's ability to take a planned sitting of an examination. The procedures to follow are set out at Appendix 4.

8 Fellowship by Examination

- 8.1 A person shall be entitled to be admitted as a Fellow of the Faculty and granted use of the post-nominal FPMRCA if he or she has:
- 8.1.1 passed both components of the FPMRCA examination; **and**
 - 8.1.2 complied with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Board in the regulations of the Faculty including formal Faculty membership.

9 Failures and Guidance

- 9.1 **FAILURES.** A candidate who is unsuccessful in an examination may, subject to the provisions of Regulations 3.8, 5 and 9.2, enter for the next or any subsequent sitting of that examination.
- 9.2 **GUIDANCE.** Prior to sitting the SOEs at the fourth and sixth attempt, candidates must attend a mandatory guidance interview. Before sitting at the final (sixth attempt) candidates must also submit an Additional Educational Training form (AET1), see Regulation 3.8.2. Guidance is not provided on failure of the MCQ examination or following failure at the first attempt of the SOE examination.
- 9.3 A candidate who fails the SOE examination at the second attempt or any subsequent attempts up to the fifth attempt will be offered a guidance interview by the Faculty via the Examinations Department. Only one guidance interview is permitted per examination component. Interviews are not mandatory at this stage (see 9.2). All correspondence regarding Guidance Interviews should be made by email to exams@rcoa.ac.uk.
- 9.4 No special consideration will be given in respect of refunds following guidance interviews.
- 9.5 For the purpose of this regulation 'guidance' shall be:
- (a) carried out by one or more Faculty Examiners.
 - (b) attended by the Local Pain Medicine Educational Supervisor.
 - (c) arranged locally or virtually.
 - (d) subject to any other requirement that the Board may from time to time authorise.

10 Representation and Re-Calculation

- 10.1 The Faculty is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly and consistently during Faculty examinations. Paragraphs 11 and 12 of these regulations allow candidates to request a 'Review' of the conduct of their exam where they believe they may have been treated unfairly and allege impropriety or bias of some kind. Any decision regarding the request for a Review is made by the Head of Examinations. Candidates who remain dissatisfied with the Review decision and wish to have their case heard by an independent panel may request an Appeal.
- 10.2 All marks are awarded following strict guidelines (see Appendix 2). **Papers cannot be remarked**, marks confirmed by the Faculty are final. However, if following the outcome of a Review or Appeal, bias or impropriety is agreed to have been proven, then the Review or Appeal body will take such action to rectify the situation identified.
- 10.3 **RE-CALCULATION REQUESTS.** A Candidate who is dissatisfied with the determination of his/her result but is not alleging any impropriety or bias, may after the receipt of the result letter, request an additional calculation of his/her result. Re-calculation will incur a £50 administration charge, refundable only where an error is identified. Applicants should be fully aware that errors found during additional calculation are extremely rare.
- 10.3.1 Re-calculation requests should be sent by email to exams@rcoa.ac.uk. On receipt, a payment link will be emailed from the Finance department.

11 Reviews

- 11.1 Reviews will be entertained **which allege bias or impropriety of some kind** in the organisation, content, conduct or determination of the result of the examination. The burden of proof lies with the candidate who must prove clear reason as to why their performance was affected by impropriety or bias. The following are examples or incidents that may affect performance:
- 11.1.1 Organisation e.g. wrong or missing documentation, instructions or artefacts, poor seating/lighting.
 - 11.1.2 Content e.g. questions not relevant to the examination, questions on a topic not related to the curriculum.
 - 11.1.3 Conduct e.g. personal questions about candidate's age, gender, origins, beliefs, disabilities, workplace, or experience.
 - 11.1.4 Determination of the result e.g. the examiner(s) did not follow the marking methods set out in Appendix 2.
- 11.2 No review, however, may be made of matters which relate solely to the examiners' judgement.
- 11.3 Any request for a review must be:
- 11.3.1 submitted by the candidate and setting out in full the matter on which the request is based.
 - 11.3.2 addressed to the Director and submitted within two months of completing the relevant examination.
- 11.4 On receipt of a request for a Review, the Director will send the candidate a letter of acknowledgement and will consider the admissibility of the request. If the Director concludes that a review is inadmissible, whether on the ground of Regulation 12.3 or for any other reason, the Director will so inform the candidate in writing forthwith.
- 11.5 If the Director:
- 11.5.1 is of the opinion that the request for a review is in the nature of a request for guidance or re-calculation rather than a challenge of the examination procedure or result due to alleged impropriety or bias, the request may be treated in accordance with the appropriate regulation.
 - 11.5.2 finds that the matter on which the review is based contains any error of fact, the candidate shall be so informed without delay and shall be invited to indicate whether he or she wishes to pursue the matter. If he or she does not, the Review shall be deemed to have been dismissed.
 - 11.5.3 concludes that the matter on which the Review is based, provides proof of impropriety or bias of some kind, whether in whole or in part, the Director shall take any action necessary to rectify the situation identified and the candidate shall be informed of the findings and any corrective action to be taken.
 - 11.5.4 concludes that the matter on which the Review is based does not prove impropriety or bias, then the candidate shall be so informed in writing forthwith.
- 11.6 In conducting the review in accordance with Regulation 12.5, the Director shall consult the Examiners.

- 11.7 Candidates cannot apply for or undertake FPPMRCA examinations whilst matters under review remain unresolved.

12 Appeals

- 12.1 If a candidate who has received a reply under Regulation 11.6.4 remains dissatisfied with the findings of the Director and wishes to challenge the points set out in the decision letter, he/she may submit an Appeal to the College Appeal Clerk, using the form at Appendix 5 to these Regulations. No appeal may be made in matters which relate solely to the examiners' judgement. The appeal must be accompanied by a fee of £1,655 (by cheque made payable to 'The Royal College of Anaesthetists') and must be received within two months of the Director's decision letter.
- 12.2 The Reviews Clerk will confirm receipt in writing and advise the Appellant of a date by which an Appeal Panel will be appointed, which will not be more than one calendar month after the date of receipt of the application. At this stage, the Appellant can request a meeting with a senior FPM examiner who is not involved in the Review or the Appeal, to discuss the FPM examination processes or marking system, the senior examiner will be nominated by the Faculty. The content of this meeting cannot be used as further evidence towards the case of the Appellant or the Faculty. The Appellant may withdraw his/her application and receive a full refund of fee providing it is prior to the final date set for the appointment of the Appeal Panel.
- 12.3 On appointment, the Panel will consist of two examiners who have not previously been involved at any time in the examination of the Appellant or his/her Review (the examiners may be drawn from the FPPMRCA Court of Examiners), and a chair, who will have no formal connection with the Faculty or College. The Appeal hearing date will be set by the Appeals Clerk. The panel shall proceed to hear the appeal in accordance with notes for the Chair at Appendix 6 and Procedures for Appeal Hearings at Appendix 7 to these Regulations. It shall allow adequate periods of notice to both parties, an opportunity for the appellant to be present in person and to be represented, and an opportunity for the appellant, or his/her representative, to present the appeal and to respond to any answer the Director may make.
- 12.4 At the conclusion of the proceedings the panel shall reach its findings. The findings a panel may make shall be as follows:
- 12.4.1 That the Appeal is dismissed; no further appeal may be considered.
- 12.4.2 That the Appeal is justified in whole or in part but that the matter does not justify further action.
- 12.4.3 That the Appeal is justified and either that:
- (a) any mark originally awarded to the Appellant shall be appropriately corrected and, if the consequence of such correction so requires, that the Appellant shall be declared successful in the examination; or
 - (b) the result of the Appellant's examination shall be declared void and that he/she shall be allowed to re-sit without payment of any fee.
- 12.5 The Chair shall have the power to decide whether all, part of or none of the appeal fee will be returned.
- 12.6 In announcing its findings the panel shall give reasons for its decision in writing.
- 12.7 The appellant cannot apply for or undertake any FPPMRCA exam whilst a matter for Appeal remains unresolved.

13 Dress code, electronic devices/mobile phones, and misconduct

- 13.1 **DRESS CODE FOR EXAMINATIONS:** the Faculty endorse the key recommendations of guidance on dress codes for postgraduate medical recruitment, training, and assessment from the conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD). Full details are set out at Appendix 8 of these regulations.
- 13.2 **ELECTRONIC DEVICES, SMART WATCHES, AND MOBILE PHONES:** The Faculty will follow strict appliance of the rules set out at Appendix 8 of these regulations regarding the use of mobile phones, smart watches, and unauthorised electronic devices during FPPMRCA examinations.
- 13.3 **MISCONDUCT:** All aspects of misconduct at FPPMRCA examinations will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the misconduct policy set out at Appendix 10 of these regulations.

14 Complaints

- 14.1 The Faculty recognises that on occasion candidates may wish to express their dissatisfaction with the way in which something has been done and feel confident that any such complaint is handled in a fair and consistent way. Candidates who consider that they have grounds for complaint, regarding the provision of a service by the Faculty that does not amount to a request for a 'Review', (see paragraph 11), should use the following regulations.
- 14.2 A 'complaint' in accordance with these regulations, is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or a specific concern, whether given orally or in writing, about the provision or quality of a service provided during the examination process.
- 14.3 Complaints should be brought to the attention of a Faculty officer as soon as possible. All complaints given orally at the time of an examination taking place will be logged on an incident report form by the Faculty officer. Immediate action to resolve issues as they arise will be taken wherever possible and the complainant will be advised accordingly.
- 14.4 All complaints should be raised initially with the Faculty officer directly involved. The vast majority of complaints can and should be resolved in this way. If this does not resolve the matter, or this step is for any reason not possible or appropriate, the complainant should contact the Faculty by email or in writing, setting out in full the matter on which the complaint is based. Correspondence should be addressed for the attention of the Heads of Examinations, within one month of the incident occurring. Complaints submitted anonymously or on behalf of another party will not be considered.
- 14.5 Where a complaint more closely fits a request for a Review or a matter such as a re-calculation, it will be reclassified and proceed in accordance with the appropriate regulation. Such reclassification will always be carried out so that the matter can be considered in the most appropriate and fair way. Candidates will not be required to resubmit their cases.
- 14.6 An informal and flexible approach to resolution of complaints will be adopted wherever possible. All complainants will be advised of the course of action taken to resolve the complaint.
- 14.7 If following communication with the Faculty a complainant remains dissatisfied and only when all attempts to resolve the complaint have been exhausted. Then a 'formal complaint' should be submitted to the Director. Following discussion with the Examinations Committee, the Director will reach a conclusion on the complaint and determine a course of action.
- 14.8 Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Director, headed 'Formal Complaint' stating:
- (a) The nature of the complaint.
 - (b) What has/has not been done to resolve it.
 - (c) Why the complainant is not satisfied with the course of action taken by the
 - (d) Faculty/Faculty officer, and
 - (e) what the complainant would like to be done to resolve the matter to their satisfaction.

- 14.9 The Director will acknowledge an official complaint within five working days of receipt. A full response will be made as soon as possible. Full reasons will be given for the decision reached.
- 14.10 The decision of the Director is final and following despatch of the decision letter the Complaint procedure will be at an end.
- 14.11 Candidate confidentiality will be observed when handling complaints wherever possible. However, it will occasionally be necessary to disclose a complainant's identity to progress an investigation. Candidates who engage in the complaints process will not be disadvantaged.

15 Equality, Diversity and Equality Analysis

- 15.1 In the exercising of its duties when carrying out examinations in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Section 149(1) (the Act), the Faculty of Pain Medicine gives due regard to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 15.1.1 In its regard for these duties the Faculty of Pain Medicine aims to meet all areas of the Royal College of Anaesthetists Equal Opportunities Policy¹ to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability and that no one is treated less favourably than another on grounds of ethnic origin, nationality, disability, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, age, or religion.
- 15.2 To ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and as part of the Faculty's compliance with the Royal College of Anaesthetists Equal Opportunity Policy, the Faculty monitors exam results in relation to the candidate population.
- 15.3 All examiners and examinations staff undertake regular exam specific E&D training.
- 15.4 The Faculty considers reasonable adjustment for examination candidates with a disability as set out at Appendix 4 of these regulations.
- 15.5 Equality analysis is an integral part of examinations policy and practice development. The Faculty carries out objective, evidence-based equality analysis when making decisions relating to exam changes, policies, content, and practice. This ensures that full consideration is given to the effect that such decision may have on the fairness of the exams and aims to prevent discrimination, promote diversity and inclusivity for all groups of people.

¹ The Royal College of Anaesthetists Equal Opportunities Policy (2014)

APPENDIX 1 The Structure of the Examination

There are two components to the FPPMRCA Examination:

1 MCQ

There are three sections to the MCQ examination comprising:

- (a) **MTF (Multiple True-False)**
40 MTFs each with 5 items
- (b) **SBA (Single Best Answer)**
25 SBAs
- (c) **EMQ (Extended Marking Question)**
25 EMQs

All three sections are taken as one paper in a three-hour sitting. The MCQ paper will test all Pain Medicine and generic areas of the *CCT in Anaesthetics*.

2 SOE

There are two sections to the Structured Oral Examination comprising:

(a) **Clinical Pain Medicine**

The Clinical Structured Oral Examination (SOE1) is 52 minutes in duration and comprises of a long case and three short clinical questions (SCQs). The long case will consist of; 10-minute preparation time, during which the candidate will be given the opportunity to read a case history and view relevant investigation results provided. During this time the candidate may make notes on paper provided for this purpose. This is followed by a 21-minute examination devoted to the clinical material. The clinical long case will examine a candidate's in-depth knowledge of the assessment and management of a complex chronic pain patient. Knowledge of clinical assessment tools and investigations relevant to clinical practice and available treatments will be required. The final 21 minutes will be given to the three short clinical questions. The topics of these questions could be any aspect of clinical pain medicine. No patients or actors are used. A list of clinical topics covered in previous FPPMRCA examinations, are available on the Faculty website.

(b) **Clinical Science**

The Science Structure Oral Examination (SOE2) is 30 minutes in duration and comprises of four sections: anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and a section covering psychology, epidemiology, and clinical measurement. The importance of the scientific basis of Pain Medicine for the FPPMRCA examination must be emphasized. A list of clinical science topics covered in previous FPPMRCA examinations, are available on the Faculty website.

APPENDIX 2 The Marking Systems

Both the MCQ and SOE exams must be passed to obtain fellowship.

In these exams, the performance of borderline candidates is reviewed by the examiners before final marks are awarded.

If, in the opinion of the examiners, a candidate's answers in the SOEs have been dangerous then the candidate's performance is reviewed by all the examiners before the marks are confirmed.

1 MCQ

MTF: 1 mark is awarded for each correct answer

SBA: 4 marks are awarded for each correctly answered question

EMQ: 4 marks awarded for each question correctly matched

The marks of the three MCQ sections are added together to give a total mark. With 40 MTF, 25 SBA and 25 EMQ the maximum mark obtainable is 400.

Marks are not deducted for wrong answers.

The pass mark is set by the examiners using assessment methods approved by the GMC.

2 SOE

Two examiners are present for each part of the SOE. Each examiner marks every question independently. There are 10 questions.

- **Pass** = 2
- **Borderline performance** = 1
- **Fail** = 0

giving a total of 40 marks for the two sub-sections.

The pass mark is determined using assessment methods approved by the GMC.

APPENDIX 3 Exam Commendation and Prize

All candidates that reach the level of 'distinction' in both components of the FPPMRCA examination at their **first attempt** will receive a letter of commendation from the Chair of the Court of FPPMRCA Examiners.

At the discretion of the Board of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, the Candidate(s) who achieve the *highest* level of distinction in both parts of the FPPMRCA, based on the letters of commendation for each academic year will be awarded the FPPMRCA Examination Prize.

A level of distinction is defined as follows:

- **FPPMRCA MCQ:** The top 10% of examination candidates
- **FPPMRCA SOE:** A maximum score of 40 marks

On completion of the Spring SOE examination, a list of candidates who received commendation letters over the current academic year, along with their scores in each part of the examination will be provided to the FPPMRCA Training & Assessment Committee.

The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of the Faculty of Pain Medicine for the award of the Prize, to the candidate(s) who has achieved the highest level of distinctions from the commendations made for that academic year.

The successful candidate will be advised in writing and invited to be presented with the FPPMRCA Examination Prize at the FPM's Annual Meeting.

APPENDIX 4 Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments at examinations – arrangements for disabled candidates

This policy has been updated following the guidelines set out in the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' 'Reasonable Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities in High Stakes Assessments' document (July 2017), which was produced following collaborative work from medical colleges and faculties. This policy is supported by a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which are available on the Faculty website and provided to candidates who apply for all FPPMRCA examinations.

1. Policy statement

The Faculty is committed to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability in all types of FPPMRCA Examination settings. To this aim, the Faculty will make 'reasonable adjustments' to examination arrangements as appropriate for individual disabled candidates. The Faculty will take account of a candidate's personal circumstances and any professional advice given in the corroborative evidence of the disability that has been supplied. Therefore adjustments are not merely based on the impairment(s) but how the impairment(s) would potentially impact on a candidate's performance.

2. Definition of disability

Disability is a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purpose of the Act, these words have the following meaning:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things such as eating, washing, walking, working and examinations.

3. Definition and provision of reasonable adjustment

- 3.1 'Reasonable adjustment' is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a candidate at a substantial disadvantage in an examination situation.
- 3.2 The Faculty will make reasonable adjustment for disabled candidates who undertake FPPMRCA examinations, where any provision, criterion, or practice and/or physical feature of the exam environment puts disabled candidates at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled. The Faculty will provide or allow the use of auxiliary aids, where without one a disabled candidate will be put at a substantial disadvantage. See paragraph 6.
- 3.3 The Faculty will also consider temporary (such as broken arm, back pain), on-going or fluctuating medical conditions for the purpose of examination adjustment, where the condition affects a candidate's ability to take a planned sitting of an examination. See Section 8 of these regulations regarding special arrangements for Pregnancy and short-term related conditions.
- 3.4 Reasonable adjustment to examination arrangements is provided to candidates with a disability in order to reduce the potential disadvantage they face compared to a non-disabled candidate. It is not designed to give any type of advantage to disabled candidates in the receiving of additional examination accommodations. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the examination and does not apply to the application of a competence standard.

- 3.5 FFPMRCA examinations are in various formats which require a number of different deliveries; online computer-based (MCQ) and oral discussion, either in-person at the College or online (SOE). Each type of format/delivery may make different demands on the candidate and therefore may influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which can be put in place. The Faculty recognises that it is not possible or appropriate to attempt to define a pre-determined set of reasonable adjustments and therefore any decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

4. Procedure for requesting reasonable adjustment

- 4.1 Any candidate who has a physical or mental disability, specific learning difficulty (SpLD) or on-going or fluctuating condition that they believe could affect their performance in an examination may be entitled to reasonable adjustments or special arrangements. All such candidates should initially inform the Faculty of this at the time of application, by completing the 'I have a disability' and the 'I require exam adjustment' boxes on the application form. Or by ticking the appropriate pop-up boxes during the online application process. This should also be carried out at all reapplications and repeat attempts at any component(s) of the examination. Candidates should not assume that they will be granted adjustments at forthcoming exams just because they were provided certain adjustments at previous attempts.
- 4.2 On completion of submitting their exam application and in addition to indicating they require adjustments during the application process. All candidates seeking reasonable adjustments must submit full written details of any adjustments they require to the Head of Examinations by emailing exams@rcoa.ac.uk the subject heading of the email should include the name of the examination applied for and the wording 'request for exam adjustments'. For example; "FFPMRCA Final MCQ, August 2018 - request for exam adjustments". Again, this process should be followed at all attempts. At the first request for reasonable adjustment candidates must supply supporting evidence from an appropriate authority, such as; the candidate's GP, their Faculty tutor or supervising consultant. See paragraph 4.4 regarding the evidence required for candidates with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD).
- 4.3 Candidates whose need for reasonable adjustments or special arrangements (see Section 8 of these regulations) arises after the submission of their application (due to an accident or sudden condition/illness) must contact the Head of Examinations exams@rcoa.ac.uk as soon as practicable.
- 4.4 If a candidate is seeking reasonable adjustments for an SpLD, then they must provide a report from an approved assessor* when contacting the Head of Examinations. This assessment needs to have been undertaken and provided in English and obtained after the age of 16. The report must include recommendations in regard to exam adjustments. Reports will be held on file therefore they only need to be submitted at the first attempt. However, the Faculty reserves the right to request a further report or clarification of the recommendations made, if the adjustment(s) requested is different from that recommended in the report or if there is no precedent set for the recommendation(s) listed, see paragraphs 4.6 and 5.8. Candidates must contact the Head of Examinations at each attempt at all examinations to discuss and confirm exam accommodations as the reasonable adjustments required may change from sitting to sitting.

*Approved assessors include:

- Specialist teachers who hold a practicing certificate, such as Dyslexia Action, BDA or PATOSS. Candidates can check if an assessor holds the appropriate qualifications on the [SASC \(SpLD Assessment Standards Committee\) website](#).
- A practicing chartered or educational psychologist who is registered with the Healthcare Professionals Council. A candidate can check if an assessor is registered on the [HCPC website](#).

Where candidates are unclear if the person who completed their assessment is an 'approved assessor' they should contact the Head of Examinations for clarification.

- 4.5 Many assessors may not be familiar with the range of assessments undertaken by candidates sitting the FPMRCA examinations and working towards a CCT in Intensive Care Medicine. Therefore to assist assessors in completing their reports the Faculty is happy to provide information to help them tailor their recommendations more effectively for specific examinations. Candidates should contact the Head of Examinations and provide the contact details of the assessor compiling the report.
- 4.6 If the rationale for reasonable adjustments in the evidence or report provided is unclear or it is felt that further explanation is required the Faculty may seek consent from the candidate to approach the relevant GP, consultant or assessor/expert concerned for further clarification.
- 4.7 Candidates are advised that failure to contact the Faculty promptly may mean that there will be insufficient time for some or all of the reasonable adjustments requested to be put in place. In such cases, candidates can either agree to sit the examination with no or some reasonable adjustment or withdraw and receive a full refund. They can then reapply for the next sitting of the examination, where a full and fair assessment of the reasonable adjustments required can be made,

5. Consideration of Reasonable adjustments

- 5.1 All decision makers will have received training in equality and diversity, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias. The Faculty is responsible for undertaking an evidence based evaluation of the entitlement to adjustments for disabled candidates, as defined by the Act and to those with conditions similar to those raised at paragraph 3.3. The Faculty will undertake re-evaluations of entitlement for each exam application made by individual candidates requesting reasonable adjustments.
- 5.2 The Head of Examinations will be the primary contact for all requests for adjustments. Whilst it cannot be assumed that candidates with the same type of disability will all benefit from the same adjustments, where a precedent has already been set the Head of Examinations will use previously awarded adjustments as a starting point for their considerations and discussions. See paragraph 5.3 in regard to SpLDs.
- 5.3 Good practice in the support of candidates with SpLDs such as dyslexia is applied in offering a provision of extra time for written examinations, although this should be raised as a recommendation in the assessor's report in order to be used as a starting point for reasonable adjustment considerations. Extra time accommodations for candidates with SpLDs will also be considered for other exam components where the reading of information is required. Additionally such candidates may have different or further requirements, such as the use of particular fonts, overlays or exam questions printed on coloured paper. Where this is the case different and/or additional reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.4 Where the Faculty has no precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need or where the adjustment requested is more significant than any previous adjustment permitted, then the case may be referred to the examinations sub-committee. If the examination date is before the next meeting of the sub-committee, then the request will be forwarded for their consideration by confidential email. The Head of examinations will coordinate and compile the response and keep the candidate advised throughout the process.
- 5.5 All candidates who have submitted written requests for reasonable adjustments will be notified in writing of the reasonable adjustments that have been permitted for their examinations.
- 5.6 If a candidate is diagnosed with a disability after failing an examination component, they should contact the Head of Examinations to discuss reasonable adjustments that can be provided for future attempts. However, all previous attempts taken prior to the diagnosis will still stand. Therefore, candidates are strongly advised that should they feel that their performance may have been impaired by an underlying disability they should seek advice after their initial failure rather than taking further attempts at the examination.

5.7 The FFPMRCA SOE examinations are regarded as competence tests, assessing understanding, cognitive skills and behaviour as well as clinical knowledge. As such the method of assessment is a crucial element of these examination components and any adjustments made must maintain the integrity and validity of these assessments and not affect the format of the examinations.

GMC guidance² indicates that while there is a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, in enabling the competence standards in Tomorrow's Doctors³ to be met, there is no requirement to make adjustments that would alter the standard of competency required.

5.8 In all cases the Faculty reserves the right to take independent advice to ensure that any proposed adjustments are appropriate and in accordance with any applicable legislation.

5.9 Details and statistical information of requests for reasonable adjustment shall be regularly reported to the Examinations Committee for the purpose of monitoring and review.

5.10 Where a candidate does not believe the adjustments they have been granted are reasonable, they should refer to the FFPMRCA Examinations Regulations and Appeal.

6. Examples of reasonable adjustments

The Act sets out three different considerations that organisations must take reasonable steps to comply with when considering reasonable adjustments. They must avoid substantial disadvantage through provision, criterion or practice and from physical features and provide or allow the use of auxiliary aids where without one a disabled person would be substantially disadvantaged.

The table below gives examples of the reasonable adjustments that could be applied to each of the three considerations – they are included for guidance purposes only:

Element of exam requiring adjustment	Example reasonable adjustments
Provision, criterion, or practice	Extra time for candidates with SpLD. Rest breaks for candidates with certain medical conditions or to allow medication to be taken. Exam papers in large fonts or specific colour.
Physical features	Adjusting exam cubicles to allow wheelchair access. Provision of access lifts, accessible toilets and staircase ramps.
Auxiliary aids	Hearing induction loop. Coloured overlays.

² http://www.gmc-uk.org/9_Health_and_Disability_in_Postgraduate_Medical_Education_and_Training.pdf_46554398.pdf

³ http://www.gmc-uk.org/Tomorrow_s_Doctors_1214.pdf_48905759.pdf

APPENDIX 5 Examination Appeal Application Form

****TO REPLACE IN FINAL VERSION WITH PDF OF NEW FORMAT FPM EXAM APPEALS FORM****

Examination Appeal



Please complete this form in BLOCK CAPITALS in BLACK ink.

To be completed by the Appellant and returned with the fee.

Part 1 To be completed by the appellant

1.1 Title

1.2 First name(s)

1.3 Last name

1.4 Address and postcode (home)

1.5 College Reference Number

1.6 Date of Examination

1.7 Email address

1.8 Candidate Number

1.9 Please summarise in 50 words the grounds on which you base your appeal (if you wish to submit a more detailed account, please attached additional pages):

Appeals will be entertained which allege bias or impropriety of some kind in the organisation, content, conduct or determination of the result of the examination. No appeal may be made which relates solely to matters of the examiners' judgement. Please indicate on what basis your appeal is made:

- Organisational issues
- Content of the examination questions
- Conduct of the examination
- Determination of the result

If your appeal is successful, please indicate what outcome you are seeking:

- No further action** (as detailed in Regulation 13.4.1)
- Upgrading of a previously allocated section mark, and to be declared successful if this change so affects your overall examination result** (as detailed in Regulation 13.4.2a)
- Your examination result to be declared void and that you resit the examination without payment of any fee** (as detailed in Regulation 13.4.2b)
- Some other result** (please specify below)

1.10 Name of applicant

1.11 Signature of applicant

1.12 Date declaration signed

Part 2

To be completed by the Director

2.1 Full Name

2.2 Please summarise in 50 words the grounds on which the earlier review was rejected (please give a full account on separate pages if desired):

NOTES:

- 1 Section 1 to be completed by the Appellant and returned to the Reviews Clerk; the Reviews Clerk is to forward a copy to the Director.
- 2 Section 2 to be completed by the Director and returned to the Reviews Clerk.
- 3 Completed form to be copied to the Appellant, the Director and members of the Appeal Panel.

APPENDIX 6 Appeal Panel Notes For Chair

- 1 Appeals will be entertained which allege bias or impropriety of some kind in the organisation, content, conduct or determination of the result of the examination, for example:
 - 1.1 Organisation e.g. wrong or missing documentation, instructions or artefacts poor seating/lighting, error in timing allowed, which was not resolved during the examination.
 - 1.2 Content e.g. questions not relevant to the examination, questions on a topic not included in the syllabus.
 - 1.3 Conduct e.g. personal questions about candidate's age, gender, origins, beliefs disabilities, workplace, or experience.
 - 1.4 Determination of the result e.g. the examiner(s) did not follow the marking methods set out in Appendix 2 of the current Examination Regulations.
- 2 No appeal may be made which relates solely to matters to the examiners' judgement.
- 3 No recording equipment is allowed in the hearing; the Reviews Clerk will minute the proceedings (long or shorthand) as the only record. The minutes will reflect the bare facts of the event, i.e. not the intricate details. The Appeals Clerk will assist the Chair in the production and dispatch of the 'decision document'.
- 4 The Appellant's Representative can be medically qualified but should not be his legal representative and may be:
 - 4.1 a Local Pain Medicine Educational Supervisor or other Consultant in Anaesthesia or Pain Medicine
 - 4.2 a friend (not appearing in a professional capacity)
 - 4.3 a Trade Union representative
- 5 If the Appellant chooses their Representative to present their case, then the Appellant can only contribute as a witness.
- 6 **Witnesses**
 - 6.1 Character witnesses may be requested to submit a written testimonial rather than appear in person at the hearing. Witnesses of fact should appear in person.
 - 6.2 The decision to call witnesses will rest with the Chair whose permission shall not be unreasonably withheld. Normally not more than two witnesses would attend.
 - 6.3 In the case of multiple witnesses, the Chair may require witnesses to present written statements rather than to appear in person. All those to be present at the appeal hearing will be notified of the witnesses.
 - 6.4 Witnesses for the Faculty will be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred (normally within the UK). The Appellant's witnesses will not be reimbursed by the Faculty, but the Chair has the power to reimburse those expenses of a successful applicant which are reasonably incurred in attending the appeal hearing.
- 7 Explain to the Appellant that Appeal Regulation 13.4.2(b), "that the result of the appellant's examination shall be declared void", means that their attempt will not be counted.
- 8 Certain steps of the Appeal Hearing Procedure may be repeated if new material is introduced.
- 9 The Chair shall have the power to decide whether all, part or none of the appeal fee will be returned.

APPENDIX 7 Procedure for Appeal Hearings

1 To be present:

1.1 **Appeal Panel**

- Chair

- Two nominated examiners not previously involved in the examination or appeal of the Appellant (one or both could be selected from the FPPMRCA Court of Examiners).

1.2 **Attending**

- Appellant

- Appellant's Representative (if desired by the Appellant)
- Training and Examinations Director (Director), on behalf of the examiners
- Reviews Clerk to minute the proceedings
- Witnesses

2 Chair to explain the procedure to the Appellant and Appellant's Representative if present.

3 **Appellant's Representative**

3.1 The Appellant may appoint a representative who may be medically but not legally qualified.

3.2 If an Appellant's Representative is present, the Chair is to establish whether the Appellant or the Appellant's Representative is to present the Appellant's case and answer questions. If the Appellant's Representative is to present the case, then the Appellant may only contribute as a witness.

4 New evidence may be brought to the hearing by either side. This new evidence should be made available to the Appellant or Director at least ten days before the date of the hearing. Neither the Appellant nor the Director can rely on any matter raised at the meeting with the senior examiner, if so used.

5 **Witnesses**

5.1 Either party may request witnesses to be present, subject to notifying the Chair of the Appeal Panel in writing not later than 21 days before the appeal hearing, with the reason why they have been invited.

5.2 The decision to call witnesses will rest with the Chair of the Appeal Panel whose permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Normally not more than two witnesses would attend.

5.3 In the case of multiple witnesses, the Chair may require witnesses to present written statements rather than to appear in person. All those to be present at the appeal hearing will be notified of the names of the witnesses.

5.4 Witnesses for the College will be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred and normally within the UK. The Appellant's witnesses will not be reimbursed by the College.

6 **Presentation of Evidence**

6.1 **Appellant**

6.1.1 The Appellant/Appellant's Representative presents the grounds of the Appeal with reference to, and contributions from, any witnesses permitted by the Chair.

6.1.1 The Director may question the Appellant/Appellant's Representative and witnesses.

6.1.2 The Appellant or Appellant's Representative will have the right to re-examine, after which there may be further cross-examination and re-examination.

6.1.3 At the end of this process, members of the Panel may question a witness. Finally, the Chair will ask if there are any further questions before standing down the witness.

6.2 Education Training and Examinations Director (the Director)

6.2.1 The Director states why the review was rejected, with reference to, and contributions from, any witnesses.

6.2.2 Procedures 6.1.2 - 6.1.4 are followed on behalf of the Director and his witnesses.

6.3 When appropriate, the Chair of the Panel will release witnesses.

6.4 The Appellant/Appellant's Representative makes a final summary statement of the Appellant's case - no new material may be introduced during the summary statement.

7 The Appellant, Appellant's Representative and the Director leave the room.

8 The Appeal Panel reaches its findings which will normally be declared immediately.

9 The Chair shall have the power to decide whether all, part or none of the appeal fee will be returned.

10 In announcing its finding, the panel shall give reasons for its decision.

11 The decision of the Appeal Panel is to be confirmed in writing to the Appellant and the Director (the decision document). A copy will be provided to each member of the panel and a copy held on Faculty files.

APPENDIX 8 Dress Code for Examinations

The Faculty endorse the key recommendations of the Guidance on Dress Codes for postgraduate medical recruitment, training and assessment from the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD).⁴

In particular, candidates are reminded that the same dress code should apply for professional examinations as it does for day-to-day clinical practice/contact with patients. This means that forms of dress should not constrain the candidate's ability to demonstrate recognised skills including effective communication with simulated patients or examiners, nor hinder easy verification of the candidate's identity.

Hence candidates are requested **not** to wear forms of dress that cover the face while attending any of the FPMRCA examinations.

Candidates are also advised that there is no requirement to wear clinical/theatre clothing during any of the examinations.

⁴ *Dress codes for postgraduate medical and dental recruitment, training and assessment.* COPMeD, October 2011.

APPENDIX 9 Electronic Devices, Smart Watches and Mobile Phone Policy

In response to the increased potential for cheating and the disturbance of other candidates, the Faculty will follow the strict appliance of the following rules regarding the use of electronic devices mobile phones and smart watches during examinations:

1. **Online written and SOE examinations:**

- Smart watches and other electronic devices are not permitted in the exam environment.
- Mobile phones are permitted in the exam room in case of a candidate needing to contact TestReach support during the exam. Once the mobile phone has been used for the environment check conducted by the virtual invigilator, it should be powered off and placed out of reach before the online exam begins.

In-person SOE examination:

No smart watches, mobiles phone or other electronic devices are permitted in the examination. All devices must be:

- switched off in front of the faculty officer at reception
- stored in secure locker/luggage for duration of time in College; **or:**
- handed to college officer to be placed in an envelope and marked with candidate's college reference number. Returned in exchange for candidate badge on leaving the College.

2. The following are some examples of 'electronic devices', it is not intended to be complete, if in doubt then candidates should ask the Faculty Officer/Invigilator in attendance:

Recording device, MP3 player, bleeper, any timing device that makes audible beeps.

3. **Non-compliance**

Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to disqualification from the examination.

a. The following constitutes non-compliance of the above rules:

- A smart watch or electronic device found in the possession of a candidate during an examination.
- Use of a mobile phone during the exam for the purposes of cheating and/or sharing any part of the examination.
- The ringing, vibrating or any audible 'beep' heard from a mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device whilst an examination is taking place, which is deemed by the Faculty officer/invigilator to have disrupted other candidates.

b. In all cases of non-compliance an incident report form will be submitted to the examinations subcommittee for their consideration. Candidates cited for non-compliance will be required to sign the incident report form before leaving the examination room and may be required to attend the Faculty to give further information/evidence regarding the incident.

c. Where the examinations subcommittee agree that non-compliance is proven they will consider the following, before a penalty is agreed:

- The need to preserve the integrity of the examination.
- The disturbance caused to others.
- Consistency with previous penalties.

d. The examinations subcommittee may consider awarding one of the following standard penalties or may give a more specific penalty where felt appropriate:

- No further action
 - A written warning
 - Result for an examination or part of an examination under investigation, to be declared void
 - Candidate barred from applying for an exam for a specified period
 - Where cheating is proved act in accordance with sub-paragraph 14.2.
- e. Examination results of candidates cited for non-compliance will be withheld until a decision has been reached by the Examination Sub-Committee. Investigations will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and candidates will be kept informed of progress. Candidates will be informed of the outcome in writing by the Director of Education, Training and Examinations on behalf of the examinations subcommittee.

APPENDIX 10 Misconduct Policy

The Integrity of FFPMRCA examinations is fundamental to the values promoted by the Faculty. It is important that all candidates are judged on their ability, and no candidate be allowed to gain an advantage unfairly over others. By virtue of entering to sit an examination, candidates are deemed to have understood and agreed to abide and respect all examination regulations and policies. Any aspect of misconduct at FFPMRCA examinations will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the following Misconduct policy. With the exception that, where non-compliance of Faculty regulations is cited due to the use of electronic devices or mobile phones, then these matters will proceed in accordance with the policy set out at Appendix 9 of these Examination Regulations.

1. Misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- (a) Failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or Faculty Officer
- (b) The introduction or/and use of any materials or documents other than those specifically permitted for the examination
- (c) Any attempt to gain access to or read the work of another candidate
- (d) Any attempt to communicate with another candidate
- (e) Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour during the examination
- (f) Removal by a candidate, of material or content from an examination, other than those documents specifically permitted
- (g) The release of content from an examination to a third party without the expressed permission of a Faculty Officer
- (h) Falsification or alteration of eligibility or identification documents
- (i) Impersonation of a candidate
- (j) Any other form of cheating, deception, fraud or conduct that is likely to give an unfair advantage to a candidate or candidates.

2. Reporting misconduct

- 2.1 Under normal examination conditions suspected misconduct should be reported to the Faculty through the submission of 'an Incident report form' (Available on request through a Faculty Officer). Incident report forms can be completed by examiners, invigilators, Faculty Officers, examination candidates and any other such person who becomes aware of any incident that may affect the examination processes or its regulations. Forms completed by exam candidates regarding suspected misconduct of another candidate *must* be countersigned by a witness such as a Faculty official. All forms must be completed as soon as possible with full details of fact, they must be signed and dated and given to the duty Faculty Officer. Full instructions for completion of Incident Report forms are set out on the back of the form.
- 2.2 Any materials that are reasonably believed by an invigilator or Faculty Officer not to be permitted as part of the exam will be confiscated. Electronic devices will be returned at the end of the exam with details logged on the Incident report form. The Candidate concerned will be asked to acknowledge agreement of the confiscation of other materials on the Incident report form. All such materials will be included as part of the report.
- 2.3 Where misconduct is suspected after an examination or outside examination conditions, such as where a candidate is suspected of passing on or unauthorised use of examination content that has not been released into the public domain, then a written report of the incident

should be submitted to the Director at the Faculty address. Such reports should give full details of the person suspected of misconduct *and* the person submitting the report.

- 2.4 Anonymous reports of misconduct will not be used to initiate a formal misconduct process.
- 2.5 The Faculty acknowledges that any case of misconduct can have an adverse effect on a candidate's reputation and career. Therefore all matters of the reporting and process of alleged misconduct will be kept strictly confidential. However, where the allegation of misconduct is proven, the Faculty reserves the right to forward details of the case to the GMC/National Medical Council and in the case of UK trainees, their College Tutor and/or Regional Advisor.

3 Review of alleged Misconduct

- 3.1 Incident report forms that allege misconduct and written reports received as described in paragraph 2.2 will be handed to the Director who will carry out a review of the alleged misconduct to determine if there is sufficient evidence of a *prima facie* case to warrant the incident being passed to the Examinations Chair and/or the Misconduct Group (see paragraph 4).
- 3.2 Where, in the opinion of the Director, an incident is not deemed to be self-evident from the facts set out in the report or the incident is judged to be of a minor/technical issue, then the matter will not be processed and no further action will be taken. However, this will not preclude an official letter being issued to advise the candidate of the conduct of behaviour expected under examination conditions. Cases not processed beyond the Director's review will not be recorded on a candidate's personal records.
- 3.3 Where, following the review of a report and consultation with Faculty staff/witnesses as necessary, the Director deems that there is sufficient evidence to prove a case of misconduct, the Director will inform the candidate of the allegations in writing. The candidate concerned will be allowed 10 working days, from the date of the letter, to accept or challenge the case against them.
- 3.4 Examination results of candidates cited for alleged misconduct will not be processed until a decision has been reached. Investigations will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and candidates will be kept informed of progress.
- 3.5 If, within 10 working days a candidate admits in writing to the allegations made against them, then the matter will be forwarded to the Examinations Chair and Vice Chair for their formal consideration and the award of an appropriate penalty in accordance with paragraph 6. Where allegations are accepted by the candidate, they can submit a written statement with their response that may be taken into account by the Examinations Chair/Vice Chair. A decision will be reached as soon as possible and normally within five working days of the date of the candidate letter.
- 3.6 If a candidate denies an allegation of misconduct in writing to the Director, either in whole or in part, then the matter will be referred to the Misconduct Group who will deal with the matter electronically.

4 Misconduct Group process

- 4.1 The Misconduct Group (the Group) will consist of:
 - (a) The Chair of the FFPMRCA Examinations Committee (Chair)
 - (b) The Chair of the FFPMRCA Examination Board
 - (c) A nominated Patient Liaison Group (PLG) representative
- 4.2 The duty of the Group will be to examine the facts of the case and to determine the strength and integrity of the evidence. Then make a decision based on the balance of probabilities, whether the allegation of misconduct is proven. Where to the satisfaction of the Group, a case is proven the Group will agree an appropriate penalty in accordance with paragraph.

The outcome will be decided electronically/via telephone conference and therefore there will be no charge to the candidate.

- 4.3 The PA to the Director will act as the Group secretary. The purpose of the Group secretary is to:
 - (a) Advise all parties on the deadline for submission of further evidence and the date on which the Group will announce their decision.
 - (b) Co-ordinate and prepare documentation/evidence for all parties.
 - (c) Provide secretarial support to the Group as required.
 - (d) Maintain communication with the candidate and provide advice as required.
 - (e) To produce and distribute the 'decision document' to all parties.
- 4.4 The Director will submit the case for the Board of examiners in writing to the Group, through the Group secretary.
- 4.5 The candidate has the right to submit written evidence for consideration by the Group up to the deadline given by the Group secretary.
- 4.6 The Group secretary will acknowledge receipt of all evidence submitted by the Candidate and confirm the date scheduled for the Group to make its decision. This will not be more than one calendar month following the written confirmation of denial of the allegation of misconduct, see paragraph 3.6. All documents to be used along with a copy of this policy will be sent by email attachments to the candidate and the Group members no later than 5 working days before the date set for the decision to be announced. No documents may be presented in evidence to the Group, unless circulated by the Group secretary in the manner detailed above.
- 4.7 The validity of the process will not be affected if the candidate fails to submit further documentary evidence on their behalf prior to the deadline given by the Group secretary.
- 4.8 Following referral of alleged misconduct to the Group, a candidate has the right to reverse their answer to the allegations up to 48 hours prior to the date scheduled for the Group's decision. Where allegations are then accepted by the candidate, they can submit a written statement with their response that may be taken into account by the Group. A decision on the penalty to be awarded will be made on the date announced by the Group secretary.
- 4.9 Neither the Group nor the candidate will be given any information regarding the candidate's result or performance at the examination in question.
- 4.10 The decision of the Group is to be confirmed in writing to the candidate (the decision document) as soon as possible following the decision date. A copy will be provided to each member of the Group and a copy will be held on Faculty files.

5 Appeals procedure

- 5.1 Appeals must be carried out in accordance with paragraph 13 of these Regulations, an Appeal Application (Appendix 5) with the appropriate fee must be submitted within 7 working days of the date of the Groups decision. All subsequent procedures and hearings will be handled in accordance with Appendices 6 and 7 of these Regulations.
- 5.2 The Appeals panel will be advised that the Misconduct Group considered the case but will not be give details of the outcome.
- 5.3 The Appeal panel will have the power to confirm, amend or reverse the decision made by the Misconduct Group.

6 Penalties

- 6.1 Where the Misconduct Group or exam chairs (paragraph 3.5), agree that the case in whole or in part, is proven whether through admission by the candidate or the outcome of the Group's findings, then they will consider the following before a penalty is agreed:
- The need to preserve the integrity of the examination.
 - The severity of the infringement proven
 - Consistency with previous penalties.
 - The evidence of remorse and the admission of the understanding of the seriousness of the case.
- 6.2 The Misconduct panel or the exam chairs (paragraph 3.5) may consider awarding one of the following standard penalties or may give a more specific penalty where appropriate:
- No further action
 - A written warning (see paragraph 6.3)
 - Result of an examination or part of an examination, to be declared void
 - Candidate barred from applying for an exam for a specified period
- 6.3 Where a written warning is agreed upon, the Group/exam chairs will reflect on the severity of the misconduct proven and reserve the right to forward details of the case to the GMC and in the case of UK trainees, their College Tutor and Regional Advisor.
- 6.4 Where a candidate's examination result is declared void, the attempt will be recorded against the candidate's exam history. Exam papers will not be processed.

APPENDIX 11 Additional Educational Training Form



FPMRCA Examinations – Additional Educational Training (AET Form1)

Notes on completion of AET Form1:

1. To meet eligibility at the sixth (final) attempt at any FPMRCA examination, a candidate must provide the Court of Examiners with evidence of a plan of additional educational experience/training which is expected to be achieved before the next intended re-sit. Please note under normal circumstances the Faculty would not recommend re-applying at the next sitting.
2. Additional educational training must be as follows: Attendance at a recognised FPMRCA Tutorial course, either locally or nationally. Practice sessions at the relevant component. Further clinical exposure and Pain Medicine training as appropriate for the relevant examination component.
3. Proof should be provided by the submission of this form, which must be agreed and signed by the Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine and **received by the Faculty at least three months** prior to the published date of the next intended examination.
4. Before completing this form the Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine, in consultation with other hospital trainers, must hold a discussion with the candidate and giving serious consideration to previous examination results and shortfalls, agree that following additional training another attempt at the examination is recommended.
5. The LPMES must agree to assist in the implementation of a realistic and achievable plan of additional training which must meet the criteria set out on this form.

AET Form 1 – Evidence of Additional Educational Training:

(To be completed by CT or RA)

Name of Candidate:

Relevant Exam component

Name of Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine:

Following discussion with the above candidate I confirm that, since their previous attempt, the following 'Additional Educational Training' plan has been agreed and put in place:

Attendance at the following *Local / *National FFPMRCA Tutorial (provide date of Tutorial):

Examination practice for relevant component (provide dates and types of sessions):

Further clinical exposure and training (give full details of clinical and other training planned):

In order to complete the above plan of additional training I have recommended that the candidate re-sits the examination at the following sitting (please refer to the exams calendar):

Regional Advisor

I recommend a further attempt at this exam component and agree to oversee the above Additional Educational Training.

Signed: Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine

Date:

Candidate

I agree to follow the above plan under the supervision of my Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine. I understand that I must have attended a guidance interview for this component before my next attempt.

Signed: Current Medical Grade

Date:App

Please submit this form to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations at the Faculty address.

APPENDIX 12 Candidate Examination Feedback Policy

1. Definition of feedback

"Specific information about the comparison between a candidate's observed performance and a standard given with the intention to assist with improving the candidate's performance."

- 1.1 The Faculty believes it is important to provide feedback to candidates beyond a standard pass-fail result to assist them in understanding and interpreting their overall result. The Faculty does not attempt to justify the overall result or the marks awarded, whether overall or for specific sections or skill domains. Marks are awarded using strict guidelines. Marks awarded by the Court of Examiners are final and therefore papers cannot be remarked.
- 1.2 Candidate feedback should not be confused with candidate guidance. Feedback is the provision of information relating to performance, whilst 'guidance' relates to the action taken in relation to certain information about performance. The rules regarding the provision of examination guidance available to candidates, is set out at Section 10, paragraphs 10.2 to 10.5 of these regulations.

2. Publishing results and providing feedback

- 2.1 The release of results date is published on the exam pages of the Faculty website.
- 2.2 MCQ and SOE examination results are emailed directly to the candidate approximately two weeks after the date of the examination using the email address provided on booking an examination. Results emails include a breakdown of performance on the examination. The type of feedback provided is detailed in section 3.
- 2.3 Appendix 2 of these regulations, give details on the marking systems and the methodology used to set pass standards used for FPMRCA examinations.

3. Type of feedback provided

- 3.1 The type of feedback given to candidates will vary according to the exam component attempted. However, the Faculty has ensured that the feedback provided meets the AoRMC and GMCs standards and is in line with other Medical Colleges/Faculties.
- 3.2 All candidates whether they pass or fail an examination will receive the same type of feedback through their results letter. This is because the Faculty believes that the provision of numerical information about a candidate's exam performance not only assists with improving a candidate's performance at future examinations but also provides important information on which to base further continuing professional development.
- 3.3 The following feedback is provided on exam results letters:
 - Confirmation of the candidate's pass-fail result
 - Confirmation of the number of attempts used/maximum number of attempts
 - The examination pass mark as a raw score in relation to the maximum achievable test score (e.g. 280/400) and/or the percentage value (e.g. 70%)
 - The candidate's overall score as a raw score and/or as a percentage value
- FPMRCA MCQ: Candidate raw scores in MTF, SBA and EMQ, Maximum score available in MTF, SBA and EMQ, Number of voids/unanswered questions.

- FPPMRCA SOE: Candidate scores for each of the three sub-sections (see Appendix 1 of these regulations)

4. Additional feedback (Examiners' comments)

In addition to the feedback provided to candidates as set out at paragraph 3, examiner comments made on candidate performance at the FPPMRCA SOE examination are provided on request. On receipt of result emails, candidates can request a transcript of their examiners' comments by emailing exams@rcoa.ac.uk. There is no charge for this service.

5. Who else will be provided with feedback?

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, a candidate's examination result may be processed and passed to examiners, Regional Advisors in Pain Medicine, Postgraduate Dean, employer, etc. for legitimate purposes connected with their training. Candidates automatically agree to this when completing exam applications either in writing or online.

6. Feedback in extraordinary circumstances

The Faculty believes it is necessary to provide more detailed feedback to candidates and their trainers where a candidate's performance at the SOE examinations is poor or causes concern. This feedback, along with suggested additional educational support which could be provided, will be sent in the form of a letter to the candidate's Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine or senior pain medicine consultant and copied to the candidate concerned. This letter is designed to bring the trainer and candidate together to discuss poor performance and areas of concern, in order to provide support and agree additional educational training that can be put in place before the next attempt. Letters are automatically dispatched to trainers and candidates where a candidate's score is <20/40 in the SOE component and where a candidate's performance demonstrates a concern in regard to patient safety.

7. Acting upon feedback

- 7.1 The primary responsibility for acting upon feedback from an examination lies with the candidate.
- 7.2 Where a candidate has failed an examination, they should discuss their feedback with their RAPM or trainer and undertake any specific exam preparation or additional educational training suggested in such a discussion before making any further attempt at the examination.
- 7.3 Where a candidate has passed an examination, they should still review any feedback with their RAPM or trainer in order to try and identify any weaker areas in clinical knowledge or performance which may benefit from further training or study as part of ongoing professional development.
- 7.4 Trainers/RAPMs should respond to requests from candidates to discuss their feedback, providing support and assistance in the provision of additional training and preparation for examinations, including advice on the timing of their next attempt.

8. Further assistance available to examinations candidates

- 8.1 In addition to the examination feedback provided, candidates may also find the Examination Chair's summary reports useful in the interpretation of their own performance in relation to the analysis of exams data set out in this document. The Chair's examination summary is placed on the Faculty website following each examination.
- 8.2 Example questions and a list of topics covered in each exam are also available on the Faculty website.



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