

Examination for Membership of the Malta College of
Family Doctors (MMCFD)

Information and Regulations

2024

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Setup of the MMCFD Examination
3. Eligibility for the MMCFD Examination
4. Application for the MMCFD Examination
5. Venues, Dates and Times
6. Regulations for the Applied Knowledge Test
7. Regulations for the Recorded Consultation Assessment
8. Non-disclosure Agreement
9. Disability and Disability Adjustments
10. AKT and RCA Examination Results
11. The Saviour Cilia Award
12. Absence from any Component of the Examination
13. Policy Regarding a Failed MMCFD Component/s
14. Policy Regarding Appeals
15. Policy regarding Cancellations and Refunds
16. Abbreviations

1. Introduction

The forthcoming Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors (MMCFD) Summative Examination will be held in October 2024. Eligible candidates are 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 recommended by the College to the Specialist Accreditation Committee as eligible to be listed on the Specialist Register of Family Doctors. This will be followed by the MMCFD . After recommendation by the Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) to the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), successful candidates of this examination will also be awarded the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (International) (MRCGP[Int]).

The examination is subject to continuous scrutiny, review and development.

Candidates must agree to be bound by the terms of the examination regulations in force at the time they take the examination. As part of its ongoing quality assurance, the MCFD routinely collects educational data about its examination candidates and analyses this information in an anonymised format. The information held by the MCFD will be processed in accordance with the Data Retention Policy MCFD of March 2022.

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)

Candidates must pass all three components to be awarded the MMCFD.

The Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)

The AKT component of the summative examination consists of 200 single best-answer (SBA) type of questions. ONE answer from five options provided needs to be chosen. There is no negative marking.

The time provided to complete the examination is 3 hours and 15 minutes. Candidates are awarded one mark for each item answered correctly. An answer sheet is provided and the candidate ticks 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. The candidate is not allowed to write down their name on any part of the examination paper. 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 Modified Angoff method. A group of Family Doctors who are familiar with the Curriculum will sit on this Angoff group.

The AKT questions are based on the breadth of the specialty and are closely aligned to the Curriculum for the STPFM.

Based on the Curriculum for the STPFM, the questions in the AKT exam are approximately:

- 25% on 'Key Features in Family Medicine' (Curriculum Section B)

- 75% on 'Clinical Medicine' (Curriculum Section C)

Medical knowledge tested is based on the guidance and current best practices present up to six months before the set exam date. Guidelines to be followed when answering questions are those stated in the STPFM Curriculum. These are primarily the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines. However, it is important to note that the NICE guidelines are not available for all topics. Consequently, it is expected that other established guidelines should be used in this regard. Candidates can be guided by referring to the relevant sections in the updated Curriculum of the STPFM.

Questions relate to current best practice, and should be answered in relation to published evidence and not according to an individual's local arrangements.

Time management is crucial 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! Make sure to answer ALL questions (there is no negative marking.)

The Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA)

The RCA aims at assessing the ability of the candidates to show and apply their clinical, 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-centred care
- Primary care management
- Problem- Solving skills
- Interpersonal skills

Thirteen cases must be submitted in this component of the assessment. Twelve cases must run up to a maximum of 12 minutes, and one case up to 15 minutes.

Three cases must be carried out in Maltese and another three cases must be in English. The rest of the consultations may be carried out in either English or Maltese.

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 trainee's progress, over a period of time, in those areas of professional practice best tested at the workplace. 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:

1. Communication and Consultation skills
2. Community Orientation
3. Practicing Holistically
4. Data Gathering and Interpretation
5. Making a diagnosis/Making decisions
6. Clinical Management
7. Managing Medical Complexity and Promoting Health
8. Primary Care Administration and Health Information Technology
9. Working with Colleagues and Teamwork
10. Maintaining Performance, Learning and Teaching
11. Maintaining an Ethical Approach to Practice
12. Fitness to Practice

These are covered by the GP Trainee Educational Portfolio. On the basis of an objective review of the trainee's Educational Portfolio, undertaken by the Postgraduate Training Coordinators of the STPFM, the trainee is certified as having successfully completed the WBA component of the MMCFD Examination.

3. Eligibility for the MMCFD Examination

GP Trainees who are eligible to sit for the AKT and RCA components of the MMCFD examination need to

- be in their third year of STPFM programme,
- be completing the STPFM programme within 6 months from the date of the examination,
- have failed previous sittings of the AKT or RCA components as stipulated by the regulations

The Postgraduate Training Coordinators of the STPFM will submit to the 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.

A scanned copy of the application can be sent via email to the Honorary Secretary of MCFD on: secretary@mcfed.org.mt

The payment of exam fee should be settled via internet banking. Exam fees for MCFD Summative Examination 2024 are:

- **AKT and RCA**- Euro 2,396
- **AKT only**- Euro 799
- **RCA only**- Euro 1,597

Bank details for online transfer of fee:

Beneficiary Bank Name: Bank of Valletta plc;

Beneficiary Bank Branch: 63, Sanctuary Street, Zabbar ZBR 1010;

Beneficiary Name: Malta College of Family Doctors;

Beneficiary Address: 127, Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira;

Beneficiary Account: 400 1288 1989; IBAN: (for those not using HSBC or BOV): MT76VALL 2201 30000000 4001 2881 989;

Bank BIC/SWIFT: (for those not using HSBC or BOV): VALLMTMT;

Details of Payment: Your name, surname, and ID number

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 MCFD 2024 are as follows:

a) Applied Knowledge Test

Date: Friday, 5th October, 2024

Venue: Mount Saint Joseph Retreat House, Mosta

Time: 09.00hr to 12.15hr

b) Recorded Consultation Assessment

Thirteen Recorded Consultations should be uploaded onto a secure IT platform by not later than 23.59hr 2nd November, 2024.

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 their ID 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, they will not be given extra time to compensate for the time lost.

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

5. Candidates may not bring into the examination room any:

- Books
- dictionaries
- notes
- other printed or written materials
- other form of recorded materials
- blank paper
- blank recording material
- pencil case or similar receptacle
- electronic device or any electronic data processor
- Smart watches

Candidates are allowed to bring their pens, pencils, rulers and erasers.

6. Prior to the start of the examination, the candidates are 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 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 inform the candidates about the end of the examination ten minutes before and at the end of the examination. When the invigilators announce the end of the examination, candidates should stop writing immediately and remain seated in silence until they are allowed to leave the examination room by the invigilators.

7. Regulations for the Recorded Consultation Assessment

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

Note for **both** examination components: The Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) will not tolerate cheating or attempts at cheating in examinations. Candidates who are found guilty of a breach of the MCFD Examination Regulations are liable to dismissal from the Examination. In the case of the RCA, the Assessment Team may decide that such behaviour results in the candidate involved being disqualified and the result annulled. The Assessment Team also reserves the right of awarding a Fail to any particular recorded consultation that does not follow the regulations.

8. Non-Disclosure Agreement

The examination materials and questions constituting the AKT component of the Membership examination of the MCFD are confidential and are the property of the College.

By applying for this examination, candidates are agreeing not to pass on knowledge of any of the examination materials and. 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 a disability or special needs can request a reasonable adjustment or adjustments when applying for their exam. The candidate must notify the MCFD and the Postgraduate Training Coordinators of their disability or special needs, and the Postgraduate Training Coordinators will take care of any possible adjustment/s so long as these adjustments are necessary and can be accommodated. The notification of the particular disability should be accompanied by a certificate from a qualified professional.

The MCFD recognises that it is its responsibility to ensure and promote the interests of disabled doctors. It encourages the disclosure of obvious and less obvious disabilities by fostering a culture of safe support, not stigma. The College is committed to ensure access to occupational health services and create an environment where positive attitudes are encouraged, harassments dealt with, obstacles removed, and reasonable adjustments made during the training programme and examination process.

10. AKT and RCA Examination Results

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 MCFD 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.

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

12. Absence from the AKT & RCA Components

Candidates who absent themselves from the AKT component of the examination due to sickness are required to inform the MCFD Honorary Secretary by email at least 1 hour before start of exam.

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 following 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 are not acceptable.

Medical certificates which do not state the reason for absence are also not acceptable (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 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 would have occurred during the period preceding the submission deadline for the RCA (2nd November 2024).

This includes a situation where a candidate has applied to sit for the RCA and particular circumstances prevent 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 MCFD 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 re-sit that component only. The candidate must then pass the failed component of the MMCFD examination.

A pass in the AKT must be achieved within three attempts. A pass in the RCA must also be achieved within three attempts. Repeat attempts can be taken at the next examination session.

Candidates who fail all attempts in a component must restart the STPFM afresh. This is allowed for one time only, at the end of which both the AKT and RCA components would need to be taken again.

Once the STPFM is restarted the examination regulations are those 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 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.**

No appeal will be considered solely on the grounds that the candidate wishes to challenge the academic judgement of the examiners or where the candidate did not understand or was unaware of the Examination Regulations.

The appeal should be accompanied with the payment of a fee of **€400**. Payment or proof of payment should be attached with the appeal sent to the Honorary Secretary.

An Appeals Board, consisting of three Fellows, will be setup to hear and determine the appeal.

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

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

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. This credit may be part or full payment according to the prevailing regulations for the examination in question. However, a candidate who does not wish or does not expect to sit for the MMCFD examination within a period of one 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 and the Treasurer of the MCFD, within a period of not more than two weeks, giving a full explanation of their case with the relevant supporting evidence.

The MCFD reserves the right to request any further evidence in the process of this application. Any such requests must reach the MCFD in a timely manner as indicated. The applicant is to receive an answer to their case within a period of not more than six weeks from the date of the acknowledgement of their application.

The decision reached by the MCFD, or its appointed representatives adjudicating the case, is final and binding.

16. Abbreviations

AKT Applied Knowledge Test

GP General Practitioner

MCFD Malta College of Family Doctors

MMCFD Membership of the Malta College of Family Doctors

MRCGP(Int) Membership of the RCGP (International)

NICE National Institute for Clinical Excellence

RCA Recorded Consultation Assessment

RCGP Royal College of General Practitioners

STPFM Specialist Training Programme in Family Medicine

WBA Work-based Assessment