THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH | Royal College of Surgeons ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE | ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW | RCSI

# Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations

## Guidance Notes for Applicants

[please read carefully]

**JCIE 2015 Regulations**
It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure they present themselves fit and prepared for the examination. Candidates will have up to a maximum of 7* years to complete the examination process as follows:
**Section 1:** Candidates have 2* years (from their 1st attempt) with a maximum of 4 attempts to gain eligibility to proceed to Section 2, with no re-entry.
**Section 2:** Candidates have a maximum of 4 attempts with no re-entry.
[*pro rata for less than full time equivalent]

**Examination Format**
**Section 1:** Paper 1 (2h): Single Best Answer (SBA) and Paper 2 (2h 30min): Extended Matching Items (EMI). These papers are carefully prepared to cover the curriculum content. A process of standard setting is performed by trained and experienced examiners to set the eligibility to proceed mark. Section 1 examinations are delivered via computer based testing at Pearson VUE Test Centres throughout the UK and Ireland.
**Section 2**: Clinical component consisting of a series of carefully designed and structured interviews on clinical topics, some being scenario based (structured orals) and some being patient based.

The standard of the pass mark is set at the level of a day one consultant in the generality of the specialty.

## The online examination application/payment system:

Debit/*Credit (*2% non-refundable transaction fee applicable) cards are accepted for payment of examination fees

## 1. Section 1 Applicants [first time applicants]

To be considered for eligibility to sit Section 1 of the Examination, applicants are required to submit an online application by 5pm GMT on the published closing date for the relevant examination.

Applicants will be informed by email and post, as to their eligibility status within a few weeks of the closing date.

**The most important dates for Section 1 [first time applicants] are the following:**

a) **Deadline for Online Registration/Application/Upload of Mandatory Documentation & Payment Date**
The examination will close at 5pm GMT on this published date
- Applications which are not complete by this closing date will automatically be transferred to the subsequent diet of Section 1

b) **What you will need to hand at the time of application:**
- Debit/*Credit Card (*2% non-refundable transaction fee applicable)
- GMC/IMC Number [if you do not have a GMC/IMC number then you will have to email enquiries@jcie.org.uk to be given access to the application system]
  Applicants must be in good standing with the GMC. For our purposes, 'not in good standing' refers to either an interim order being issued and/or conditions or restrictions having been placed on practice by the GMC or employer and/or suspension from the workplace. Any change to an applicant's status must be communicated in writing to the JCIE for consideration of the relevant Specialty Board. Failure to do so could render an examination outcome being deemed null and void. If you are registered or anticipate being registered with the GMC then your personal data, including data about your exam results, will be passed to the GMC for quality assurance and research purposes and to facilitate the awarding of certificates of completion of training (CCTs)
- Medical Qualification – year/country obtained
- MRCS – month/year obtained [if applicable]

- Preferred Pearson VUE test centre location; a drop-down option list is available at the time of application
- PDF or Word of your three completed structured reference forms. Referees MUST all be on the UK or Irish Medical Register [see 4. Below] – you will be asked to attach these at the time of online application
- PDF or Word format of your Curriculum Vitae and Operative Summary – you will be asked to attach both documents at the time of online application
- PDF format of a copy of your photographic identification

**c) Once you have Registered you will have created your own Personal Profile**

- You will have access to your Personal Profile at any time
- You will be able to track your application and view your payment transaction(s)
- For clear communication please keep your Personal Profile up to date making any relevant changes to your email and postal address

## 2. Section 1 [resit candidates]

- As you are already on our system you still have access to your Personal Profile but please ensure that you keep your email and postal address up to date
- Those re-sitting Section 1 who are still within the 2 year eligibility period (max 4 attempts) are <u>not</u> required to submit 3 new Structured References
- GMC Status: Candidates must be in good standing with the GMC. For our purposes, 'not in good standing' refers to either an interim order being issued and/or conditions or restrictions having been placed on practice by the GMC or employer and/or suspension from the workplace. Any change to a candidate's status must be communicated in writing to the JCIE for consideration of the relevant Specialty Board. Failure to do so could render an examination outcome being deemed null and void.

**The most important dates for Section 1 resit candidates are the following:**

**a) Deadline for Online Registration/Application & Payment Date**

- The examination will close at 5pm GMT on this published date
- The fee for re-sitting Section 1 will be deducted from your current balance
- If you have a nil balance then you will automatically be prompted to pay the full examination fee
- Applications which are not complete by this closing date will automatically be transferred to the subsequent diet of Section 1.

**b) What you will need to hand at the time of application:**

- Debit/*Credit Card [if applicable] (*2% non-refundable transaction fee applicable)

**c) Expiry of Eligibility for Section 1**

- Candidates will have a period of 2 years **(maximum 4 attempts)**, from their first attempt at Section 1, to gain eligibility to proceed to Section 2.

## 3. Section 2 [resit candidates]

- As you are already on our system you will still have a Personal Profile
- For clear communication, however, it is important that you keep your email and postal address up to date on your Personal Profile
- GMC Status: Candidates must be in good standing with the GMC. For our purposes, 'not in good standing' refers to either an interim order being issued and/or conditions or restrictions having been placed on practice by the GMC or employer and/or suspension from the workplace. Any change to a candidate's status must be communicated in writing to the JCIE Head of Operations prior to the examination. Failure to do so could render an examination outcome being deemed null and void.

**The most important date for Section 2 resit candidates is the:**

**a) Deadline for Online Application/Payment**

- To guarantee your resit place you must complete online application and payment by this published deadline date.
- Places cannot be guaranteed after this date.

**b) What you will need to hand at the time of application:**

- Debit/*Credit Card (*2% non-refundable transaction fee applicable)

## 4. Structured References

- All three referees MUST be on the UK or Irish Medical Register [referees do not require a licence to practise in the UK or Ireland]
  [referees must be in good standing with the GMC or IMC with no restrictions to practise]
- All three referees MUST have direct experience of the applicant's current clinical practice within the last 2 years.

- Eligibility will be granted by the relevant Board based on the applicant having met all entry criteria and having submitted three supportive structured references as follows:

  a) **UK Trainees:** The applicant must have a successful ARCP Outcome 1 at ST6 onwards (ST5 onwards for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery & Urology).
  b) **Republic of Ireland Trainees:** The applicant must have a RITA C for Year 4 onwards (Year 3 onwards for Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery & Urology).
  c) **Applicants not in training:** If the applicant is not on a training programme the sponsoring referee must be satisfied that the applicant has equivalent experience at the level stated above for UK and Republic of Ireland trainees and has had specific training in the areas of surgical practice which will be examined in the Section 2 component of the examination.
     - The applicant has, in the last 4 years, undertaken appropriate training in those areas of surgical practice that will be examined in the Section 2 component of the examination.
     - The applicant regularly attends the Higher Surgical Training Programme and/or has attended appropriate training courses and has knowledge of the literature relevant to the specialty.

  a/b) **Applicants in approved training posts**:
  All three referees must be on the UK/Irish Medical Register.
  **One referee MUST be the trainee's current Programme Director** and the other two must be Consultant Trainers/Supervising Consultants or Senior Colleagues in the specialty with direct experience of the trainee's current clinical practice within the last 2 years.

  c) **Applicants not in training**:
  All three referees must be on the UK/Irish Medical Register.
  **One referee MUST be the applicant's current Lead Clinician/Head of Department/Medical Director (or equivalent)** and the other two must be Senior Colleagues in the Specialty with direct experience of the applicant's current clinical practice within the last 2 years.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that each referee receives the Guidance Notes for Referees and the Structured Reference form. The applicant must complete Section A of the Structured Reference Form. Sponsoring referees are then required to return the reference to the applicant. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all 3 references are uploaded at the time of online application.**

## 5. 'Eligibility to Proceed' to Section 2

Candidates having completed Section 1 and who have gained eligibility to proceed to Section 2 will be advised, by email and by post. Confirmation of the date of your Section 2 examination will also be provided.

It should be noted that places in Section 2 may be restricted and entry will be granted strictly in order of date of receipt of current application for Section 1. Please be assured that every effort is made to accommodate all candidates into their preferred option for Section 2 **but this cannot be guaranteed** and an alternative date may have to be given.

## 6. Professionalism & Probity

It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure they present themselves fit and prepared for the examination. Candidates must be in good standing with the GMC. For our purposes, 'not in good standing' refers to either an interim order being issued and/or conditions or restrictions having been placed on practice by the GMC or employer and/or suspension from the workplace. Any change to a candidate's status must be communicated in writing to the JCIE for consideration of the relevant Specialty Board prior to the date of the examination in question. Failure to do so could result in an examination outcome being deemed null and void.

## 7. Dress Code

We advise candidates to dress for the clinical examination as you would to work in a UK/Ire hospital ward. This would normally mean bare below the elbow with no watches, bracelets or rings. It is important that patients can communicate freely with their doctors. Candidates are therefore required to remove any face covering during all parts of the examination. Candidates must be prepared to take steps to anticipate and overcome any perceived barrier to communication in advance of the examination.

## 8. Requests for Reasonable Adjustment

Candidates seeking a reasonable adjustment (special arrangement) in a component of the JCIE examination on the grounds of a disability, whether temporary or permanent must be provided at the time of application. Applicants will be asked to describe the disability and must provide documentary evidence (e.g. a medical disability certificate or for dyslexic candidates, a report from an educational psychologist

detailing up to date recommendations). Details of any special arrangements that have been made in the workplace or any reasonable adjustments that have been granted for previous assessments will be required as will the details in each case of the organisation that administered the assessment.

Candidates must ensure they are fit and prepared to sit the examination and to consider with their Principal Referee if anything in their personal circumstances justifies reasonable adjustments to the examination arrangements. If so, the evidence in support of such requests must be submitted at the time of application.

Requests for reasonable adjustments can only be made prospectively. Retrospective requests relating to acquired illness/conditions current at the time of the examination but undiagnosed until after the examination cannot be accepted but will be carefully considered for that specific diet. Failing candidates highlighted for targeted feedback will be reminded that they have to present themselves fit and prepared and are asked to consider alongside their Principal Referee (Programme Director/Head of Department) whether they may have any condition requiring reasonable adjustments and if so to seek evidence to support this before any subsequent attempt at the examination.

JCIE Reasonable Adjustments Policy: http://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22

## 9. Medical Conditions including pregnancy-related illness

A candidate who develops a medical condition or pregnancy-related problems close to the date of the examination should withdraw from the examination where it is felt that the condition would have a detrimental effect on performance. A medical certificate would be required.

## 10. Candidates who wish to withdraw prior to an examination

Fee penalties will apply to candidates who withdraw from an examination after the closing date. Candidates are not authorised to reschedule their Section 1 test with the test centre. Candidates must therefore contact the JCIE to receive the necessary authorisation. Section 2 withdrawal: transfer/ withdrawal requests from Section 2, after the Section 1 date, will incur fee penalties: (http://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22).

## 11. Candidates who withdraw during an examination

Withdrawal during an examination, for whatever reason, will be **counted as an attempt** and candidates would be **deemed to have failed** the examination unless they have complied with the following:

## 12. Candidates who take ill during an examination

If a candidate takes ill during an examination and is unable to complete the examination, the candidate MUST:

1. Report the illness immediately to the Test Centre Administrator or contact the JCIE Office (0131 662 9222) and explain the reason for leaving.
2. A Medical Certificate Form MUST be provided and MUST be dated on the day of withdrawal from the examination. The Medical Certificate MUST be sent to the JCIE within five working days of the date of withdrawal.
   The JCIE will **NOT** accept Medical Certificates dated after the date of withdrawal from the examination.

## 13. Mitigating Circumstances

The JCIE would expect claims of Mitigating Circumstances to usually be submitted no later than two working days after the examination has taken place.

It is the responsibility of candidates to ensure they present themselves fit and prepared for the examination. The JCIE would normally expect a candidate who believed that their performance was likely to be affected by mitigating circumstances arising before an assessment to withdraw from that sitting and re-sit at a later date. Candidates presenting for either Section 1 or Section 2 will be deemed fit to take the assessment and presentation at the assessment is a declaration to that effect.

If a circumstance is likely to have affected performance in an examination the JCIE would expect there to be contemporaneous documentation of discussions with the educational supervisor/employer about fitness for work.

Candidates should note that most practitioners suffer adverse personal circumstances at one time or another during their working lives and it is part of demonstrating fitness to practice when an individual makes an assessment about the impact of such an event on their performance.

The General Medical Council's guidance 'Good Medical Practice and Duties of a Doctor' covers presenting for work, educational activities and training (including implicitly attendance at postgraduate medical examinations) and fitness to practice is implicit in the guidance. Doctors are expected to recognise and work within the limits of their competence.

The following are examples of possible mitigating circumstances and the supporting documentation required in order for them to be considered by the JCIE.

1. Exceptional personal circumstances which might have led to underperformance in an examination e.g. bereavement or immediate family illness. These events do not usually occur on the day of the examination, but within a short period beforehand. In most circumstances the candidate would be expected to have withdrawn. Therefore only in exceptional circumstances would the request be considered and there would need to be evidence of the personal circumstances documenting an event and its educational impact. Copies of death certificates and travel documents confirming travel which had disrupted preparation may also be required.

2. Personal illness that was not severe enough at the time of the examination to make the candidate withdraw but which in retrospect could have had a serious adverse effect on performance.

   In these instances confirmation by a medical attendant will be required. Occasionally if the condition is one that might affect performance but which does not preclude normal attendance at work, additional evidence may be required and requested.

   JCIE Mitigating Circumstances Policy: http://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22

## 14. Candidates who fail to get to the examination at the right time or on the right day

**NO** allowance will be made for a candidate who is late for an examination or who is absent from an examination as a result of misreading the instructions. This, however, would not be counted as an attempt. The candidate would lose the test fee and would be required to re-apply for a future diet of the examination.