



MRCGP [INT] SOUTH ASIA

EXAMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP MRCGP [International] SOUTH ASIA

RULES & REGULATIONS FOR EXAMINATION

INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains information on the examination for Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP [INT] South Asia. Please keep it for reference at all stages of the examination process.

Please address all enquiries or correspondence to:

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The examination is subject to continuous scrutiny, review and development. Details of its format, content and marking, and of the examination Regulations, may change without prior notification. You should ensure that you have a copy of the Regulations current at the time you apply for each part of the examination, particularly if you extend your taking of the examination over more than one year. The most current version of the Rules and Regulations is published on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia website at:

www.mrcgpintsouthasia.org

You should note that it is a condition of entry for the examination that you agree to be bound by the terms of the Regulations in force at the time you apply to take the respective modules.

This booklet also contains information designed to give you a general idea of the examination, and to help you prepare for it. However, you should not assume that the actual questions which you see if you take the examination will be as described here.

The MRCGP [INT] qualification does not guarantee a working opportunity in the UK. The answers to many frequently asked questions are contained in these Regulations. Please familiarise yourself with them.

EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

There are two parts to the examination. You must pass both parts in order to pass the examination overall

- a) The two parts of the examination are:
 1. Written – A multiple choice paper – Part 1.
 2. Oral – objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) – Part 2.
- b) Candidates need to pass Part 1 before they can proceed to Part 2. There are no limits to the number of times a candidate can sit Part 1 of the examination.
- c) Having passed Part 1, a candidate will have up to three attempts at Part 2. Failure after three attempts will require the candidate to re-sit Part 1 examination. Furthermore, the two parts must be passed within 6 years of acceptance of your application. Each part is currently available twice a year.

Multiple Choice Paper (MCP) / Acquired Knowledge Paper (AKP) – Part 1

This examination is currently available twice a year, in May and November, and can be taken in the individual countries of South Asia. You will be asked to choose a centre where you wish to sit the paper. We expect to be able to accommodate your preference, although we do not guarantee to do so and it is sometimes necessary to move candidates from the centre of their choice.

The multiple choice paper will consist of 200 questions in the single best answer format. Time allowed for completion of the paper is 3½ hours.

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) – Part 2

The second part of the examination will be a clinical assessment in the OSCE format. There will be 14 active stations, each allocated 10 minutes, and also a small number of rest stations. Each station will test clinical, communication and practical skills. Starting from 2010, this examination is held twice a year, usually in March and September, and will be available at different times in Karachi (Pakistan) and Colombo (Sri Lanka). The choice of venue will be subject to the security situation, and the South Asia Board reserves the right to change the venue at short notice to ensure safety and security of candidates and examiners.

APPLYING TO SIT THE EXAMINATION

Are you eligible?

Eligibility criteria for MRCGP [INT] South Asia Part 1 examination:

These should be:

All candidates should have completed a year's internship and:

Either:

1. ***Certification of completion of a structured three years training course*** inclusive of experience in Family Medicine/General Practice and accredited by the South Asia Region MRCGP [INT] Board.

Or:

2. ***Certification of completion of an accredited one year programme in Family Medicine with an additional three years clinical experience.*** This should consist of either three years in FM or a minimum of two years in FM with a further year in a speciality/-ies allied to Family Medicine/General Practice that are certified by the local accrediting organisation and approved by the regional MRCGP [INT] Board.

Or

3. ***Minimum of five years clinical experience of which a minimum of three years should be in Family Medicine/General Practice*** and the other years in speciality/-ies allied to Family Medicine/General Practice certified by the local accrediting organisation and approved by the regional MRCGP [INT] Board.

Note that:

- Internship / house job experience is not counted.
- Specialties acceptable to the Board include Internal Medicine, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Accident & Emergency / Emergency Medicine. Up to 6 months of surgical training / clinical experience will be accredited.
- The candidates are required to submit experience certificates (translated in English language by registered translating agency) as a proof of eligibility to sit the exam.
- Part time equivalents of the required clinical experience will be accepted by the MRCGP [INT] Board provided they are approved by local accrediting organisations.
- In case of private practice, candidates are required to submit a reference letter issued by any Assistant Professor or above rank person of any academic organisation OR registered regional Family Medicine organisation on their letterhead mentioning the complete address of your clinic and the duration of the family medicine / general practice clinical experience.

It is strongly recommended but not mandatory that all candidates attend one of the MRCGP [INT] South Asia preparation courses which are organised and run by the various accreditation organisations.

Local Accrediting Organisations:

These are organisations within each country of the region which have responsibility for determining the eligibility of candidates in that country. By country, the organisations are:

Bangladesh: A committee of three persons, at least one from the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) and one from the Bangladesh College of GPs.

India: Indian Medical Association College of General Practitioners, Chennai

Pakistan: A Joint Committee with representatives from Pakistan College of Family Medicine (Karachi) and Society of Family Physicians (Lahore).

Sri Lanka: The College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka.

Membership of Regional South Asia MRCGP International Board:

Two members from each country constitute the board. The following organisations are represented:

Bangladesh: Two members as agreed by the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons and Bangladesh College of GPs.

India: One member from IMA College of GPs. Second member from Academy of Family Physicians, India.

Pakistan: One representative from each of:

- Pakistan College of Family Medicine (Karachi);
- Society of Family Physicians (Lahore).

Sri Lanka: Two representatives from The College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka.

Secretariat Head of Secretariat (*ex officio* post).

RCGP: Two International Development Advisers (IDAs) as full members; remaining IDA(s) as observers.

Other Members can be co-opted onto the Board as required, and as agreed by the Board Members.

Eligibility Criteria for MRCGP[INT] South Asia Part 2 examination:

Only candidates who have passed Part 1 will be eligible for the Part 2 examination.

How to apply - general

The application process is clearly described in the Application Guide for candidates published on our website. You need to make a separate application either to your regional co-ordinator or to the MRCGP [INT] South Asia admin office to take each part of the examination. Application forms can be obtained from the regional organisations or can be downloaded directly from the South Asia Board website. Completed application forms must be accompanied by:

- A photocopy of any of your valid medical license.
- Evidence of your eligibility to practise (if appropriate; see above).
- One verified photograph.
- The correct examination fee (a bank draft in pounds sterling made payable to the “MRCGP [INT] South Asia” The prevailing exam fees can be found on the South Asia website.

You must staple to the application form one recent passport-sized photograph of yourself. It must be verified by any MRCGP [INT] graduate, your supervisor, department Head or a senior member of your professional body who should sign and stamp on the back of the photograph and put the date.

Please note that application forms, together with Banker’s Draft for the correct amount, should be sent to your nearest representative of the Local Accrediting Organisation or the South Asia admin office , whose contact details are listed on the website and in the Application Guide. **The RCGP in London does not accept applications from candidates.** Only hard-copy applications bearing the candidate’s signature can be accepted. Incomplete, ineligible candidates will be required to send a **prepaid courier envelope to return their application and the bank draft.** Only in exceptional circumstances, the South Asia admin office will send the applications / bank drafts to the candidates on the provided address through normal post and the admin office will not be held responsible for late delivery or misplacement of the documents.

We strongly recommend that candidates provide a valid personal email address and write it clearly and legibly, as most communication and announcements are made by email. Please take extra care in typing in your email correctly, as errors will result in our messages to be sent to the wrong address and in your not receiving updates from us.

Please make sure you familiarise yourself with the Application Guide and the current Examination Rules and Regulations that can be found on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia website indicated below.

Submission of an Application will be taken as confirmation that you accept the Conditions and Regulations set out in this booklet.

Applying to take each part

You need to make a separate application for each part of the examination.

You will need to make sure that your application reaches your representative of the Local Accrediting Organisation **before** the closing date as indicated in the exam calendar published on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia website at:

www.mrcgpintsouthasia.org

You will become eligible to apply for Part 2 of the examination after passing the Part 1 paper.

When to apply

Each of the two parts of the examination has an opening and a closing date for applications. Please see the examination calendar for the current year on the website for dates and fee structure. Please make sure you use the current version of the Application Form which can be downloaded from our website. The Application form for each diet of the exam is published on the website on the registration opening date.

Applications received **after** the closing date may not be accepted and may be returned to the applicant, and delays in the postal service will not be accepted in mitigation. Therefore, the MRCGP [INT] South Asia Board recommends that you use a reputable courier service to ensure safe and timely delivery of your application. We also recommend that you retain a photocopy of your complete application and bank draft for your records. If your application gets lost, your lost bank draft can still be cancelled and re-issued by your bank at a small charge.

It may prove necessary to limit the number of candidates for the OSCE examination at a particular session, and to defer some candidates until a subsequent session of the examination.

What to pay

Please check the current year examination calendar on the website for the fee structure. Fees are subject to revision each year. Therefore, it is important that the correct fee is submitted together with the application.

Please note that the MRCGP [INT] South Asia Board currently only accepts payments through bank drafts in pounds sterling. Any other forms of payment or payments in another currency will not be accepted and applications will be returned.

Making changes to your application

At the discretion of the Convenor of the Panel of Examiners you may be allowed an extension to the time within which you have to pass both parts if you are prevented by exceptional circumstances

from attending the centre originally chosen; or if we cannot accommodate you at your chosen centre and you are prevented by exceptional circumstances from attending the alternative which we offer you.

Withdrawing your application

Notification of withdrawal from any part of the examination must be given in writing:

1. If you enter for a given part of the examination and then decide that you want to withdraw from the examination, you may do so without penalty provided that we receive your instructions, in writing as per the deadline dates mentioned in the exam calendar for each exam. The application fee you have paid will not normally be refunded, but the balance or full amount as per the date of withdrawal will be retained as credit towards a subsequent application. In case you opt for credit of fee towards the next subsequent exam and later decide not to take the exam, the balance fee will not be reimbursed.
2. If you fail to attend any part of the examination, the entire fee paid in respect of that exam will be forfeited.

Refunds of examination fees will be at the discretion of the MRCGP [INT] South Asia Board.

Communicating with us

The details you submit on your application form are stored on record. As most correspondence and all announcements to candidates are done by email, it is crucial that you submit a valid personal email address. Please do not submit someone else's email address, as because of confidentiality reasons we would be unable to discuss your personal information or exam results by telephone or email without verifying your identity. If you have any query, please make sure you contact us using the same email address you submitted in your application form for the exam and quote your 7-digit candidate ID number.

Acknowledging your application

Receipt of your application for the part I exam will be acknowledged through emails at least three weeks after the application submission deadline due to screening and other administrative process. When your application has been approved you will then receive an email of acceptance of your application to sit the part I exam. Two weeks before the exam date you will receive a further email, appropriate to the exam you have applied to take, confirming your candidate ID, date and timing of the exam and the exam venue details. After passing the MCQ paper you will be eligible to apply for Part 2 of the exam.

For the part II OSCE applications, candidates will be confirmed receipt and acceptance of application through email at least four weeks before the exam starting date. The exact allotted date and session of the OSCE exam will be notified to all the candidates no later than two weeks before the exam. However, for both exam applications, you may confirm the delivery date and name of receiving person from the courier company through which you sent the application.

Punctuality

Subject to the discretion of the invigilator, no candidate will be admitted to the multiple choice paper more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination. Extra time cannot be allocated for late arrival.

You must present yourself for the OSCE at least 45 minutes before the scheduled time of your examination. This is in order for you to receive a detailed briefing from the marshalling examiner or invigilator. Subject to the discretion of the marshalling examiner or invigilator, candidates arriving after the start of the OSCE briefing may be excluded from the examination and be deemed to have failed to attend.

Security

No books, any other written material or electronic equipment may be brought into the examination hall with the possible intention of referring to them during the examination, and no material may be removed from, or copied with the intention of removing from, the examination hall. Anyone detected in attempting to do so will be deemed to have failed the examination concerned. Mobile phones will not be allowed inside the examination hall.

Candidate identity

You must bring to the examination centre some means of identification which includes a photo identification document, such as passport, driving licence, national identity card, hospital ID card, etc.

RESULTS

Results in each module

Your result in each of the two parts will be reported to you as Fail or Pass. A list of candidates who successfully complete each part of the examination is published on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia website indicated above and communicated to the representatives of the Local Accrediting Organisations as soon as they are released. The South Asia Regional Administrator will also send a courtesy email to each candidate informing them of their result.

In order to ensure accuracy and confidentiality and to prevent excessive demand on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia staff, results will not be communicated or discussed by telephone. Any enquiries relating to your results or performance in the examination must be made in writing to the South Asia Regional Administrator or to a representative of the Local Accrediting Organisation. (Please refer to the section below on Quality Control.)

The overall result

To pass the International Membership examination overall you must achieve a Pass in both parts within 6 years of the acceptance of your application for Part 1 examination. If you do not do so you will have failed the examination as a whole and will be asked to re-sit Part 1.

You are allowed **three attempts** at Part 2 of the examination. If you do not pass Part 2 of the examination after three attempts you will have failed the examination as a whole and will need to retake Part 1 of the examination again.

If, having failed, you wished to make a further full application for the examination, **you would not be able to carry forward any credits obtained; both parts would have to be taken again.**

Publication of results

Lists of names of successful OSCE candidates who become eligible to proceed to International Membership of the College will be published on the MRCGP [INT] South Asia website within two weeks after the announcement of the result.

If you wish to make a complaint

This section of the Regulations sets out what you must do if you wish to complain about any aspect of the conduct of the examination, or if you consider that there are exceptional circumstances not covered by the foregoing which you wish to bring to the attention of the MRCGP [INT] South Asia Board.

Please note that exam results are final and requests to review results or change the score will not be accepted by the South Asia Board.

1. If you wish to lodge any kind of complaint, or ask for any issue to be investigated, or request consideration of any exceptional circumstances, you must notify the Convenor of the Panel of Examiners (“the Convenor”) **in writing within 14 days** of receiving written notification of the examination results. Submissions received more than 14 days after the notification of results will be considered only if, in the opinion of the Convenor, there are warrantable reasons why they were not made within this time.
2. The written submission must state the particular matter about which the complaint or appeal is made and must set out, in full, the grounds relied upon.
3. Any submission must be made by the candidate himself or herself. Correspondence with any third party, such as a candidate’s Trainer or Course Organiser, will only be entered into upon receipt of the candidate’s signed authorisation.
4. Your submission will be dealt with in the first instance by the Convenor, who will take all appropriate steps to ascertain the relevant facts, including consulting where necessary with examiners or the admin office staff. The Convenor will respond in writing as soon as practicable.
5. By way of example only, and not intended as an exhaustive list, the following remedies are at the Convenor’s disposal and discretion following the upholding of a complaint or the acceptance of a submission:
 - an explanation or apology;
 - an undertaking to review relevant administrative procedures;
 - checking of data entry into the examination’s computing systems;
 - a refund of the examination fee paid for the part in question;
 - waiving of the examination fee in respect of re-sitting the part in question;
 - extension either of the time allowed for completion of the examination or of the number of attempts allowed at the module in question.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that in signing your application to sit the International Membership examination you agree to be bound by the terms of the Examination Regulations, including those set out in this section.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

The bibliography of general practice/family practice is so extensive that it is not possible to give a complete recommended reading list. You should ensure that your knowledge of contemporary general practice/family practice is kept up-to-date by reading relevant books and textbooks, together with current mainstream medical journals. However as an indication, candidates should certainly refer to:

- Oxford Handbook of General Practice
- British National Formulary
- NICE Guidelines, especially for the more common conditions eg hypertension
- WHO guidelines and protocols for local conditions eg TB; malaria; vaccination schedules

Courses designed to prepare candidates for the examination are offered throughout the South Asian countries. The Examination admin office does not maintain details of these. Details are likely to be available from your local Family Medicine/General Practice organisations.

In order to safeguard the probity of both parties, examiners are advised not to offer personal advice or coaching to individual candidates unless there is an ongoing educational relationship between them. Examiners may, and frequently do, contribute to preparation courses where their involvement with individual candidates is brief, and are expressly forbidden from any involvement in preparation courses for the two months preceding the exam.

Many candidates in the past who have taken MRCGP (UK) examination have reported that the most effective form of preparation was through local self-help groups and journal clubs.

Marking schemes remain confidential within the Board's Panel of Examiners and are *not* made available. Please note that sample examination material is supplied for use by individual candidates only, and remains the copyright of the Board at all times.

Multiple choice paper

The multiple choice paper is the machine-marked written paper which is designed to test both your core and emerging knowledge about general practice/family practice, more importantly, the deeper understanding and application of that knowledge. Each question in the paper is intended to explore a topic of which an ordinary general practitioner/family physician or trainee could be expected to have a working knowledge.

The paper will last 3½ hours and is offered twice a year. It will consist of 200 question items in the single best answer (SBA) format.

This part of the examination takes place in the individual countries of South Asia but currently marked and monitored in the UK. You should be aware that there are **TWO** answer sheets. Sheet one is to be used for questions 1 to 100. Sheet two is to be used for questions 101 to 200.

Questions are derived from accredited and referenced sources, including review articles and original papers in journals readily available to all general practitioners/family physicians: primarily from the Oxford Textbook of General Practice, *Clinical Evidence*, *British Medical Journal*, *British Journal of General Practice* or *WHO and NICE Guidelines*, the *British National Formulary (BNF)* and *South Asian journals of relevance*.

Some of these questions relate to current best practice. They should be answered in relation to published evidence and not according to an individual's local arrangements. Questions relating to infectious disease are based on WHO Guidelines. For questions relating to chronic disease, NICE guidelines are now used as the source of reference because of difficulties reported by candidates in accessing WHO sources.

Calculators are NOT necessary for statistical questions, and so are NOT allowed in the examination.

Pictorial data, such as charts, photographs, X-rays and ECGs, may be included in the questions.

Format

The paper uses the single best answer format.

- **Single Best Answer (SBA)** questions in which a statement or stem is followed by a variable number of items, only **one** of which is correct.

For example:

A 2-year-old child attends with a runny nose fever and barking cough for 2 days

which single best treatment option known to shorten the course of the condition? Only 5 options

- A Place the child in a steam filled bathroom.
- B Administer inhaled budesonide.
- C Prescribe amoxicillin 125 mg t.d.s. for five days.
- D Administer inhaled salbutamol.
- E Administer inhaled tribavirin.

Extended Matching Questions are no longer used in the South Asia examination

Scoring

Irrespective of the question format, candidates are awarded one mark for each item answered correctly. Marks are *not* deducted for incorrect answers nor for failure to answer; the total score on the paper is the number of correct answers given. You are therefore advised to attempt all items.

Your answers are to be recorded on machine-marked sheets. If it is helpful, you may mark the question booklet as a preliminary before completing the answer sheets. If you do this, remember to leave sufficient time in which to transfer your answers. You will not be allowed extra time for this.

Use only the pencil provided.

On all of the answer sheets:

- write your full registered name in the space provided;
- enter your candidate ID number in the boxes provided and fill in the appropriate lozenges.

Record your answers by making a heavy black mark that fills the lozenge completely. If you simply mark with a faint horizontal line the mark will not be detected and you will receive no mark. You may erase answers using the rubber provided.

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

The OSCE examination consists of 14 interactive (not data based) stations to be sat only on successful completion of Part 1 (MCQ paper). There will also be a small number of rest stations during the circuit.

Aspects of all skills including clinical communication, practical skills, clinical reasoning, critical thinking and best evidence based practice are included in all the OSCE stations. The candidate will be allocated ten minutes for each station. There is a break of 1 ½ minutes between stations and there are also a small number of rest stations, to ensure that candidates, examiners and simulated patients all have opportunity for regular breaks. With effect from 2010 there are now two OSCE exams per year, normally in late March and late September. Please see the exam calendar is available on the website mentioned above.

Four main areas or domains, of competence will be tested during these fourteen 10-minute OSCE stations. Those domains are:

- Communication Skills:** – consultation skills, doctor – patient interaction, patient centered approach, maintenance of confidentiality.
- Data gathering Skills:** – interviewing, taking history awareness of the patient's agenda,
- Examination / Counselling Skills:** physical examination, proper counselling, breaking bad news
- Management and Investigation Skills** – explanation of symptoms and diagnosis, negotiation of treatment plan, safety netting, appropriate investigation, use of appropriate resources, treatment, urgent referral, follow-up requirements, health promotion and preventive care.

In each of the four domains broad criteria apply, and the candidate will be marked according to how well or badly they meet the criteria established.

Specific individual feedback based on areas that need strengthening will be made available to all candidates who fail the OSCE exam within 4 weeks after the announcement of result.