

Requirements for Colleges and Faculties in relation to Examiners and Assessors

This document establishes the minimum requirements for Colleges and Faculties in relation to examiner selection, training, performance management, duration of appointment and collection of equality and diversity data.

The requirements do not preclude individual Colleges/ Faculties establishing their own requirements, which might be more detailed and more specific.

All Colleges/Faculties will publish their individual criteria for examiner selection, training and duration of appointment.

Eligibility

The following requirements are essential on appointment and will remain as requirements throughout the examiner's term of service. A change in status must be notified to the relevant examining authority.

It is expected that all clinical examiners will have a licence to practise. This means, they will need to:

- undergo an appropriate annual appraisal and maintain their status in relation to revalidation covering the scope of their practice
- fulfill CPD requirements that would cover the scope of the specialty curriculum as it pertains to the exams that they usually cover
- be subject to the usual quality assurance arrangements pertaining to their examination which will confirm their competence as an examiner.

All examiners should demonstrate an understanding of the legal duties of an examiner in relation to equality, diversity and human rights, and the guidance provided by the GMC on the relevant issues, e.g. personal beliefs.

1) Medical Practitioner Examiners will:

- Be on the GMC Specialist or GP Register¹ with a licence to practise (see later section for those who have demitted clinical practice)
- Be a member in good standing with a College/Faculty, where the examiner is examining for a College/Faculty examination. Members of one College/Faculty may examine for another College/ Faculty or organisation.
- Be in a substantive consultant² (or equivalent) post for at least two years, and must demonstrate awareness of the training standard required of the candidates, before becoming an examiner

¹ Unless an examiner under 1e) below

² Unless an examiner under 1e) below

- Provide evidence (for example, references) to confirm that management and/or clinical colleagues agree to the examiner taking up this role, if appropriate. This may not be required for some medical practitioners who work independently e.g. GP or portfolio career.
- Be able to provide evidence of satisfactory completion of examiner training after selection.

1a) SAS doctors and trainees as examiners

- In some cases SAS doctors and doctors in training may be eligible to be examiners. It is therefore the case that they may not be on the Specialist or GP Registers and will not have completed two years in a substantive Consultant post (or equivalent) In this event the individual must demonstrate awareness of the training standard required of the candidate³(see Appendix A)
- If a College/Faculty wishes to use SAS doctors and doctors in training as examiners such doctors should meet the other minimum standards for examiners.
- Where a College/Faculty uses doctors in training or SAS doctors to examine, the examiner must hold full registration with the GMC and without limitation on their practice (for GPs, must be registered with performers list with no limitations on their practice).

1b) Examiners who are not in NHS practice

- Those medical practitioners who wish to examine but who work in the private sector and are not employed in the NHS must meet all the requirements noted above. However, there are specialties (eg Pharmaceutical Medicine) where practitioners are not on the Specialist Register and where consultant appointments are not available. The relevant College of Faculty will publish their eligibility criteria taking into account the principles above.

1c) International Clinical examiners

Bearing in mind the concerns of the regulator about standards in relation to patient care and the assessment of medical practitioners for work in the NHS, it is recommended that Colleges/Faculties consider limiting the number of such medical practitioners to a percentage (for example, no more than 20%) of the examiner cohort in any one diet of the examination being held in the UK.

International medical practitioners, who are examiners in the UK will be assessed for their suitability by the relevant College/Faculty. The criteria for selection will be published.

Examiners examining in the UK, who have not been trained in the UK, or who do not work in the UK must:

³ General Medical Council (2010) *Standards for Curricula and Assessment Systems*. GMC. Standards 9, 10 & 16.

Available at: [www.gmc-uk.org/Standards for Curricula Assessment Systems.pdf_31300458.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/Standards_for_Curricula_Assessment_Systems.pdf_31300458.pdf)

- Hold full registration with their host country regulator (with entry on the specialist register/GP register where appropriate) and without limitation on their practice.
- Be a Member in good standing with a College/Faculty for the relevant College/Faculty examination.
- Fulfill the other relevant criteria specified for medical practitioner examiners.

1d) Examiners who have demitted their usual medical or clinical practice

In the first few years following demission from practice medical practitioners offer a wealth of experience and knowledge which can be invaluable in assessing the next generation of doctors.

However, in the UK, examinations are part of the process of accrediting a medical practitioner so that he/she can be given a licence to practise by the GMC. The examiners who are responsible for assessing these medical practitioners should be at that standard also.

Therefore, if an examiner wishes to continue to examine beyond the point at which they demit from active practice, they should meet the expectations and requirements of all examiners, with the exception that they are no longer in active practice, but they have maintained a licence to practise.⁴

1e) Non-medical Specialists

- Where non medical specialists are used to assess the competence of doctors in training, the relevant College/Faculty or organisation will publish the expectations and requirements of those examiners. This will include information about their legal duties under equality, diversity and human rights legislation, and the requirement to carry out their role in a way which is objective and non-discriminatory.

The following are considered desirable:

- Able to demonstrate understanding of the principles of adult learning (completed a 'Training the Trainers' course or equivalent).
- Be a recognised trainer.

2) Lay Examiners

These are individuals of good standing in their community:

- They will have not been a registered medical practitioner in the UK or Internationally.
- They must complete an application form after reviewing a published job description and person specification.
- They must provide structured references in support of their application.

⁴Revalidation Frequently Asked Questions for Retired Doctors and those preparing to Retire Available at: <http://www.aomrc.org.uk/revalidation/key-revalidation-links-and-reports.html>

3) Quality Assurance Assessors

Assessors will be appointed from a body of Clinical and Lay examiners. The appointment process will be open and transparent and will be published.

Their role is:

- To assess the process and conduct of the examination to ensure there is a uniform and fair standard applied by all examiners, and that there is no unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the protected characteristics described in equality legislation.
- To contribute to the appraisal and performance review of examiners in their role as an examiner.
- To provide feedback on the conduct of the examination to the body setting the examination.

4) Question Writers

Persons selected to contribute to question writing will demonstrate that they are:

- Up to date in their specialty.
- Understand the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes required of the candidate to pass the exam.
- Able to devote the time required to develop appropriate questions.
- Able to develop questions that minimise bias for candidates from the groups protected by equality legislation.

Standing with the GMC

Where a medical practitioner has been referred to the GMC for investigation, they should not examine if an interim order has been issued or conditions have been placed on their practice or they have been suspended. It is recommended that Colleges/Faculties should consider requiring all examiners to sign a statement stating they are in good standing with the GMC.

Recruitment and Selection Process

Different processes are followed for recruitment and selection. Whatever the process, it must be fair, transparent, robust, and relevant to the examination in question.

The selection process should be designed to ensure that it does not unlawfully discriminate against any person who shares a protected characteristic. It must be open to anyone who meets the relevant eligibility criteria, and should be conducted in a fair way. Steps should be taken to promote and encourage a diverse pool of candidates to apply.

Appointment as an examiner should be based on competences, and the selection process must be published. The required competences should include a commitment to promoting equality and valuing diversity with

subsequent training to include the gaining of knowledge and understanding of the equality and diversity issues that apply to being an examiner.

All interviews should be based on the competencies outlined in the job specification for the roles.

Reasonable adjustments will be made as required throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Standards for recruitment and selection

The GMC has set out standards⁵ for recruiting assessors* and examiners as follows:

Standard 10: Assessors/examiners will be recruited against criteria for performing the tasks they undertake.

Mandatory requirements

10.1 *The roles of assessors/examiners will be clearly specified and used as the basis for recruitment and appointment.*

10.2 *Assessors or examiners must demonstrate their ability to undertake the role.*

10.3 *Assessors/examiners should only assess in areas where they have competence.*

10.4 *The relevant professional experience of assessors should be greater than that of candidates being assessed.*

10.5 *Equality and diversity training will be a core component of any assessor/examiner training programme.*

The following supporting principles have been agreed:

- There must be a published job description and person specification.
- There should be a transparent system for assessing the application forms and agreeing which candidates move onto the next stage.
- *Monitoring* - Equality and diversity data about examiners should be collected and analysed for candidates at each stage of the application and selection process. This will enable the assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangements to promote diversity within the candidate pool, and demonstrate accountability and good governance of the process.
- *Training* - there should be a published training programme for examiners. Such a programme will include:
 - Principles of assessment. This may include taking part in mock exams as part of the training process.
 - The responsibilities of an examiner in complying with equality, diversity and human rights legislation, and the role of the examiner in ensuring that examinations and assessments are fair.

⁵ Standards for curricula and assessment systems, GMC 2010

*in the context of this document these expectations relate to examiners and not assessors

- Good practice should be shared and where possible, consideration should be given to providing training that would apply to all exams to promote a common standard of practice.⁶
- *Observer Status* - before examining independently, the new examiner should observe each relevant component of the examination. This could be achieved by taking part in mock exams as part of training
- Once established as an examiner, all examiners will be subject to quality assurance of their performance.

Complaints

Candidates, assessors, and examiners have a right to pursue a complaint concerning unlawful discrimination during the appointment process. There will need to be procedures for dealing with these complaints which must be published.

Feedback

Feedback from QA assessors, post-examination surveys, complaints and appeals will be used to inform examiners of their performance.

Duration of Service as an Examiner

The criteria regarding the length of time an examiner/QA assessor may remain in role must be published.

These requirements will be reviewed 2 years from the date of publication. We expect them to be fully operational as soon as possible, but we require them to be in place by the time this review is carried out.

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⁶ Joint Surgical Colleges (2013) *Equality and Diversity Policy*
Available at: <http://www.jcie.org.uk/content/content.aspx?ID=43>

