



The ROYAL COLLEGE of OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

RCOphth Code of Conduct for Examination Applicants and Candidates

Candidates and applicants for all examinations delivered by The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout their dealings with the College and to conduct themselves as is appropriate for a Fellow of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists. This includes behaviour during the examination, and in all their contact with examiners, examination patients, invigilators and staff of the College before, during and after the examination.

This Code of Conduct has been developed to set out the College's expectations of its examination candidates. Any allegation of misconduct will be investigated in accordance with the policy for allegations of cheating and misconduct.

This code applies to all examinations from 10 March 2024. Candidates should note that by virtue of applying to sit any College 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

Candidates are expected to behave in a professional manner, befitting a Fellow of the College, in all activities associated with the examination. Adherence to the principles and values within the General Medical Council's Good Medical Practice is expected at all times. The College expects all candidates to treat everyone they encounter during their College interactions with dignity and respect. This code applies equally to behaviour of candidates and applicants when

- Dealing directly with the Examinations Department at the College (in person, on the telephone, in correspondence) and
- Publishing or posting comments on websites and social media

Candidates are expected to act with respect for those running the examination at all times. Physical or verbal abuse, or the threat of such abuse, will be regarded as a form of misconduct, and investigated accordingly.

- Candidates should not attempt to harass, bully or bribe RCOphth examiners or staff.
- Harassment includes any unwanted conduct which is demeaning and unacceptable to the individual.
- Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour



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intended to undermine, humiliate, disparage or injure the recipient

- Failure to comply with written or verbal instructions of the College and its staff, including the examination regulations, protocols and policies, will also be considered as misconduct.



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

- Candidates are expected to act with respect for fellow candidates.
- Candidates are expected to ensure that their behaviour is not disruptive and does not affect other candidates attempting the examination at the same time.
 - Examples of inappropriate behaviour may include, but are not restricted to, inappropriate language, verbal or physical aggression, questioning the fairness of another candidate's success in getting a place at or passing the examination, refusal to accept exam policies such as closing dates and other exam deadlines.

Interacting with patients

At the Refraction Certificate and Part 2 FRCOphth Oral examinations, candidates will be required to interact with real and simulated patients.

- Candidates should maintain an awareness of patient comfort and safety at all times
- The dignity of all patients must be respected at all times
- Candidates should observe the appropriate hygiene protocols, specifically regarding hand washing.
- Candidates should not interact with patients, other than as part of their OSCE and this would usually be under the direction of an examiner.
 - For the avoidance of doubt, under no circumstance should candidates interrogate patients as to their underlying condition
- Candidates working in the host department must not attempt to identify patients recruited by their colleagues for the clinical examination
- Candidates are required to maintain strict confidentiality and must not divulge the identity or details of patients used in an examination.
- Candidates should ensure their personal appearance is in keeping with the professional nature of FRCOphth examinations, clothing should be clean and smart with sleeves which can be rolled up to the elbow. Neck ties are not required.

Cheating and misconduct

Cheating and other misconduct, whether attempted or successful, will be penalised severely by the Council of the RCOphth. Candidates found to be in possession of unauthorised material or equipment, including mobile phones and/or other smart devices, during an



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examination will be deemed to be guilty of misconduct whether the items have been used or not.

Cheating and misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- Plagiarism
- Copying unauthorised material
- Talking to other candidates during the examination
- Passing notes
- Failure to respond to the instructions of an invigilator or examiner
- Bribery
- Unauthorised access to examination materials
- Copying or alteration of certificates
- Talking to patients during a clinical examination (unless directed to do so by an examiner as part of the examination process)
- Discussing clinical cases with other candidates (if either party has not yet sat the examination)
- Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour, including, but not limited to
 - Use of inappropriate language
 - Verbal or physical aggression
- Aiding or abetting any of the above

If a candidate has any concern about the conduct of a fellow candidate this should be brought to the attention of the examination staff as soon as is practicable.

Copyright and use of examination materials

The RCOphth assumes the copyright of all materials produced for all RCOphth examinations.

Candidates must not discuss, publish or in any other way attempt to share any material which they have encountered in the FRCOphth examinations.

GMC (or equivalent) reporting

Candidates should promptly inform the RCOphth if any limitations on practice are placed on them by the GMC (and / or the equivalent regulatory body in the country in which they practice).

March 2024