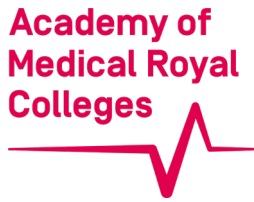
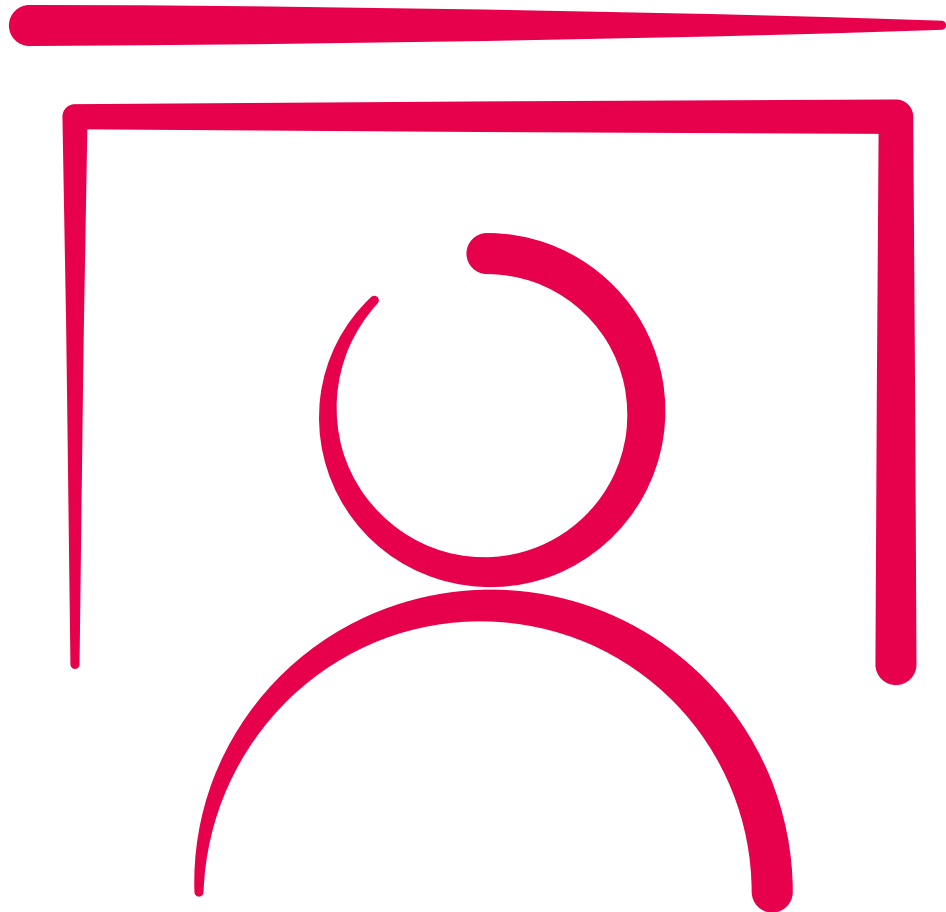


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Eligibility criteria for college examiners



Introduction

Becoming an examiner is a highly rewarding opportunity for individuals to learn [particularly outside their sub-speciality area], to mix and exchange ideas with clinicians and lay people across the country, as well as to observe and assess trainees.

The duty of examiners is to understand and maintain the standard of the exam, while maintaining equality, respecting diversity and being aware of all relevant GMC guidance. They need to be familiar with the curriculum and keep exam questions relevant to the current practice of the specialty.

In '[Designing and Maintaining Postgraduate assessment programmes](#)' the GMC said it is important that assessments take place fairly and reliably. With respect to examiner selection they say, *"Organisations can support this by the choice of assessor, specifically, ...defining what professional expertise is needed for in each assessment and when or if particular training is required. This should not unduly restrict the range of assessors that can be used, but where particular professional qualifications, experience, credibility or training is necessary, this should be clear."*

All colleges and faculties should publish their own criteria for examiner selection, training and duration of appointment, which may be more detailed and specific. This will vary depending on the type of examination, type of examiner and the required activity of the examiner. They should also publish a code of conduct for examiners on their websites and have a clear mechanism for dealing with any examiner who breaches it.

The Academy acknowledges that doctors in many areas are developing portfolio careers and may not be an employee of an NHS trust. This should not exclude the doctor's participation as an examiner assuming they fulfil the relevant criteria.

Here we provide an overview of the eligibility criteria for the different types of examiners. It is primarily aimed at GMC approved examinations. However, colleges and faculties may also run other examinations that the criteria will be relevant to.

General criteria

All examiners must:

- Have completed a recognised course in equality and diversity [renewable every five years]
- Make fair, unbiased judgements in the examination setting
- Remain objective and dispassionate where necessary
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills in English
- Have high levels of integrity and professional standards
- Participate in ongoing assessment, training and development as an examiner.

All medical and allied professional examiners must:

- Be involved in the training of doctors – either national training number (NTN) trainees and/or those not on the national programme (for example those in non-training NHS posts or international candidates)
- Be up to date with medical knowledge and skills relevant to the subject matter of the examination
- Be in good standing with their relevant college or faculty.

Eligibility criteria

The following outlines the eligibility requirements for each type of examiner. This information is also summarised in the Appendix of this paper.

Consultant/General Practice examiners

Consultant/General Practice examiners need:

- Full registration with GMC (with no limitations)
- Colleges should determine how long after appointment to a consultant/general practitioner post, a doctor is eligible to become an examiner. The time ranges from zero to five years across specialties. Colleges should document the reasons in their respective policies
- To be on the specialist register or GP register (usually a pre-requisite for appointment as consultant)
- To have passed the examination (or equivalent) that they are assessing. Examples where equivalence may be needed include: the examiner's qualification was from a different college or country, the examination in question did not exist in its current form at the time the examiner was training, or the examiner is from a different specialty. This might be an opportunity to award the examiner the qualification "by election" where defined criteria exists at the college
- To be up to date with their appraisal.

SAS or Post-CCT Fellow examiners

SAS or post CCT Fellow examiners need:

- Full registration with the GMC (with no limitations)
- To be on the specialist register or GP register — for post CCT fellow only
- To hold an appointment in substantive career grade NHS post or post CCT fellowship
- To have passed the examination (or equivalent) that they are assessing. Examples where equivalence may be needed include: the examiner's qualification was from a different college or country, the examination in question did not exist

in its current form at the time the examiner was training, or the examiner is from a different specialty. This might be an opportunity to award the examiner the qualification "by election" where defined criteria exists at the college

- To be up to date with their appraisal.

Trainee examiners

Trainee examiners need:

- Full registration with the GMC (with no limitations)
- To hold a National Training number (NTN) in the relevant specialty and have reached a training level in the programme specified by each college
- Passed all summative assessments in the programme
- To be up to date with their annual review of competency progression (ARCP).

Trainees should not be involved in the face-to-face aspects of clinical examinations or involved in question setting for a specific exam. However, they can contribute to question writing (knowledge based questions and viva) and may also be involved in marking written questions (such as structured response questions).

International examiners

International examiners need:

- To hold registration in the host country of the exam (equivalent to GMC registration) and be in good standing. Potential examiners are asked to provide a certificate of good standing from the relevant regulator in their country
- To have been in appointment as consultant or equivalent for same number of years as for UK consultant examiners as stipulated by that specialty
- To be able to demonstrate consultant practice in the relevant specialty
- To have passed the examination (or equivalent) that they are assessing. Examples where equivalence may be needed include: the examiner's qualification was from a different college or country, the examination in question did not exist in its current form at the time the examiner was training, or the examiner is from a different specialty. This might be an opportunity to award the examiner the qualification "by election" where defined criteria exists at the college
- To provide evidence of continued professional development or clinical governance (if there is not an appraisal process).

Examiners not in NHS Practice

Examiners not in NHS practice need:

- Full registration with the GMC (with no limitations)
- To be on the specialist register or GP register (usually a prerequisite for appointment as consultant)
- A certificate of completion of training (CCT) and the same number of years after appointment to consultant/GP post as the specialty stipulates in NHS practice
- To have passed the examination (or equivalent) that they are assessing. Examples where equivalence may be needed include: the examiner's qualification was from a different college or country, the examination in question did not exist in its current form at the time the examiner was training, or the examiner is from a different specialty. This might be an opportunity to award the examiner the qualification "by election" where defined criteria exists at the college.
- To be up to date with their appraisal
- To be involved in training and be familiar

Allied professional examiners

Allied professional examiners need:

- To be in active practice, registered with their professional body and be in good standing
- To have completed training in their profession and hold a recognised qualification relevant to their practice
- Postgraduate certification may be relevant in addition to their professional qualification (usually an undergraduate degree)
- To be competent in the area they are assessing
- To provide evidence of continued professional development or clinical governance
- To demonstrate that they are involved in training and be familiar with the standards required for the examinations they wish to assess.

Lay examiners

Lay examiners do not assess medical knowledge or techniques, but are valued for assessing communication skills, delivering information and presentation.

Lay examiners must:

- Not be medically qualified and should not have been registered as such in the past
- either in the UK or internationally
- Be in good standing in their community
- Be familiar with the UK healthcare system and the attitudes and expectations of patients
- Demonstrate commitment to improving healthcare in the UK and/or worldwide.

Quality Assurance Assessors

Quality assurance assessors do not need to be:

- On the GMC register
- In active practice
- Undergoing appraisal
- Involved in training.

However, they may be any of the above or still be active examiners. They would usually have previous experience as a consultant/GP examiner, with experience in setting the examination and presenting results to relevant committees.

Training

Examiner training can be done via an online course, webinar or in person.

Training should include:

- Aspects of examination design (including the use of computer programmes and online platforms)
- Standard setting techniques
- Reliability indices
- Question writing
- The role of the examiner on the exam day
- How to mark.

Examiner training needs to be kept up to date and will need to be refreshed at least every five years. Lay examiners will require more specific training which should be detailed by the college or faculty.

Consideration should be given to highlighting the published data on differing pass rates of those of different ethnic backgrounds.

Duration of appointment

People can continue to be examiners as long as they continue to:

- Fulfil the eligibility criteria
- Remain competent in the exam subjects
- Keep up to date with examiner training.

However, colleges may choose to have a maximum term for examiners, in order to allow the appointment of new examiners. Refreshing the examiner pool also promotes diversity.

Colleges may also require a minimum commitment from examiners (e.g. number of days per year) to develop the relevant expertise. Colleges may consider removing examiners if they are inactive for a period of time. Again the full requirements should be outlined on college and faculty websites.

Roles

Colleges should clearly publish role descriptions for all examiner positions including question writers and lay examiners. This will include a timeline for application.

Special Circumstances

Retired Examiners

Examiners who have demitted their clinical practice should demonstrate that they are still knowledgeable and have the competency to the level of the examination which they wish to assess. One way to demonstrate this is to maintain their licence to practice by being up to date with appraisal and revalidation. In the absence of revalidation, colleges will need to demonstrate that retired examiners remain up to date in case this is challenged. The GMC provide [further guidance](#) on retired examiners.

GMC Standing

Medical practitioners who have been referred to the GMC for investigation, should not be examiners where an interim order has been issued or conditions have been placed on their practice or they have been suspended.

Colleges and faculties should consider requiring all examiners to sign a statement stating they are in good standing with the GMC.

Appendix

The table below summaries the basic criteria that each type of examiner will need to meet in order to be selected for GMC approved postgraduate exams.

	GMC registration	CCT	Appraisal	Post Grad qualification of College	Involved in training	Equality & Diversity	References
Consultant / GP	✓ specialist/GP register	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAS	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trainee	✓	NTN	ARCP	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overseas	✓ or equivalent	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non NHS Dr	✓ specialist/GP register	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allied Professionals	✓ or equivalent	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Lay	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Assessors	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓

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