

MRCOG Appeals Policy



RCOG Appeals Policy

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is committed to delivering a high quality service and ensuring reliability and fairness in all of its qualifications. We recognise that errors can occur and that on very rare occasions our examinations can be subject to disruptions that may affect candidate performance. This document outlines the policy and procedures for any candidate who wish to submit and appeal in relation to an RCOG examination.

This policy aims to:

- provide a fair and transparent policy, which is clear and accessible for anyone wishing to make an appeal
- publicise the existence of our appeals policy so that people know how to contact us
- ensure all appeals are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- ensure that appeals are, wherever possible, resolved in a satisfactory manner
- use any appeals received as a learning experience to improve our work

This policy applies to all RCOG examinations:

- MRCOG Part 1
- MRCOG Part 2
- MRCOG Part 3
- DRCOG

Appeal Policy scope

The scope of this policy relates to matters where a candidate wishes to appeal the outcome of their examination for the following reasons:

- There was a procedural or logistical irregularity in the conduct of the



examination, which has adversely affected a candidate's performance. Please note, candidates are expected to report any issues on the day to centre administrators or invigilators. Candidates should then contact the MRCOG Exams team at exams@rcog.org.uk to inform them about the issue as soon as possible after the exam, and no later than 5 working days after the date of the exam. Candidates should then submit an appeal form once the results have been released

- There were exceptional circumstances, such as illness or bereavement, which have adversely affected a candidate's performance. Candidates should note, however, that there is a process to withdraw from examinations prior to the examination date (please see the RCOG Examinations Exceptional Circumstances Policy) and that by attending an examination candidates are normally certifying themselves as fit to do so. If you are making an appeal in relation to exceptional circumstances, you must contact the college within 5 working days of the exam taking place, to outline the circumstances which may have affected your performance.
- In scenarios where a candidate has successfully completed an exam in a Pearson VUE test centre but have been affected by a technical issue, which may result in an individual not being provided with the full allocated time for the exam, each case will be reviewed with consideration to the percentage of time missed in the exam pro-rata to the percentage achieved. Should the percentage of time lost be greater than the percentage difference between the required pass mark and the percentage achieved, the appeal should be upheld and the candidate should be provided with a refund of their fee, and the attempt will not be counted.

Out of scope

Some candidates who have failed one or more parts of an examination may feel that they deserved to pass and wish to appeal against the declared result. While the RCOG is sympathetic to such candidates' disappointment, it is considered that in applying marking schedules and making judgements



nothing can supplant the judgement of the individual examiner(s) marking an exam component.

Accordingly, no appeal will be entertained solely on the grounds that a candidate wishes to challenge the judgement of the examiners or their examination result. The RCOG takes the view that all possible and necessary precautions to ensure the maximum reliability of the result and to compensate for errors of measurement are built into the marking process. Unless there is good reason to suspect a procedural error, the RCOG does not consider it appropriate for any papers to be re-marked, or for any reassignment to be made of grades obtained in the clinical assessment. Our response to any such request will be confined to checking that no administrative, procedural, numerical, data transcription or computing errors have occurred, and that the declared result accurately reflects the judgement of the examiners. If a candidate believes that such errors have occurred they must provide evidence to support this with their appeal.

In determining its policy, the RCOG has given consideration to three main points of principle:

- Our marking and standard-setting procedures are such that in all components the reliability of the marking decision is greatest at the time of the initial examiners' judgement, i.e., when the candidate's performance in the examination is fresh in the examiners' memory
- Subsequent review by different or senior examiners or by independent assessors cannot guarantee greater accuracy or reliability, as the conditions that foster marking reliability cannot be recreated at a later date. Moreover, in the case of the MRCOG Part 3 exam, there is no residual physical evidence of the candidate's performance which could be revisited

- Our post examination marking processes are subject to quality assurance processes and our Part 3 results are validated by an independent psychometrician

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

Submitting an appeal

To make an appeal, please complete the [Examinations Appeals form](#) (Word document, 55kb) and email to examsappeals@rcog.org.uk

By making your appeal in a timely manner, this will better allow the matter to be investigated and the College to identify, where necessary, a suitable remedy.

Therefore, appeals will only be considered in accordance to the following timelines:

- Candidates must first contact the RCOG Exams team at exams@rcog.org.uk to inform them about the issue no later than 5 working days following the date of the exam. Appeals are not considered before candidates receive their results, but collection of evidence at this stage will assist subsequent investigation.
- An appeal form should then be submitted within 20 calendar days following the release of the examination results. Please note, appeal forms will not be considered unless a candidate has previously

notified the Exams team of any issue affecting their exam performance within 5 working days of the exam

Please note that any appeal submitted after these deadlines will not be reviewed unless there are highly extenuating circumstances.

Please note, working days are defined in this policy as Monday to Friday excepting UK bank holidays and College closure over Christmas.

How your appeal will be managed

Stage 1

We will acknowledge your appeal within two working days of its receipt.

Stage 2

Your appeal will be reviewed by a Quality Assurance Officer (or nominated deputy) of the RCOG Examinations Department, who will, within five working days of receipt of your appeal, confirm whether your appeal falls within the scope of this policy and the appropriate next steps.

Stage 3

If your appeal falls within the scope of the policy, the Quality Assurance Officer (or nominated deputy) considers that the grounds for the appeal are within the scope of this Appeals policy, then they may:

- Arrange for an immediate remedy to be offered to the Appellant
or
- Decide that the case needs wider consideration by an Appeals Panel. Examples of where an Appeals Panel may be convened include where there is:
 - Clear evidence of potential procedural, logistical error or potential bias which has adversely affected the trainee's performance; or

- Clear evidence of potential procedural, logistical error or potential bias that needs wider discussion.

The Quality Assurance Officer will investigate your appeal and gather the relevant facts, ensuring that the information gathered is accurate and complete. In some instances, a meeting between the appeal panel and candidate will be necessary. The appeal panel response will contain reasons for either upholding or rejecting your appeal and will be issued within 30 working days of receipt of your original appeal. Where your appeal has been upheld, the response will also contain a proposed remedy. In addition, if the appeal is upheld, the action taken and the lessons learned or to be learned will be logged for future purposes.

The appeals panel will normally comprise:

- Chair of the Examination and Assessment Committee (or nominee)
- Vice President, Education (or nominee)
- Director of Examinations and Assessment (or nominee)
- Examinations Quality Assurance Officer (or nominee)

In some instances, depending on the nature of the appeal, an additional independent appeal panel member may be required.

Appeal decisions & confidentiality

It should be noted that this policy does not allow for the amendment of marks or pass/fail decisions, unless it has been determined that there was an error in the collation, recording or reporting of marks meaning that had the procedural irregularity not occurred the Appellant would have passed the examination.

The appeals panel cannot accurately or numerically determine the effects of any procedural irregularity or extenuating circumstance on an individual's performance, and so the Panel will not revise the Appellant's result even if an appeal is upheld and the likely effects of the circumstances on their performance are judged to have been severe. Instead, the Panel may declare the result void and expunge that attempt from the Appellant's record or offer some other redress so that they can demonstrably achieve a passing score at a subsequent attempt.

The decision of the appeal panel is final. There is no further mechanism either within this policy or in the wider College to challenge the decision of the panel. However, should an Appellant have reason to believe that the RCOG has not followed its own appeals policy and processes they have a right to submit a complaint. In this instance an Appellant must submit a complaint within 20 working days of receiving the outcome to their appeal. Information of the RCOG Examinations Complaints process and policy can be found [here](#)

Your appeal and all accompanying documentation will be kept confidential as far as is possible in facilitating a fair and thorough investigation. While your privacy and confidentiality will be respected, this needs to be balanced with:

- The need for an open and fair investigation
- Appropriate remedial action to be taken
- The outcome of the investigation to be reported appropriately
- Action to be taken to improve our processes and quality of service

The Examinations Department will endeavour to anonymise candidates when considering an appeal. However, it will occasionally be necessary to disclose the identity of the individual appealing beyond the reviewing senior



manager or appeal panel to progress an investigation. Candidates who are not willing for their identity to be disclosed in this way should make this clear in their letter of appeal.

The RCOG will take all necessary steps to support all parties involved in an appeal and undertake all investigations sensitively and expediently.

Candidates are assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate concern through this policy without risk of disadvantage or criticism.

Data retention: All materials relating to your appeal will be kept on active file for 12 months from the date of receipt of your first email to examsappeals@rcog.org.uk and will then be destroyed.

Policy last updated February 2024