

Managing disruption and incidents experienced at Pearson VUE test centres

Policy

Background

Since September 2020, the RCOG has successfully transitioned our written exam provision (MRCOG Part 1 & 2 and DRCOG) from a paper-based to a computer-based format. We have partnered with Pearson VUE to deliver an integrated digital solution that support our exams function and processes, while delivering an excellent experience for candidates taking their exam.

Whilst Pearson VUE make every effort to mitigate the risk of there being disruption on the day of the exam, on occasion issues may occur. This policy sets out the RCOG support for those affected, providing guidance to candidates on what to expect should any disruption or incident be experienced and how to raise a concern following the exam.

Noise disruptions

Test centres aim to provide a professional exam environment. During the exam, invigilators may need to communicate with each other or with other candidates, however, voice levels should be at an absolute minimum. If any noise/disturbances occur during the exam, the candidate should raise their hand and tell the invigilator who will aim to resolve the matter immediately. A number of test centre sites are able to offer earplugs or headphones on request.

If a concern is raised following a disturbance, test centre staff will log a case incident and provide the candidate with the case number. Following the exam, if the candidate feels that the concern was not resolved at the time by the test centre staff, candidates should raise the issue with the RCOG Examination Department for further investigation. Please email

ExamConfidentialEnquiries@RCOG.ORG.UK within 10 working days of the examination, ensuring the case number is included. Candidates not satisfied with the outcome of the RCOG Examinations Department initial investigation have the right to submit a formal complaint for further review and investigation. Details of the 'Examinations complaints policy and procedures' can be found here: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/careers-and-training/exams/exam-policies/>

Technical issues/delays in exam delivery

Candidates should expect the exam to start in accordance with the scheduled start time provided on the test centre booking confirmation email. Once the exam has started it should be delivered without disruption from technical issues. However, on occasion technical issues or other disruptions can occur, which may impact the exam start time or halt the exam after it has started.

If difficulties are experienced with the exam delivery, the candidate should raise their hand to report the issue to the invigilator. Test centre invigilators will aim to resolve all issues as quickly as possible.

The RCOG recognise the impact that may be caused by any delay or disruption during the exam. When there is a delay or disruption of more than 120 minutes, due to technical issues or any other cause under Pearson VUE's control, subject to validation of the incident, the RCOG will provide candidates with a 50% refund. If a technical issue persists and the exam is unable to be completed, subject to validation, the RCOG will provide a full refund of the examination fee.

In the event of a delay or disruption, the test centre staff will log a case incident and provide the candidate with a case number. To claim a refund, candidates should email ExamConfidentialEnquiries@RCOG.ORG.UK within 10 working days of the examination explaining the issue and including the case number provided. The RCOG Examinations Department will use the case number to investigate the incident with Pearson VUE. Once the length of delay or disruption has been confirmed by Pearson VUE, the RCOG Examinations Department will confirm to the candidate if the claim is valid and if accepted the refund will be processed, normally within 30 days.

Failure to meet ID requirements for test centre admission

Strict ID requirements are in place at test centres to protect the integrity of the examination. All candidates have a responsibility to review and understand the ID requirements provided in the test centre booking confirmation emails and instructions from the RCOG Examinations Department. The RCOG is unable to offer a refund of the examination fee, or provide any other compensation when the candidate has failed to follow these instructions.

If a candidate is denied entry the test centre staff will log a case incident and provide the candidate with the case number. Candidates who believe they met the ID requirements but were denied entry to the test centre should email ExamConfidentialEnquiries@RCOG.ORG.UK including the case number provided, within 10 working days of the examination. The RCOG Examinations Department will use the case number to investigate the incident with Pearson VUE. In the event it is demonstrated that the test centre failed to follow the Pearson VUE ID Policy, the candidate will be eligible for a full refund of the examination fee.

Arriving late to a test centre

All candidates have a responsibility to make necessary arrangements to ensure they arrive on time for the exam. The test centre booking confirmation email sent to candidates advises arrival at least 30 minutes prior to the exam and confirms that entry may be denied should a candidate arrive more than 15 minutes after the confirmed appointment start time.

Candidates denied entry to sit the exam due to late arrival to the test centre will forfeit the examination fee. In certain specific cases, the RCOG will consider refunding the exam fee if the reason for the late arrival is deemed to fall under the Exams Extenuating Circumstances Policy, due to circumstances that are unavoidable, unexpected and beyond the candidates control. However, please note, transport difficulties, foreseeable or planned travel disruption are unlikely to be accepted. Please see further information in the RCOG 'Exams Extenuating Circumstances Policy'

Exam paper security

Computer-based testing via Pearson VUE's test centre network, provides fortified examination security.

In test centres, invigilators monitor candidates through a clear glass viewing window and via a live-feed video system, or by sitting in the testing room, ensuring the invigilator has full control of the examination at all times. Pearson VUE policy requires at least one invigilator per 15 candidates taking an exam at any one time. Comprehensive ID and security steps are taken prior to candidates entering and leaving the test room – preventing candidates from bringing in or leaving with prohibited material.

In addition, all candidates have signed a confidentiality form that prohibits them from sharing exam content in any form. Candidates who have concerns about any other candidate or the security of the examination papers, should notify the RCOG Examinations Department immediately via ExamConfidentialEnquiries@RCOG.ORG.UK so we can investigate and determine any subsequent course of action. Please be assured that any information you share will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Following an investigation, if it is determined a candidate has compromised the security of an exam paper, including instances where exam material has been shared, RCOG Council may refuse to allow a candidate to attempt either part of the MRCOG exam or to become a Member of the College. Under such circumstances, the candidate will be advised of the appeals procedure. Please note, any issue regarding a candidate's probity will be passed on to the relevant training body, where applicable.

Raising concerns

Candidates who experience any disruptions or have any concerns should immediately report these to invigilators/test centre staff. This will ensure concerns and issues are addressed and recorded at the time they are raised, and candidates are provided with a case number to support any subsequent investigation by the RCOG Examinations Department. If any concerns are not resolved during the examination, please email ExamConfidentialEnquiries@RCOG.ORG.UK within 10 working days of the examination, in the first instance, stating the case number provided by the test centre.

Candidates not satisfied with the outcome of an initial investigation from the RCOG Examinations Department have the right to make a formal complaint for further review and investigation. Details of the 'Examination complaints policy and procedures' can be found here: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/careers-and-training/exams/exam-policies/>

In instances where there has been a procedural or logistical irregularity in the conduct of the examination, which has adversely affected performance, candidates have the right to submit an appeal against the outcome of the examination. Please note, candidates should raise the issue with the RCOG Examinations Department as soon as possible after the exam and not wait until the release of exam results. Details of the RCOG examinations appeals policy is available here: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/careers-and-training/exams/exam-policies/>