

Diploma of Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery

(MFDS) Examinations Candidate Code of Conduct

Revised January 2021

Introduction

1. Candidates and applicants for examinations delivered by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (referred to as 'the Colleges') are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout their dealings with the Colleges and to conduct themselves as is appropriate for a potential member or fellow of the Colleges. This includes behaviour during the examination and in all contact with examiners, invigilators, College staff and fellow candidates before, during and after the examination.
2. This Code of Conduct has been developed to provide guidance against which allegations of misconduct related to behaviour will be judged.
3. Candidates should note that by virtue of applying to sit an examination they are deemed to have understood and agreed to respect and abide by all relevant regulations, including this Code of Conduct.

General standard of behaviour

4. Candidates are expected to behave in a professional manner, befitting a potential member or fellow of one of the Colleges, in all activities associated with the examination.
5. The Colleges expect all candidates to treat everyone they encounter during their experience with dignity and respect.

This code applies equally to conduct of candidates and applicants when:

- dealing directly with personnel involved in the examination (in person, on the telephone, in online meetings or in written and email correspondence); and
- publishing or posting any comments on websites and social media.

Interacting with College staff and representatives

6. Candidates are expected to act with respect for those running the examination at all times. College examiners, invigilators and employees have the right to undertake their roles without fear of abuse or harassment. Verbal abuse, or the threat of such abuse, will be regarded as a form of misconduct, and investigated accordingly.
 - Harassment includes any unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of College employees or representatives which is judged to be demeaning and unacceptable to the individual.
 - Bullying includes offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which may be deemed to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
 - Failure to comply with instructions of College representatives (e.g examination regulations) may also be considered as misconduct.

7. Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, but are not confined to: shouting, threats of harm (either to self or staff), inappropriate written communications, email or telephone conversations and physical contact.

Online delivery

8. Candidates must ensure they have successfully tested the examination platform prior to the start of their examination. Candidates are expected to take responsibility for testing their equipment ahead of the examination with any guidance issued by the Colleges or platform provider.
9. Candidates who log on after the start time will not be given any additional time to complete the examination.
10. The identification process for the assessment will be specified in the candidate instructions. Any candidate who does not fulfil this requirement may be refused entry to the examination.
11. Candidates are not permitted to give or receive any third party help or support during the examination period.
12. Candidates are not permitted to communicate with any third party (other than for administrative activities directly related to the assessment) whether by mobile phone, tablet or other electronic device during the examination period.
13. Candidates are not permitted to share their username and password associated with the delivery platform at any time.
14. Candidates are confirming by submitting the required responses that all the material is entirely their own work and they wish this to be taken into account for the examination.
15. Candidates are expected to take responsibility for the proper and timely submission of all examination material within the allocated examination time.
16. Candidates are not permitted to refer to any other reference material during the examination (e.g. books, study notes, websites). All material will be provided at the start of the examination time.
17. Should candidates experience a technical issue during the exam they must report this following the procedural notes provided for the examination. Failure to do so may mean that assistance cannot be provided and that examination time may be lost.
18. If a candidate is ill during the examination, they should report this at the earliest opportunity using the contact details provided in the procedural notes provided for the examination.
19. Candidates who are in receipt of a reasonable adjustment must keep the College updated of any relevant changes in circumstances that may affect the appropriateness of the adjustments. An allegation of inappropriate candidate use of adjustments will be investigated and may result in sanctions (section 29).

Academic misconduct

20. The Colleges take all reported incidences of academic misconduct seriously and seek to ensure that they are dealt with efficiently and appropriately. Academic misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:
- providing false documents as part of eligibility requirements of an application to sit the examination
 - the introduction into any examination of any additional materials, electronic, audio or communication (digital) devices (including mobile phones and ‘smart’ watches);
 - any attempt to remove materials or content from an examination;
 - the use of any recording equipment (including all photographic, video and audio recording equipment);
 - any attempt to release content from any examination to a third party/commercial organisation;
 - any attempt to gain or pass on information about the content of an examination in advance of the date of the examination;
 - uploading assessment material (either from memory or through obtaining copies) to websites or distributing them via social media or written means;
 - during an examination or in between components of an examination (including times where one candidate’s exam is complete and another candidate is waiting to begin):
 - any attempt to communicate with another candidate
 - any attempt to gain access to, read or copy the work of another candidate
 - impersonation, or attempted impersonation, of another candidate
 - bribery (of another candidate, examination official)
 - failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or other examination official, or breach of examination regulations
 - falsification or alteration of any results document or qualification
 - any other form of cheating or conduct likely to give an unfair advantage to the candidate or others
 - aiding or abetting in any instances outlined above.
21. Academic misconduct can occur between:
- a candidate and other candidates who sat the examination at the same sitting
 - a candidate and others who have already passed the examination
 - a candidate and other candidates who are yet to attempt or pass the examination.
22. If a candidate has any concerns about the conduct of a fellow candidate, these should be brought to the attention of the Colleges as soon as is practicable, and these will be investigated by the Colleges.

Copyright and use of materials

23. The copyright of all materials prepared for any part of an MFDS examination resides with the Colleges. Candidates must not discuss, publish or in any other way attempt to share any material which they have encountered in an MFDS examination.

Regulatory body reporting

24. Candidates should promptly inform the College if any limitations on practice are placed on them by their regulatory body for example, in the UK the General Dental Council (or equivalent).
25. The Colleges also reserve the right to report individuals to the relevant regulatory body where appropriate.

Post-examination procedures

26. In accordance with the examination regulations, candidates may appeal against their examination result or make a complaint about the conduct of the examination. The Colleges are committed to investigating any such cases in a fair and transparent manner. The appeals procedure is published on the colleges' websites.
27. It is occasionally necessary to request information from a candidate regarding an appeal or complaint received from another candidate: candidates are expected to respond to any such request in an open and timely manner.
28. Candidates should be assured that they have the opportunity to raise matters of legitimate concern and that making an appeal or complaint will not put candidates at risk of conduct violations.

Sanctions

29. If a candidate (is found to have acted improperly, the following sanctions may be applied:
 - they are issued with a formal warning about their conduct and the likely penalties if the conduct is repeated
 - their name may be reported to the regulatory body (the General Dental Council), hospital Trust or local area team
 - their examination result is withheld or annulled
 - they are barred from entering the examination for a set period or permanently
 - if they have passed the examination, they may not be admitted to Membership according to each College's statutes and regulations. In cases where serious misconduct is not related to the examination but is judged to make the person unfit to become a Member of the College.