



Royal College of
General Practitioners

MRCGP Examination Misconduct Policy and Procedure for AKT and SCA

MRCGP Misconduct Policy for AKT and SCA – v1.0
August 2023

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	August 2023	Head of Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Misconduct Policy introduced to replace MRCGP Code of Conduct for Candidates (AKT and CSA)• Section on CSA replaced to reflect introduction of SCA. Minor wording changes to section re AKT Updated and wording refined to reflect the move from CSA to SCA• Process for reporting allegations of misconduct and investigating process added.

Review date August 2024 and then annually thereafter.

Relevant Policies, Templates and Forms

The following policies, procedures and guidance should be used or referred to when necessary, alongside this policy. All policies and templates are available on the RCGP website:

Name	Version	Date
MRCGP Regulations for medical practitioners training for a CCT in General Practice	3.0	August 2023
MRCGP Reporting an allegation of misconduct form	1.0	August 2023

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Introduction

1. This policy applies to the following examination components of the MRCGP that are set and assessed by the RCGP:
 - Applied Knowledge Test (AKT).
 - Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA).
2. There is a separate code of conduct covering the regulations for WPBA and use of the Trainee ePortfolio. [Read the WPBA code of conduct on the RCGP website.](#)
3. Trainees for all MRCGP examinations are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout all their dealings with RCGP staff and any external agencies which deliver examinations on its behalf. This includes trainees' behaviour before, during and after the examination in their contact with
 - Examinations staff/teams
 - Pearson VUE test centre staff/SCA delivery partners staff
 - Other trainees
 - Invigilators
 - Role Players
 - Examiners.
4. Trainees should note that by applying to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to abide by all the relevant Regulations including this Policy. All allegations of misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with the MRCGP Regulations and this policy and procedure.

Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)


5. Trainees are expected to familiarise themselves, and to comply with the rules of conduct specified by Pearson VUE at their AKT examination test centres and should abide by the instructions and advice given by invigilators and other Pearson VUE staff.

6. Trainees are strictly forbidden to:
 - attempt to provide information about the examination content of the AKT to trainees attending later examination sittings.
 - attempt to solicit information about the examination content of the AKT from trainees attending earlier examination sittings.
 - bring any unauthorised material or electronic devices into the examination area, or otherwise arrange access during the course of an examination. These might include manuscripts, notes, textbooks or study guides, dictionaries, recording equipment, personal organisers, computing equipment, calculators, personal stereos, mobile phones, cameras, watches, Bluetooth or other similar electronic or communication devices. All of the above, as well as bags, coats, food and drink and any nonessential medicines must be left in the lockers provided for you at each Pearson VUE test centre. Mobile phones must be left in the lockers and switched off at all times.
 - communicate with anyone, except the invigilators, by any means, during the AKT. This will include the periods during which the examination is conducted and when entering or leaving the examination area. In the event of a temporary evacuation, e.g. a fire alarm, trainees should not communicate anything about the AKT with anyone, other than invigilators or Pearson Vue staff.
 - copy from other trainees sitting the AKT.
 - remove any material whatsoever by any means from the examination area. This includes notes or copies made of any materials during the course of the examination.
 - disclose, disseminate or publish any material from the examination, the copyright for which is held by the RCGP.

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7. Trainees are advised that they must not record or discuss specific details of examination content with anyone, including their colleagues, Trainer/Educational Supervisor or other member of the deanery educator team. Trainees should note that Pearson VUE use CCTV cameras to ensure that there are no violations of examination security at any of their AKT centres. In order to ensure the security and integrity of the examination, trainees sitting during the afternoon session are required to arrive and register at the examination centre before the trainees sitting in the morning session have completed their examination.

Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA)

8. Trainees should abide by the instructions and advice given by examiners, invigilators and administrative staff involved in the delivery of the examination.
9. Trainees are strictly forbidden to:
 - seek to gain prior knowledge from, or to provide knowledge to, other examination trainees on the examination content of the SCA.
 - bring any unauthorised material or electronic devices into the live examination environment, or otherwise arrange access during the course of an examination. Please refer to the guidance on permitted items.
 - have access during the examination, inclusive of any breaks, to items other than those permitted in the guidance. [Read the SCA Trainee Surgery guide on the RCGP website.](#)
 - communicate with anyone, except role-players, invigilators, examiners and administrative staff, by any means, during the SCA. This will include the periods during which the examination is conducted and when entering or leaving the SCA examination environment. In the event of a temporary evacuation, e.g. a fire alarm, trainees should not communicate anything about the SCA examination content with anyone, other than invigilators, examiners or administrative staff.
 - remove any material whatsoever by any means from the SCA examination environment. This includes notes or copies made of any materials during the course of the examination.
 - disclose, disseminate or publish any material from the examination, the copyright for which is held by the RCGP.
10. Trainees are advised that they must not record or discuss specific details of examination content with anyone, including their colleagues, Trainer/Educational Supervisor or other member of the deanery educator team.
11. RCGP acknowledges the educational purpose of trainees reflecting on their examination experience with their Educational Supervisors and this is not deemed as misconduct. No specific examination content should be documented or recorded.

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12. Trainees should note that the examination is being recorded throughout for the purpose of quality control, security and marking. The content of the examination must not be recorded or saved in any other way by the trainee. Violations of examination security may also be recorded and used as evidence in any subsequent investigation or action.
 13. The RCGP assumes the copyright of all materials produced for all MRCGP examinations. Trainees must not publish, or in any other way, attempt to share any material which they have encountered in the MRCGP examination.

Examples of misconduct (AKT/SCA)

RCGP regards trainees' misconduct in the AKT and SCA examinations with the utmost seriousness.


14. The following activities are viewed as misconduct, and therefore trainees must not:
 - distribute or sell any examination content (ie questions or cases)
 - upload or distribute examination content (ie questions or cases) online (ie on website or social media) or by any other written means
 - share examination content outside the trainees's immediate educational sphere
 - deliberately attempt to undermine the integrity and security of the examination.

15. Examples of misconduct include, but are not restricted to:
 - collusion with others
 - false declaration of authenticity
 - obtaining or attempting to obtain secure examination content/materials
 - impersonation
 - offering a bribe of any kind to a invigilator role-player, examiner, or member of staff
 - inappropriate conduct (e.g. disruptive, violent or offensive behaviour) during the examination
 - introduction of unauthorised material or instruments into the examination session
 - use of technology to duplicate, share, print, or save examination content/materials
 - browsing or accessing the internet and/or information online during the examination
 - using recording equipment (other than equipment expressly permitted and required to take the examination in accordance with RCGP specification). e.g photographic, video or audio recording, taking screenshots (any screen recordings are not permitted)
 - misuse or attempted misuse of examination content/materials
 - exchanging, obtaining, receiving or passing on unauthorised or confidential examination content/materials
 - failure to abide by the instructions of an invigilator, examiner, or member of staff
 - any attempt to undermine the examination process
 - any attempt to gain an unfair advantage over other trainees
 - non-adherence to published examination regulations.



Misconduct reporting and investigation (AKT/SCA)

The course of action that RCGP will take in responding to and investigating an allegation of suspected misconduct relating to the examination of the MRCGP examinations is set out below.

16. RCGP will not investigate complaints expressing personal dissatisfaction about the quality of teaching or training, and such complaints should be directed to the relevant Deanery.
 17. When misconduct is alleged during an examination the trainee will normally be allowed to complete that examination. A record of the allegation will be made by the invigilator and a copy subsequently given to the trainee.
 18. Results will be withheld whilst allegations of misconduct are investigated.
 19. If following the completion of the examination any individual suspects that misconduct has occurred during a MRCGP examination they should report this to the Examinations Team using the *Reporting an Allegation of Misconduct Form*.
 20. Individuals who are in possession of evidence to support their allegations should provide this at the time of making the allegation, or as soon as they are contacted by RCGP.
 21. Each disclosure will be considered sensitively and carefully, and appropriate action will be taken. It should be noted, our ability to substantiate allegations is often dependent on the availability of documentary evidence. Evidence becomes increasingly difficult to produce and authenticate as time elapses. Therefore, we strongly encourage anyone who suspects misconduct to notify RCGP as soon as possible.
 22. Where a case of misconduct is established, the Head of Examinations may, if the case appears to be isolated or minor, deal with the matter him/herself.
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23. A panel may be convened to consider serious allegations. Panels will have at least three members none of whom will have been involved in the original examination process. The panel will conduct its business in accordance with the RCGP's Guidance on the Conduct of Assessments. Allegations of misconduct will normally be considered on the basis of paper evidence only and oral hearings will not be held. The panel will make its decision on the balance of probabilities. The panel's decision will be communicated to the trainee in writing, with reasons, as soon as is reasonably possible and normally no more than six weeks after receipt of the allegation.
24. Where an allegation of misconduct is considered by a panel all relevant parties, including the trainee, will be invited to comment on the evidence collected by the Head of Examinations.
25. Information received in disclosures may be shared with third parties where necessary.
26. RCGP cannot disclose to an informant the outcome of an investigation or any action that is taken as a result of an investigation.
27. An investigation may be discontinued at any stage if the
 - investigation could prejudice the possibility of future criminal or civil proceedings
 - informant makes any public statements during the investigation that could prejudice the outcome of the investigation or the possibility of future criminal or civil proceedings – this includes the informant discussing the investigation with the trainee involved during the investigation process.
28. When investigating allegations, we expect relevant parties involved to cooperate and provide evidence and information relating to the allegation when requested.
29. RCGP aims to complete an investigation in a timely manner. An individual ability to provide all the information requested as quickly as possible will help to ensure this aim is met.



Possible penalties for misconduct

30. Penalties for those failing to comply with the guidance given above, or behaving in an unprofessional or disruptive manner, will depend on the nature of the offence and may include:
 - formal written warning, if a further offence is committed a more serious penalty may be applied
 - withholding or annulling results for a particular examination
 - withholding or annulling results for all examination attempted
 - being barred from taking an examination or examinations for a specified or indefinite period
 - referral to the General Medical Council (GMC).
 31. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to inform the police.
 32. Cases of misconduct may be referred to the Postgraduate Dean, Head of School/Director of General Practice Education in the trainee's Deanery.
 33. In all but the most minor cases, alleged misconduct will be considered by a misconduct panel. Penalties will also be determined by a misconduct panel.
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