



## **Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors**

### **Information and Regulations**

**2021**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The first-ever Summative Examination for the Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors (MMCFD) was held in June/July 2010. The Royal College of General Practitioners of the United Kingdom accredited this first examination to the level of Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners [International](MRCGP [Int]) after an extensive and detailed visit of the teaching and assessment processes. Subsequent MMCFD examinations were held every year since then. Successful candidates of these examinations were awarded both MMCFD and MRCGP [Int].

The forthcoming MMCFD Summative Examination will be held in October 2021. The candidates for this examination will be GP trainees who have undergone training in the Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine (STPFM). Successful candidates of all three components of this examination (see Section 2) will subsequently be awarded the Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors and recommended by the same College to the Specialist Accreditation Committee as eligible to be listed on the Specialist Register as Specialists in Family Medicine. After recommendation by the MCFD to the Royal College of General Practitioners, successful candidates of this examination will upon application be awarded the MRCGP[Int]. As the names imply MMCFD and MRCGP{Int} are linked to continued membership of the respective organisations.

The examination is subject to continuous scrutiny, review and development. One should note that it is a condition of entry for the examination that the candidate agrees to be bound by the terms of the examination regulations in force at the time the candidate takes the examination.

This document also contains information designed to give a general idea of the examination. The candidate is advised to familiarize him/herself with them before sitting for the examination.

As part of its ongoing quality assurance, the MCFD may routinely collect educational data about its examination candidates and analyze this information in anonymized formats. The information held by the MCFD will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

## **2. SETUP OF THE MMCFD EXAMINATION**

The MMCFD Examination has three components:

- The Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)
- The Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA)
- The Work-Based Assessment (WBA)

### **The Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)**

The AKT component of the summative examination will consist of **200** single best answer (SBA) type of questions (ONE single answer from five options provided will need to be chosen). There will be **no negative marking**.

Since the examination is an ever-evolving process, the feedback from the previous sessions is important. Coupled with this, as opposed to previous years, the SBA will be the only format of questions available in the AKT component (i.e. there will be **no extended-matching questions**). Consequently, the time provided to complete the examination will be **3 hours and 15 minutes**. Candidates are awarded one mark for each item answered correctly. An Answer Sheet will be provided and the candidate will tick the correct answer with a non-erasable pen. Marks are **not** deducted for incorrect answers.

Pictorial data such as charts, photographs, X-rays and ECGs may be included in the questions.

The Candidate Index Number must be written down on the Answer Sheet. On no part of the examination paper is the candidate allowed to write down his/her name. Both the question paper and the Answer Sheets will be collected at the end of the Examination.

The pass mark for the AKT component of the examination will be set by the Angoff method. A group of Family Doctors who are familiar with the Curriculum will sit on this Angoff group.

The AKT questions will be based on the breadth of the specialty and will be closely aligned to the **Curriculum for the Specialist training Programme in Family Medicine (STPFM)** which has been recently updated by the MCFD. The only completely new chapter in the updated Curriculum is titled 'Environmental Health'. Since this was not present in previous versions of the Curriculum, the content of this chapter will not be examined during the upcoming AKT examination session – October 2021.

It is understood that the medical knowledge tested will be based on the guidance and current best practices present **up to six months before the set exam date**. Further to this, given that this exam is a reflection of the Curriculum, the guidelines to be followed when answering questions will be guidelines that are stated in the Curriculum. These are primarily the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines. To avoid any doubts in this regard, it is

important to state that the NICE guidelines are not available for all topics. Consequently, it is expected that other established guidelines (e.g. SIGN, GINA, GOLD, ECDC etc) and accredited, referenced sources should be used in this regard. Candidates can be guided in this regard by referring to the relevant sections in the updated Curriculum of the STPFM.

It is important to note that questions will relate to **current best practice**, and should be answered in relation to **published evidence** and not according to an individual's local arrangements.

The aim of the AKT component is to test the application of knowledge of the candidate on the breadth of the specialty, based on the (revised) curriculum of the STPFM, within a fair test condition and **without delving in the possible nuances differentiating one set of guidance from the other**.

It is important to keep in mind that time management plays an important part in this examination. Remember that anything marked on the question booklet cannot be considered towards the final mark. Try to avoid having to copy out all answers from the question booklet to the answer booklet – there is often not enough time! And make sure to answer ALL the questions in the paper (remember there is no negative marking).

In view of the ever-changing pandemic situation, guidance about the use of protective masks during the AKT examination will be communicated with candidates closer to the examination date.

### **The Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA)**

The Recorded Consultation Assessment aims at assessing the ability of the candidates to show and apply, in a coherent and comprehensive way, their clinical, professional, communication and practical skills to a level that is appropriate for a Specialist in Family Medicine.

This component covers the following core competencies:

- A holistic and comprehensive approach
- Community orientation
- Patient-centered care
- Primary care management
- Psychomotor skills
- Attitudinal characteristics

There will be thirteen (13) cases in this component of the assessment. 3 of the cases will be allowed to run up to 13 minutes, while the other 10 will have to be concluded in 11 minutes.

The language for the RCA is generally Maltese but a minimum of three cases should be presented in English.

A Handbook for the Recorded Consultation Assessment is published separately and needs to be read in conjunction with this document.

### **The Work-Based Assessment (WBA)**

The Work-Based Assessment is defined as the evaluation of a doctor's progress, over a suitable period of time, in those areas of professional practice best tested in the workplace. It is a process through which evidence of competence in independent practice is gathered in a structured and systematic framework.

The areas of competencies assessed by the Work-Based Assessment are:

- Communication and Consultation skills
- Community Orientation
- Practicing Holistically
- Data Gathering and Interpretation
- Making a diagnosis/Making decisions
- Clinical Management
- Managing Medical Complexity and Promoting Health
- Primary Care Administration and Health Information Technology
- Working with Colleagues and Teamwork
- Maintaining Performance, Learning and Teaching
- Maintaining an Ethical Approach to Practice
- Fitness to Practice

This is covered by the GP Trainee Educational Portfolio. On the basis of an objective review undertaken by the Postgraduate Training Coordinators of the Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine (STPFM) through the GP Trainee's Annual Appraisal, the GP Trainee is certified as having successfully completed the GP Trainee Educational Portfolio, signifying that the WBA component of the MMCFD Examination has been passed.

The updated version of the 'The GP Trainee's Annual Appraisal' approved by MCFD Council on 20th April 2010 has been made available to all candidates.

**A CANDIDATE MUST PASS ALL THREE COMPONENTS OF THE EXAMINATION IN ORDER TO PASS THE MMCFD EXAMINATION OVERALL.**

### **3. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE MMCFD EXAMINATION**

All GP Trainees who

- have successfully completed the three-year STPFM programme,
- will be completing the three-year STPFM programme within 6 months from the date of the examination,
- have failed previous sittings of the AKT or CSA components as stipulated by the regulations,

will be eligible to sit for the AKT and RCA components of the MMCFD examination.

It is only upon successful completion of all three components of the examination that a candidate can be awarded the MMCFD.

The Postgraduate Training Coordinators of the STPFM will submit to the Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) a list of the names of candidates eligible to sit for the AKT and RCA components of the Summative Examination.

### **4. APPLICATION FOR THE MMCFD EXAMINATION**

Candidates eligible to apply for the AKT and RCA components of the MMCFD examination should fill in the appropriate examination application form issued by the Council of the Malta College of Family Doctors and submit it by **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021**.

Applications together with the appropriate fee (see section 16 below) are to be sent to:

**The Honorary Secretary  
Malta College of Family Doctors  
The Professional Centre  
Sliema Road,  
Gzira GZR 1613.**

Once applications are processed, each candidate will receive an index number for their AKT examination.



## 5. VENUES, DATES & TIMES

Eligible candidates are advised that the venue, dates and times of the Membership Examination of the Malta College of Family Doctors 2021 are as follows:

### a) **Applied Knowledge Test**

**Date:** Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

**Venue:** Mount Saint Joseph Retreat House, Mosta

**Time:** 9.00 am to 12.15pm

### b) **Recorded Consultation Assessment**

13 Recorded Consultations should be uploaded onto a secure IT platform by not later than midday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

## 6. REGULATIONS FOR THE APPLIED KNOWLEDGE TEST

1. Candidates are reminded that they are to be seated in the examination room, as directed by the invigilators, at least 15 minutes before the start of the examination.

2. Candidates should bring with them an identification document which must be either the national identification card or passport or driving licence. During the examination, candidates must place this on their desk where it is visible.

3. Candidates shall **not** be allowed into an examination room after the first half hour of the start of the examination. No candidate can leave the examination room, whether temporarily or permanently, during the first half hour and during the last fifteen minutes of the examination. Candidates who arrive after the first half hour will not be allowed to sit for this examination component. If a candidate is allowed to enter after the commencement of the Examination, he/she will **not** be given extra time to compensate for the time lost by arriving late.

4. Candidates needing to leave the examination room temporarily, will be allowed to do so (during the time allowed – see point 3 above) only if accompanied by an invigilator. Only one candidate will be allowed to temporarily leave the room at one time.

5. Candidates may **not** bring into the examination room any books, dictionaries, notes or any other printed or written materials or any other form of recorded materials (including mp3/mp4 players), any blank paper or any blank recording material, any pencil case or similar receptacle, any electronic device or any electronic data processor. Candidates are allowed to bring their biros, pencils, rulers (the latter without electronic gadgets, e.g. calculator, mp3) and erasers.

6. Kindly note that prior to the start of the examination, the candidates will be asked to turn off their mobile phones, place them in individually sealed envelopes, and leave them in the care of the examination invigilators.

7. Candidates shall **not** during any part of the examination, by any improper means whatsoever, obtain or seek to obtain advantage in the examination, or give or seek to give assistance to other candidates sitting for the examination.

8. The invigilators will inform the candidates about the end of the examination 10 minutes before and at the end of the examination. When the invigilators announce the end of the examination, candidates shall stop writing immediately and remain seated in silence until they are allowed to leave the examination venue by the invigilators.

## **7. REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE RECORDED CONSULTATION ASSESSMENT**

A Handbook for the Recorded Consultation Assessment is published separately and needs to be read in conjunction with this document.

**Note for both examination components: The Malta College of Family Doctors will not tolerate cheating or attempts at cheating in examinations. Candidates who are found guilty of a breach of the Malta College of Family Doctors Examination Regulations are liable to dismissal from the Examination. In the case of the RCA, the Assessment Team may decide that such behaviour may result in the candidate involved being disqualified and the result annulled.**

## **8. NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT**

The examination materials/questions constituting the Applied Knowledge Test component of the Membership examination of the Malta College of Family Doctors are confidential and are the property of the Malta College of Family Doctors.

By applying to take the Membership Examination of the Malta College of Family Doctors, candidates are agreeing not to pass on knowledge of any of the examination materials/questions of the examination components. This agreement is also stated in the application form for the MMCFD examination.

If the MCFD becomes aware of any such disclosure the candidate involved may be disqualified and result annulled.

## **9. DISABILITY & DISABILITY ARRANGEMENTS**

Any candidate with disability or special needs can request a reasonable adjustment or adjustments. The candidate must notify the MCFD and the Postgraduate Training Co-ordinators of their disability or special needs, and the Postgraduate Training Co-ordinators will take care of any possible adjustment/s so long as these adjustments are necessary and can be accommodated.

## 10. MMCFD AKT AND RCA EXAMINATION RESULTS

The results will be issued within six weeks of the RCA submission deadline.

Only failing candidates will receive feedback on their performance.

## 11. THE SAVIOUR CILIA AWARD

The Examination Board may identify a candidate or candidates who show outstanding performance during the MMCFD examination. The Board will then recommend such candidate or candidates to the Council of the Malta College of Family Doctors who will confer the Saviour Cilia Award to the eligible candidate or candidates. This award will consist of a plaque, a certificate and a monetary sum of € 250.

In the case that more than one candidate achieves this outstanding performance, the monetary sum associated with this award may be shared between the eligible candidates.

## 12. ABSENCE FROM THE AKT & RCA COMPONENTS DUE TO SICKNESS OR OTHER MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Candidates who absent themselves from the AKT component of the examination due to sickness are required to inform the MCFD Council Honorary Secretary by phone within one hour after the start of an examination component.

Contact number will be made available to candidates beforehand.

A written and signed letter by the candidate giving the reason for absence, together with a handwritten, legible and clearly dated medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner must then be presented to the MCFD Council Honorary Secretary within the next **24 hours**.

**The Medical Certificate should include the name and the Medical Registration Number of the registered medical practitioner printed clearly.**

Please note that National Insurance medical certificates (N.I.45) or pre-printed certificates, like the ones used for the purpose of exempting pupils from attending school, are not acceptable.

Medical certificates which do not state the reason for absence are also not acceptable (e.g. it is not enough for the certificate to state that the candidate was sick or unwell on an examination date).

Candidates who present a sickness certificate and are unable to attend for the examination will have to reapply, pay and sit for the next examination the following session.

Mitigating circumstances are serious, unforeseen, unpreventable events that significantly affect candidate performance and have occurred during the period preceding the submission deadline for the RCA (9<sup>th</sup> October 2021).

This includes the situation where a candidate has applied to sit the RCA and such circumstances have prevented collection and submission of the required number of consultations. As soon as such circumstances develop the candidate is encouraged to immediately inform the Honorary Secretary of the Malta College of Family Doctors in writing, giving a full explanation of their case with the relevant supporting evidence.

Loss of data arising from a failure of the candidate's computer or any associated systems such as broadband routers will not normally be accepted as valid mitigating circumstances. It is expected that data is backed up appropriately. In the event of loss of data or inability to upload consultations arising from a failure of the MCFD's central IT platform, an extension of the deadline for submitting consultations will be made for all candidates affected.

### **13. POLICY REGARDING FAILED COMPONENT/S**

If a candidate fails to pass one component of the examination, then that candidate can re-apply to take that component only. The candidate must then pass the failed component of the MMCFD examination. In the case of the AKT this must be done within **three** extra attempts following the initial taking of the examination, that is, **four attempts in total** are allowed. In the case of the RCA, this must be done within **three** extra attempts following the initial taking of the examination, that is, **four attempts in total** are allowed. Candidates who fail all the attempts at that component have the possibility to restart the STPFM afresh for one time only, at the end of which both the AKT and CSA( Clinical Skills Assessment)/RCA (whichever is being delivered at the time) components would need to be taken again.

If a candidate fails to pass both the Applied Knowledge Test component and the Recorded Consultation Assessment component, then the candidate has to retake both these components at the next examination session. The candidate must then pass these two components of the MMCFD examination within the extra attempts specified above for each component (**two** extra attempts for the AKT, **three** extra attempts for the CSA/RCA). Candidates who fail all the attempts have the possibility to restart the STPFM afresh for one time only, at the end of which both the AKT and CSA/RCA components would need to be taken again.

Once the STPFM is restarted the examination regulations are the same as the regulations in force at the time of re-application for examinations.

Candidates who fail the WBA component of the examination, but pass both the AKT and CSA/RCA components, will only be awarded the MMCFD on successful completion of this component.

#### **14. POLICY REGARDING APPEALS**

Candidates who have failed one or more components of the MMCFD examination may lodge an appeal in writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Malta College of Family Doctors within ten (10) running days from the official receipt of the result.

The appeal should be accompanied with a fee of €400, this should be attached with the appeal sent to the Honorary Secretary. Should the appeal be deemed to be justified, the appellant will be refunded €200.

An Appeals Board, consisting of two Fellows and an external Professional will be set up to hear and determine the appeal.

The Appeals Board will decide the relative appeal within thirty (30) running days, from the day of the Board's constitution.

The decision of the appointed Appeals Board will be final and binding.

A new *Policy on the Appeals Procedure* document for 2021 MMCFD is attached to this Information and Regulations document and should be read in conjunction.

### **15. POLICY REGARDING CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS**

Candidates, who have applied to sit for the MMCFD examination may, if they do so wish, apply to reschedule or cancel their examination before the closure of the application period designated by Malta College of Family Doctors. Fees paid will be held as credit against a future application to sit for the same examination at a later date (In the case of the RCA, it may be another RCA session or a CSA session depending on the situation at the time). This credit may be part or full payment according to the prevailing regulations for the examination in question. However, any candidate doctor who does not wish or does not expect to sit for the MMCFD examination within a period of 1 year may apply for a refund of the examination fee, less an administrative charge.

Candidates who cancel their examination after the designated closing date and registered candidates who fail to attend for the MMCFD examination, will forfeit their examination fee. Candidates who believe that there were circumstances beyond their control which prevented them from sitting for the examination, or that obliged them to cancel the examination after the designated closing date, may apply for a refund (less an Administration Charge) by writing to the Honorary Secretary of the Malta College of Family Doctors and the Treasurer, within a period of not more than two weeks, giving a full explanation of their case with the relevant supporting evidence.

The Malta College of Family Doctors reserves the right to request any further evidence in the process of this application. Any such requests must reach the Malta College of Family Doctors in a timely manner as indicated by the said College. The applicant is to receive an answer to his/her case within a period of not more than six weeks from the date of the acknowledgement of their application. The decision reached by the Malta College of Family Doctors, or its appointed representatives adjudicating the case, is final and binding. `

**16. MMCFD EXAMINATION FEES**

The MMCFD examination fees are as follows: <b>Both</b> AKT and RCA components of the examination	€ 2,077
The <b>AKT</b> component of the examination <b>only</b>	€ 735
The <b>RCA</b> component of the examination <b>only</b>	€ 1,342
<b>Appeal</b> to the examination result	€ 400

**NOTE: These fees are subject to change.**

All candidates have to pay the respective fee for each time that the examination is taken.



## **17.ABBREVIATIONS**

AKT – Applied Knowledge Test

ECDC – European Centre for Disease Control

GINA – Global Initiative for Asthma

GOLD – Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease

GP – General Practitioner

MCFD – Malta College of Family Doctors

MMCFD – Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors

MRCGP[INT] – Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners [International]

NICE – National Institute for Clinical Excellence

RCA – Recorded Consultation Assessment

RCGP – Royal College of General Practitioners

SIGN – Scottish Collegiate Guidelines Network

STPFM – Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine

WBA – Work-based Assessment