

Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations

Guidance Notes for Applicants

[please note - these relate to new applications for examinations taking place from 1 October 2023]

JCIE 2015 Regulations

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)

Candidates will have a maximum of 4 attempts in totality at each Section across both the Intercollegiate Specialty Examinations and the Joint Surgical Colleges Fellowship Examinations
i.e. the total of 4 attempts applies to the Intercollegiate Specialty Examinations and the Joint Surgical Colleges Fellowship Examinations alone or any combination of the two.

Examination Format

Section 1 is a written test composed of two Single Best Answer papers. These papers are carefully prepared to cover the curriculum content which can be best assessed in this way. 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 in the UK and Ireland.

Paper 1 120 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 15 mins)

Paper 2 120 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 15 mins)

Candidates must meet the required standard in Section 1 in order to gain eligibility to proceed to Section 2.

Section 2 is the clinical component of the examination. It will consist of a series of carefully designed and structured interviews on clinical topics – some being scenario based and some being centred around volunteers. Such volunteers will be past or present patients relevant to the specialty and recruited by the host examiner. The Section 2 examinations will be held in pre-selected UK/Ireland host centres.

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

Section 1 – 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 UK time on the published closing date for the relevant examination. Applicants will be informed by email on their eligibility status within a few weeks of the closing date.

You will need to create a Personal Profile. The Guidance Notes for the Application System are available on the Application page of the JCIE website.

a) Important Date - Deadline for Registration/Application/Upload of Mandatory Documentation & Payment

- The examination will close at 5pm UK time on the date published on the website
- Applications which are not complete by this closing date will automatically be transferred to the next diet of Section 1

b) What you will need at the time of application

- Debit/Credit Card for payment of examination fees
- GMC/IMC Number. If you do not have a GMC/IMC number then please email enquiries@jcie.org.uk to obtain 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; an option list is available at the time of application
- PDF or Word format of your 3 completed structured reference forms. Referees MUST be on the UK or Ireland Medical Register – these must be attached at the time of online application
- PDF or Word format of your Curriculum Vitae and Operative Summary – both documents must be attached at the time of online application
- PDF format of a copy of your photographic identification

c) Your own Personal Profile will be created when you have completed Registration

- 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

Structured References – First Time Applicants only

- **All 3 referees MUST be on the UK or Ireland Medical Register.** Referees do not require a licence to practise in the UK/Ireland but they must be in good standing with the GMC/IMC with no restrictions to practise.
- Eligibility will be granted by the relevant Board based on the applicant meeting all entry criteria and having submitted 3 supportive structured references detailed below.

a) Applicants who are UK or Republic of Ireland trainees

- **One referee MUST be the trainee's current Training 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
- The Training Programme Director (Principal Referee) confirms that the applicant has acquired the applied knowledge and clinical skills to be assessed at the level of a Day 1 Consultant in the generality of the Specialty
- The applicant must satisfy one of the following criteria:
 - Completion of Phase 2 of the relevant specialty curriculum with an ARCP Outcome 1
 - Be a maximum of 2 WTE clinical years in advance of the indicative CCT/CCST date and have an ARCP Outcome 1 at that point in training

b) Applicants who are not in training

- **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
- 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 following criteria apply:
 - The applicant must have passed the MRCS examination of one of the four Surgical Royal Colleges.
 - The applicant must have undertaken a minimum of 4 years of appropriate training in those areas of surgical practice that will be examined in the Section 2 component of the examination.
 - A minimum of 1 year of this surgical practice must have been within the UK or Ireland during which time the applicant must have participated in the mandatory requirements for maintenance of professional competence as set out by the GMC (UK) or the IMC (Ireland).
 - During the time spent in the UK or Ireland the applicant must have been signed up to ISCP and there is confirmation of competency progression referenced to this.
 - For UK applicants the Trust or Health Board's Director of Medical Education or nominated Deputy must countersign the Principal Referee form to confirm that it has been completed by an appropriate individual. For Republic or Ireland applicants this role will be undertaken by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

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.

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 not 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.

a) Important Date - Deadline for Registration/Application & Payment

- The examination will close at 5pm UK time on this published date
- The fee for re-sitting Section 1 will be deducted from your current balance
- If you have a balance less than the Section 1 examination fee 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 next diet of Section 1

b) What you will need at the time of application

- Debit/Credit Card for payment of examination fees (if you need to make a top up payment)

c) Expiry of Eligibility for Section 1

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

Section 2 – 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

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.

a) Important Date - Deadline for Online Application & Payment

- To reserve your resit place you must complete the application/payment by the published closing date
- Places may not be available after the closing date

b) What you will need at the time of application

- Debit/Credit Card for payment of examination fees

'Eligibility to Proceed' to Section 2

Candidates who have completed Section 1 and who have gained eligibility to proceed to Section 2 will be advised by email. 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.

Professionalism and 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.

Candidates who wish to withdraw prior to an examination

A request to withdraw prior to an examination will normally incur penalties. The Fees and Penalties document is at: <https://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22>

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.

Candidates who withdraw during an examination

Withdrawal during an examination, for whatever reason, **will be counted as an attempt** and candidates would normally be **deemed to have failed** the examination unless they fall into the category immediately below.

Candidates who take ill during an examination

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

1. The candidate must report the illness immediately and explain the reason for leaving.
2. A Medical Certificate must be provided and must be dated on the day of withdrawal from the examination. The Medical Certificate must be sent to the Specialty Manager within five working days of the date of withdrawal. The JCIE cannot accept Medical Certificates dated after the date of withdrawal from the examination.

Candidates who fail to get to the Examination at the right time and/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 or timetable. However, this **would not be counted as an attempt**. The candidate would normally lose the examination fee and must re-apply for a future diet of the examination.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustment

Please ensure you read the JCIE Reasonable Adjustments Policy. The Policy and submission form are at: <https://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22>

Appeals

Please ensure you read the JCIE Appeals Policy. The Policy and a submission form are at: <https://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22>

Complaints

Please ensure you read the JCIE Complaints Policy. The Policy and a submission form are at: <https://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22>

Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

Please ensure you read the JCIE Mitigating Circumstances Policy. The Policy and a submission form are at: <https://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=22>