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MEDICAL COUNCIL'S PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION SYSTEM HANDBOOK

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING
LEVEL 2
AND
LEVEL 3
OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION SYSTEM (PRES)**

**THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
MEDICAL COUNCIL REGISTRATION RULES 2011
AND THE GUIDE TO THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND REGISTRATION RULES
FOR REGISTRATION.**

IMPORTANT:

- **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**
- **PLEASE RETAIN THIS DOCUMENT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

EFFECTIVE: 1st March 2011

***THIS HANDBOOK WAS LAST UPDATED IN MARCH 2011
PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION REGARDING
EXAMINATIONS***



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1. What is PRES and who can apply for it?

1.1. Introduction

The Medical Practitioners Act 2007 and the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007 replace the Medical Practitioners Acts 1978-2002. Part 6 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 deals with registration matters. The Council has made Registration Rules 2011 under Section 11 of the Act.

The Register of Medical Practitioners is established under section 43 of the Act. It comprises of four Divisions, which includes Trainee Specialist Division and the General Division. As part of the Trainee Specialist Division, **Trainee Specialist Registration** is specifically for medical practitioners who practise in individually numbered, identifiable postgraduate training posts which are recognised by the Medical Council for training, while they are completing all or part of their medical specialist training in Ireland. **General Registration** in the General Division is the only form of registration available for medical practitioners who have not completed their specialist training and do not practise in individually numbered, identifiable postgraduate training posts.

The Registration application process comprises of **FIVE Levels**.

LEVEL 1	Document Examination (for all applicants)
LEVEL 2	Computer Based Written Examination (where applicable)
LEVEL 3	Clinical Examination (where applicable)
LEVEL 4	Evaluation of internship (where applicable)
LEVEL 5	An assessment of the applicant's postgraduate education, training, qualifications and experience to establish the applicant's eligibility for specialist registration. This level applies to applicants for specialist registration only.

1.2. What is PRES?

All applicants for Registration will be required to undergo a **Level 1** assessment and verification of their documentation. Eligible medical practitioners will then be either required to sit or be exempted from Levels 2 and 3 known as the Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES).

The Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES) consists of two parts. **Level 2** is a written examination. **Level 3** is a clinical examination.

1.3. What is the process for applying for Registration?

For a short series of questions designed to help you determine which division of the register you may be entitled to apply for, you should click on this [link](#).

You should then look at the information for that division at this [link](#). This will bring you to the generic application form and information that you require to apply for registration with the Medical Council.

The required documentation which *must* be provided with an application for both Trainee Specialist Registration and General Registration can be found at this [link](#).

1.4. Who can apply for/has to take PRES?

Details relating to who can apply for/has to take PRES can be found at this [link](#).



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2. How does one know if one is eligible to sit the PRES Examination?

If you wish to **apply for registration** and this is **your first contact** with the Medical Council, you should refer to 1.3. "What is the process for applying for Registration?" for further information. If you have further questions in relation to registration with the Medical Council, you should contact the Registration Section at 00353-1-4983166 or registration@mcirl.ie.

If you are in the **process of applying** for registration, and are at present having your documentation examined by the Registration section, you are not eligible to sit the PRES/Level 2 until Level 1 (documentation examination) is complete and you have been declared eligible to sit it.

If you have recently been **declared eligible to sit the PRES**, the Medical Council has sent you your Letter of Authorisation and Admission Card by post, with instructions on how to book the Level 2.



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3. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice

There are Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice as devised by the Medical Council.

They are the following:

Patient Safety and Quality of Patient Care

Patient safety and quality of patient care should be at the core of the health service delivery that a doctor provides. A doctor needs to be accountable to their professional body, to the organisation in which they work, to the Medical Council and to their patients thereby ensuring the patients whom they serve receive the best possible care.

Relating to Patients

Good medical practice is based on a relationship of trust between doctors and society and involves a partnership between patient and doctor that is based on mutual respect, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility and accountability.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Medical practitioners must demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills. This enables the exchange of information, and allows for effective collaboration with patients, their families and also with clinical and non-clinical colleagues and the broader public.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Medical practitioners must co-operate with colleagues and work effectively with healthcare professionals from other disciplines and teams. He/she should ensure that there are clear lines of communication and systems of accountability in place among team members to protect patients.

Management (including Self Management)

A medical practitioner must understand how working in the health care system, delivering patient care and how other professional and personal activities affect other healthcare professionals, the healthcare system and wider society as a whole.

Scholarship

Medical practitioners must systematically acquire, understand and demonstrate the substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of the field of learning in their specialty, as part of a continuum of lifelong learning. They must also search for the best information and evidence to guide their professional practice.

Professionalism

Medical practitioners must demonstrate a commitment to fulfilling professional responsibilities by adhering to the standards specified in the Medical Council's "Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners".

Clinical Skills

The maintenance of Professional Competence in the clinical skills domain is clearly specialty-specific and standards should be set by the relevant Post-Graduate Training Body according to international benchmarks.

You should be aware of these, as they are the key skills that the Medical Council expects of doctors who practice in Ireland.



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4. Level 2

4.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 2 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

4.1.a. What is Level 2?

Level 2 comprises of a computer based written examination. This *currently* takes place in the form of a Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) examination. Candidates are required to pass Level 2 **before** being permitted to sit Level 3. Level 2 tests factual knowledge in the main clinical disciplines of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, and Medicine/General Practice. It is based on the Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice as devised by Medical Council (refer to 4. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice for further information.)

4.1.b. Where can it be taken?

A computer-based Level 2 is currently available at the following examination centres in Ireland, Egypt, India, and Pakistan.

Country	Examination centre location
Ireland	Dublin
Egypt	Cairo
India	Ahmedabad Allahabad Bangalore Calcutta Chennai Gurgaon Hyderabad Mumbai Trivandrum
Pakistan	Islamabad Karachi Lahore

Please, do not contact the examination centre directly as they will NOT be able to advise procedures / dates / venues etc. Candidates MUST have been declared eligible to sit the PRES and received a Letter of Authorisation and Admission Card from the Medical Council. This will give details as to where and how to apply for the Level 2.

4.1.c. How does one apply for and find out about Level 2 dates?

Only candidates who have completed Level 1 (assessment and verification of documentation) with the Medical Council's Registration section and have been declared eligible to sit the PRES are eligible to apply for Level 2. They will receive a Letter of Authorisation and Admission Card from the Medical Council. This will give details as to where and how to apply for Level 2. **Please do not attempt to contact the testing company/examination centre/registration centre before then.**

Level 2 is available on a regular (weekly) basis at the examination centres. The Medical Council's staff are unable to give exact details of times/dates/venues of the examinations to any candidate, as only the testing company holds that information. Once a candidate has been declared eligible to sit Level 2, **and** have received their Letter of Authorisation and admission card, they should contact the testing company by telephone or go on their website for available dates.

4.1.d. Level 2 validity

Level 2 must be passed within **two years** from the date a candidate is declared eligible. A pass in the Level 2 is valid for a period of **two years** from the date of passing and candidates must pass Level 3 within two years of passing Level 2. If a candidate DOES NOT pass Level 2 within two years or fails Level 2 THREE times, they should refer to 7. "How does one reapply to sit the PRES Exam?" for further information.



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4.2. BEFORE THE LEVEL 2

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 2 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

4.2.a. How does one book a place in the Level 2?

Candidates must not attempt to book Level 2 until they receive their Letter of Authorisation and Admission Card. The information required to book Level 2 will be given to candidates in their Letter of Authorisation. The Medical Council is not responsible for candidates who are refused entry to an examination because they do not have their Letter of Authorisation, and/or Admission Card and/or current valid passport.

Candidates **must** meet the following criteria **in order to book** Level 2:

- (a) They **must** have completed Level 1 (assessment and verification of documentation) with the Medical Council's Registration section and be declared eligible to sit the PRES;
- (b) They **must** be in possession of a Letter of Authorisation and an Admission Card from the Medical Council. Their eligibility and/or Admission Card must not be expired on or before the date on which they are scheduled to sit Level 2;
- (c) They **must** hold (or have authorised use of) a valid Visa or Mastercard credit card.
- (d) They **must** hold a current, valid passport; their passport number and its expiry date must be identical to those indicated in the Letter of Authorisation and admission card received from the Medical Council. This must be in date on the day they sit Level 2. A current, valid Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) Card (and Travel Document) is **only** allowed as identification for candidates of refugee status.
- (e) They **must** have a current, functional e-mail address to receive confirmation of their booking, whether they have booked by telephone or online.

Once a candidate's details are correct and they meet the criteria **in order to book their** Level 2, they may:

- contact the Regional Registration Centre of their choice by telephone

or

- online at the testing company's website.

On the testing company's website candidates should

↓ go to the area "For Test Takers".

↓ select "All" under "Schedule a Test" and then scroll down to "Irish Medical Council" and click on it.

↓ The screen headed "Irish Medical Council Testing" appears next. In the box called "Get Started", the candidate should click on "Schedule your test". The candidate should select the country where they want to sit the exam, then click "next", and then "schedule an exam".

↓ On the next two screens, the candidate should pay careful attention to the information and instructions provided to them by the Examination centre and ensure that they properly adhere to the instructions, regulations and policy guidelines.

↓ In the screen headed "Eligibility Information" the candidate should enter their Eligibility ID which is the Medical Council reference number given to an applicant at Level 1 and the first 4 Letters of their last name (which is the same as their last name in the salutation in their Letter of Authorisation).



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Once a candidate has scheduled their Level 2 and their date/time/venue is confirmed, they will be issued with 16-digit confirmation number. If a candidate schedules their Level 2 online, the confirmation number will be sent to the candidate by email at the email address that the candidate provided when booking their examination. If a candidate schedules their Level 2 by telephone, they will be provided with the confirmation number at that time and will also receive an email at the email address that they provided when booking their examination confirming their appointment. It is advisable for candidates to bring their confirmation email with the 16 digit number from the testing company with them on the day of their examination.

A candidate's Letter of Authorisation and admission card is valid for **TWO** years from the date that they are declared eligible to sit Level 2, until they either pass Level 2 or their eligibility expires. The Letter of Authorisation and admission card are important documents and candidates must keep them safely. Duplicate Letter of Authorisation and/or admission card will only be issued to candidates in *exceptional* circumstances.

If a candidate's name, address, e-mail, or passport details (passport number and/or expiry date) change during the time the candidate is eligible to sit Level 2, it is the candidate's responsibility to contact the Medical Council in writing either by email at pres@mcirl.ie or by post. It is advisable to give as much notice as possible, in case a New Letter of Authorisation and/or admission card is required to be sent to the candidate. If a candidate has any query about this they can telephone the Medical Council at 00353-1-4983138.

4.2.b. Fees

Click here for the current fee (excluding credit card charges) for Level 2. The fee will be extracted in US dollars. Payment is made by credit card (Visa or Mastercard) only, directly to the test provider, who conducts Level 2 on behalf of the Medical Council.

Each time a candidate attempts Level 2, the current Level 2 fee (excluding credit card charges) will apply.

4.2.c. How does one reschedule/cancel their Level 2?

A candidate may reschedule or cancel their appointment no later than 12.00 noon (GMT), five business days (i.e. 1 calendar week) prior to the date and time of their scheduled appointment. They should contact the testing company in order to do this.

If a candidate does not change or cancel their Level 2 within five business days, and they do not sit the Level 2 on the date and time of their scheduled examination appointment they will be charged for the full Level 2 fee and will need to pay the full fee in order to schedule/book a new appointment.

The Medical Council does not get involved in the booking/rescheduling/cancelling of a candidate's Level 2. It is a matter between the candidate and the testing company/relevant Regional Registration Centre.

Please refer to details below regarding rescheduling/cancelling the Level 2.

i) Rescheduling the Level 2

A candidate can reschedule their Level 2 to a new time/date/venue. They must reschedule their examination appointment directly through the testing company either online or by telephone. They will be required to provide the 16-digit Confirmation Number they obtained when initially booking their Level 2.

To reschedule their Level 2 online, a candidate should click on the "Schedule, Reschedule, Cancel or Confirm an Exam" button on the testing company's website, where they will be led through the steps for rescheduling their examination. Alternatively, a candidate can contact the testing company by telephone at the contact details of the relevant Regional Registration Centre, whose details the candidate received with their Letter of Authorisation.



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ii) Cancelling the Level 2

A candidate can cancel their Level 2 if they have decided that they cannot sit/attend the Level 2 at time/date/venue that they are already scheduled for, and do not wish to reschedule. They must cancel their examination directly through the testing company either online or by telephone. They will be required to provide the 16-digit Confirmation Number they obtained when initially booking their Level 2.

To cancel their Level 2 online, a candidate should click on the "Schedule, Reschedule, Cancel or Confirm an Exam" button on the testing company's website, where they will be led through the steps for cancelling their examination. Alternatively, a candidate can contact the testing company by telephone at the contact details of the relevant Regional Registration Centre, whose details the candidate received with their Letter of Authorisation.

4.2.d. Absence on the day of a Level 2

If a candidate is absent from the Level 2 on the date and time of their scheduled appointment, they will forfeit the full Level 2 fee paid.

The candidate should allow a number of days to elapse from the date that they were scheduled to sit their Level 2 before they are eligible to schedule/book their next Level 2.

If a candidate is absent from the Level 2 on the date and time of their scheduled appointment, they do NOT have to allow six weeks to lapse from the date that they were scheduled sit their Level 2 before they are eligible to schedule/book their next Level 2.



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4.3. THE LEVEL 2

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 2 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

4.3.a. What is the format of the Level 2?

Level 2 *currently* consists of one computer based MCQ examination of 2½ hours (150 minutes) duration. There are 60 questions in total. Each question consists of a stem followed by 5 statements. Therefore there are 300 questions in total.

The Level 2 is negatively marked. A correct answer gains one mark (+1). An incorrect answer loses one mark (-1). An unanswered question does not gain or lose any mark (0). Currently, the pass mark for Level 2 is set at 45% or 135 correctly answered questions out of 300 questions, with negative marking applying. (Please note that this score will be subject to review and candidates are advised to consult the website for the latest information).

The following are typical of the questions which might be included in the *current* Level 2 paper.

MEDICINE

The following relate to the symptoms of severe chronic anaemia

- skin pallor can be absent. True / False
- swelling of the ankles can occur. True / False
- the peripheral pulses can be 'collapsing' in type. True / False
- shortness of breath on exertion is rare. True / False
- angina pectoris can be troublesome. True / False

SURGERY

Gallstones

- can cause intestinal obstruction. True / False
- are diagnosed by an oral cholecystogram when the patient is jaundiced. True / False
- are associated with gallbladder mucocoele and empyema. True / False
- are all easily shattered by lithotripsy. True / False
- are associated with typhoid carrier status. True / False

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

The following physiological changes of pregnancy normally occur with the first 6 weeks of gestation.

- regression of the Corpus luteum. True / False
- the appearance of colostrums True / False
- a marked increase in the progesterone secretion from the placenta. True / False
- decrease in systolic and diastolic blood pressure. True / False
- increased urinary output. True / False

PSYCHIATRY

Anxiety symptoms:

- are uncommon in the general population. True / False
- are best treated by drug therapy. True / False
- occur in response to a real or imagined threat. True / False
- are common in depressive illnesses. True / False
- are similar to those of hyperthyroidism. True / False



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GENERAL PRACTICE

A 45 year old man presents to his GP with chest pain. The following features in the evaluation suggest that it is due to angina:

- the pain is throbbing. True / False
- the pain is usually accompanied by vomiting. True / False
- when it occurs, it lasts for several hours. True / False
- it may occur at rest. True / False
- exertion may provoke the pain. True / False

PAEDIATRICS

Recognised clinical features of cardiac failure in infants include:

- pulses paradoxus. True / False
- splenomegaly. True / False
- sweating. True / False
- poor weight gain. True / False
- flaring of the alae nasi True / False

4.3.b. Answering the Questions

There is a short online tutorial before the examination starts to show candidates how to answer the questions. The sample tutorial can be viewed [here](#).

Candidates must click on the radio buttons (circles) beside the answers they think are correct (as shown on the sample below). If a candidate does not know the answer to a question, they leave both true and false radio buttons blank. When the candidate has read through all the questions and answered those they are sure of, they will be taken to the review screen. Here, they will have an opportunity to go back and review the questions they are unsure about. When a candidate has answered all the questions they want to answer, they must click the END EXAM button on the review screen.

The following question is an example:-

Questions 1 - 5 of 300	Test Taker Medical Council of Ireland TRAS Examination	Time Remaining: 02:29:55
There is an increased risk of ovarian cancer associated with:		
• Nulliparity	<input type="radio"/> A. True	<input type="radio"/> B. False
• Breast cancer	<input type="radio"/> A. True	<input type="radio"/> B. False
• Prolonged oral contraceptive use	<input type="radio"/> A. True	<input type="radio"/> B. False
• Social class V	<input type="radio"/> A. True	<input type="radio"/> B. False
• Hormone replacement therapy use	<input type="radio"/> A. True	<input type="radio"/> B. False

NEXT
REVIEW LATER



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4.4. ON THE DAY OF THE LEVEL 2

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 2 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

4.4.a. What time should one arrive at the Examination Centre?

Candidates must arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled appointment to allow time for check-in procedures. If a candidate arrives late, they may not be allowed to sit the examination and will forfeit their Level 2 fee.

4.4.b. What does one need to bring to the Examination Centre?

In order to be admitted to the Level 2, candidates must bring ALL of the following:-

1. Their **Letter of Authorisation** (which will be sent to the candidate once they have been declared eligible to sit PRES).
2. Their Medical Council **Admission Card** (which will be sent to the candidate once they have been declared eligible to sit PRES).
3. Their **current, valid passport** (containing the same details as their Letter of Authorisation and Admission Card). The Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) Card is **only** allowed as identification for candidates of refugee status who are sitting Level 2 in the Dublin examination centre. **No other evidence of identity is acceptable and candidates presenting without the correct evidence of identity and in date will not be permitted to sit Level 2.**

*Candidates are also advised to bring their **confirmation email** with their 16-digit confirmation number from the testing company.*

Please note: The name contained in the testing company scheduling system must exactly match the name with the candidate's identification. If the candidate's name does not exactly match, or the candidate does not bring correct evidence of identity or does not bring the required documentation (as outlined above), then the candidate **will not** be permitted to sit the Level 2 and will forfeit their examination fee.

Please note: If a candidate's name, address, e-mail, or passport details (passport number and/or expiry date) change during the time the candidate is eligible to sit Level 2, it is the candidate's responsibility to contact the Medical Council in writing either by email or by post. It is advisable to give as much notice as possible, in case a New Letter of Authorisation and/or admission card is required to be sent to the candidate.

Candidates should ensure that their personal information on their Letter of Authorisation and admission card matches their current, valid passport.

Candidates should not bring any medical equipment or writing implements with them to the Level 2. The Level 2 is closed book: candidates are not allowed to consult any material during the examination. No testing materials will be provided, except for the standard "scratch paper" that candidates may use for making rough notes during the examination. Candidates will receive the standard 6 sheets in a booklet.

Candidates should pay careful attention to the information provided by the Examination centre and ensure that they strictly adhere to their instructions and regulations/policy guidelines at all times.



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4.4.c. Information about the examination centre

i. Travel arrangements

Candidates must make their own provisions in relation to travel arrangements. Candidates are advised to allow for any transportation delays (i.e. heavy/rush hour traffic and delays in public transport) and unfamiliarity of the surroundings when planning their journey and time of arrival at the Examination centre. Public parking spaces (limited) may be available at/nearby certain examination venues. Further information regarding transportation in Ireland is found in 9.6 "Where can one obtain information about transportation in Ireland?".

ii. Refreshment arrangements

Refreshments are not normally allowed to be brought or consumed during the Level 2, though this will depend on the examination venue.

iii. Toilet facilities

Although toilet breaks are permitted during the Level 2, in an effort to minimise disruption candidates are requested to visit the toilets before the exam commences. Candidates visiting the toilets during the exam will be escorted by an invigilator or as per arrangements at the individual examination venue.

iv. Smoking arrangements

Smoking is forbidden in enclosed places of work (e.g. office blocks, various buildings) in Ireland. Smoking is **NOT** permitted in the exam hall or adjacent areas (e.g. toilets). Candidates will **NOT** be permitted to leave the building for a smoke break during the exam. It may be possible to smoke in a designated outdoor smoking area outside the examination venue, but this facility is solely at the discretion of the examination venue provider. For candidates sitting their Level 2 in Egypt, India or Pakistan, candidates should abide by arrangements at the individual examination venue.

v. Storing of personal belongings

Mobile phones, blackberry, notes, textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, palm pilots, USB, memory sticks and all other electronic devices are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** from the examination centre. **Ideally candidates should not bring such devices with them.** Mobile phones or other electronic communications devices should **NOT** be left powered on within the vicinity of the examination centre and should be left **SWITCHED OFF**.

At registration, candidates will be asked to deposit any such devices and other personal belongings either to staff of the examination centre or into a locker provided. Please note that no responsibility can be taken for lost or stolen items.

Where the examination centre do not have secure areas to store personal items, any coats, bags or other item(s) brought into the examination centre should be deposited as directed by the invigilator(s).

vi. Waiting arrangements

Candidates are advised that it will not be possible for the Examination centre to facilitate waiting spouses, relatives or friends before, during or after the Level 2. Candidates sitting the Level 2 should plan to meet them elsewhere after the examination.



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4.4.d. Adverse Circumstances which affect the Conduct of the Examination

If any adverse circumstances affect the conduct of the examination for any candidate(s), the Examination centre Manager will take such action as they think fit. After the Level 2, the Examination centre Manager will report to the Medical Council. The Medical Council will consider the effect of the circumstances and take any further action they think appropriate. If necessary, the matter will be brought further to the PRES Sub-Committee. The PRES Sub-Committee will consider the effect of the circumstances and take any further action they think appropriate.

4.4.e. Cheating and misconduct – Level 2

It is important to note that cheating in all its forms and misconduct is deemed to be a major disciplinary offence in the Medical Council's Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES), and as such serious penalties may be imposed. Cheating in an examination is defined as the use, possession, or attempted use, of unauthorised material, unauthorised collaboration or attempted collaboration, copying or attempted copying. Misconduct in an examination is defined as unacceptable or immoral behaviour that is not in accordance with accepted moral or professional standards.

Please note the following are STRICTLY PROHIBITED and are deemed a DISCIPLINARY OFFENCE:

Cheating

- a) that a candidate brings one or more of the following with them to the examination centre - mobile phone(s), notes, textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, palm pilots and all other electronic devices;
- b) that a candidate's mobile phone(s) or other electronic communications devices is/are left powered on within the vicinity of the examination centre;
- c) that a candidate removes from the examination venue, any examination rough work paper/"scratch paper", whether used or unused, or other supplied material;
- d) that a candidate writes down or copies details of questions, by any means, to take out of the examination venue;
- e) that a candidate consults any materials or mobile phones or other electronic communications devices outside the examination room during periods of absence (i.e. toilet break) while the examination is in progress;
- f) that in cases of impersonation, the matter of the impersonator and the impersonated will be reported directly to the Council of Medical Council, as it is an offence under Section 41 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 "if the person makes or causes to be made any false declaration or misrepresentation for the purpose of obtaining registration".

Misconduct

- g) that a candidate aids, or attempts to aid, another candidate, or obtain, or attempt to obtain, any assistance from another candidate, or communicate in any other way with another candidate in the examination venue;
- h) that a candidate uses, attempts to use, assists another to use or attempts to assist another to use any other unfair, improper or dishonest method to gain advantage in any part of the PRES;
- i) that a candidate communicates with the examination centre or Medical Council staff either before, during or after the examination regarding the possible outcome of their grades;



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- j) that a candidate whose conduct or behaviour at an examination is thought to cause disturbance to other candidates or affecting the proper running of the Level 3 (or other examinations that may be taking place in the examination centre);
- k) that a candidate is involved in the theft or concealment of any material which is the property of the Medical Council or the Examination centre venue;
- l) any other form of cheating and/or misconduct not outlined above.

If a candidate does any of these actions they will be reported to the Medical Council's Examination Board by the testing company (apart from f). The Medical Council reserves the right to withhold publication of the results of an examination candidate suspected of having been involved in any irregularity or misconduct in connection with a Level 2, pending the completion of investigations into the alleged irregularity or misconduct.

4.4.f. Sanctions/enforcements

During an examination;

- if any candidate is found to be in possession of any material/electronic aids, the candidate will be issued immediately with a verbal warning from the testing companies invigilator and the material/electronic device confiscated.
- a candidate may be removed from the examination room if by their conduct they disrupt the examination.

A written report will be drafted and signed by the testing company's invigilator and countersigned by a witness to the event. This report will be forwarded to the Medical Council immediately and without delay. If the misconduct is severe enough, a meeting of the PRES Sub-Committee will be called.

The PRES Sub-Committee may, in its absolute discretion,

- decide not to take any action in relation to the alleged offending conduct;
- request explanation, comments and/or further information in writing or in person by the Candidate;
- impose penalties on the Candidate.

The penalties that the PRES Sub-Committee may recommend to impose on a candidate include, without limitation:

- no penalty;
- awarding the candidate a zero mark (or failure) for the whole Examination;
- expulsion from the examination process; for a certain period as decided by the Board;
- inform the Council of the Medical Council for further disciplinary/registration actions may be taken.

Within a reasonable period after the PRES Sub-Committee meeting, the candidate will be given a written notice of the decision by the PRES Sub-Committee concerning the alleged offending conduct. The candidate may, within one calendar month of the issue of the notice, appeal in writing to the PRES Sub-Committee against the decision. The appeal should be supported with relevant information or evidence.



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4.5. AFTER THE LEVEL 2

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 2 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

4.5.a. Results

The Medical Council will notify all candidates **by letter** about their results in Level 2 as soon as possible after the Level 2 (approximately two to three weeks after the exam). The results are issued as a Pass or Fail. The results of candidates who were successful in their Level 2 will be placed on the Medical Council website, using the Medical Council reference number, when the results letters are sent by post. [Click here for the most current Level 2 results.](#) No diploma or certificate will be issued to successful candidates.

4.5.b. Breakdown of Results

Since mid-2010, candidates who were unsuccessful in the Level 2 receive a breakdown of their result in their results letter. This gives the candidate the number of questions they answered correctly, incorrectly and not answered. Under no circumstances will the breakdown be emailed to candidates.

Candidates who pass Level 2 will not be entitled to a breakdown of their marks.

4.5.c. Appeals

It is not possible to appeal Level 2 results.

4.5.d. How many times can someone attempt Level 2?

The Medical Council currently imposes a limit of **three attempts** at any Level of the examinations. Candidates attempting Level 2 have a two years period of eligibility from the date when they are declared eligible to sit PRES. If a candidate is unsuccessful in the Level 2, they may attempt the examination up to and including a maximum of three times, until they either **pass** the examination, they **fail three times** or their **eligibility expires**.

If a candidate is unsuccessful in their Level 2, **they must allow six weeks to lapse from their previous attempt before they are eligible to schedule/book their next Level 2.** For example, if a candidate sat and failed Level 2 that was held on 1st January, they will be ineligible to book the next Level 2 until a period of six weeks has elapsed from the date of Level 2 i.e. from 1st January to 12th February. On 12th February they would be eligible to schedule their next Level 2 (usually from 1pm Irish time onwards). Recognition of a candidate's eligibility will be automatic once the six weeks has elapsed, so it is not necessary to contact the Medical Council.

i.e.

1 st January	Candidate sat Level 2
8 th January	1 week after sitting Level 2
15 th January	2 weeks after sitting Level 2
22 nd January	3 weeks after sitting Level 2
29 th January	4 weeks after sitting Level 2
5 th February	5 weeks after sitting Level 2
12 th February	6 weeks after sitting Level 2 Candidate is now eligible to book their Level 2 again



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Candidates do not need to receive a new eligibility number/admission card/Letter of Authorisation from the Medical Council once six weeks has elapsed. Their eligibility number is their Medical Council reference number which remains the same throughout the registration process with the Medical Council. Candidates do not need to get another Letter of Authorisation and admission card from the Medical Council to schedule their next Level 2. They should continue to use the one that they used previously. Duplicate Letter of Authorisation and/or admission card will only be issued to candidates in *exceptional* circumstances.

4.5.e. Reference Number and Change of address

The reference number allocated by the Medical Council must be quoted in all telephone calls, emails and other correspondence relating to PRES.

The postal address specified by the candidate on their application form for PRES, or subsequent change of postal address received while at Level 1, will be used for correspondence. Any subsequent change of address must be immediately notified to the Medical Council either online on the Medical Council website, in writing or by email to the Medical Council. If the address is changed by email or letter, the date of birth of the candidate must be included as a security measure. Failure to notify the Medical Council of a change in address may result in unnecessary delays in candidates obtaining their Letter of Authorisation and admission card and/or receiving their Level 2 results.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they provide the Medical Council with the necessary reference number and contact details.



5.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 3 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

5.1.a. What is Level 3?

Level 3 is a clinical based assessment. Level 3 is the second part of the PRES examination. Candidates must pass Level 2 **before** being permitted to sit Level 3. Communication, Interpretation and Practical Skills are examined.

The Level 3 is primarily a test of clinical skills in the main clinical disciplines of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, and Medicine/General Practice. It is based on the Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice as devised by Medical Council (refer to 4. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice for further information.)

5.1.b. Where can Level 3 be taken?

Level 3 is **usually** offered in a centre in Ireland, either in Dublin or in a major provincial centre i.e. Cork or Galway. There are currently no overseas centres for Level 3.

Council reserves the right not to hold an examination if there are insufficient candidate numbers. Candidates will be moved to the next available examination date.

5.1.c. How does one apply for and find out about Level 3 dates?

The Council will provide information about Level 3 dates as soon as it becomes available. The dates will be posted on the Medical Council website under PRES dates. The Medical Council endeavours to give as much notice as possible prior to the date of the Level 3. The Level 3 is usually held two to three times per year depending on demand. [Click here for the current Level 3 dates.](#)

Only candidates who have passed Level 2 are eligible to apply for a place in Level 3. These candidates will also be informed by email and by post at the same time as dates are posted on the Medical Council website. Therefore, it is important to keep the Medical Council informed of any changes in postal/email address. The Level 3 offer letter and application form are posted to every eligible candidate. It is also emailed to each candidate. The Application form is also available on the Medical Council's website (see link in previous paragraph).

5.1.d. Level 3 Validity

A pass in Level 2 is valid for a period of **two years** from the date of passing. **Candidates must pass Level 3 within two years from the date of passing Level 2.** If a candidate DOES NOT pass Level 3 within two years or fails Level 3 THREE times, they should refer to 7. "How does one reapply to sit the PRES Exam?" for further information.



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5.2. BEFORE THE LEVEL 3

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 3 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

5.2.a. How does one book a place in the Level 3?

The numbers of Level 3 places available are limited for each examination and a 'first come, first served' policy will usually apply.

The Level 3 offer letter, Level 3 application form and further information (e.g. Important Notice about the Level 3) regarding the Level 3 are posted to every eligible candidate. The contents of the Level 3 offer letter are also emailed to each candidate along with the attachment of the Level 3 application form and further information. The Level 3 application form and further information is also available on the Medical Council's website.

Once an eligible candidate has received their Level 3 offer letter they should read and follow the instructions in:

- the Level 3 offer letter
- the Important Notice about the Level 3, and
- the Level 3 application form.

Candidates are advised to read note and understand the most up-to-date version of the following documentation (available on the Medical Council's website) prior to completing the Level 3 application form:

- The Guide to the Application Procedure and Registration Rules for Registration in the Trainee Specialist, Specialist or General Divisions of the Register of Medical Practitioners
- Medical Council Registration Rules
- This the Pre-Registration Examination Handbook
- The Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners

The specified closing date is clearly stated on the application form and on the Medical Council website. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Medical Council, at its discretion, accept applications beyond the specified closing date.

All candidates who are eligible to sit the Level 3 MUST complete the Level 3 application form (indicating whether they wish/do not wish to sit the Level 3) and return it to the Medical Council.

- All candidates who are eligible to sit the Level 3 should complete Section 1.
- Candidates who wish to sit the Level 3 should ALSO complete Sections 2A, 3 and 4.
- Candidates who do not wish to sit the Level 3 should ALSO complete 2B.

Level 3 application forms should be completed and returned to the Medical Council either:

- by **post** addressed to: *Level 3 Examination, Education and Training Section, Medical Council, Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2, Ireland*

or

- by **fax** to: 00353-1-4983155

This information may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook. March 2011



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i) IF THE CANDIDATE WISHES TO SIT THE LEVEL 3

- ↓ Level 3 places are allocated on a strictly first on a first-come-first-served basis on receipt of a fully completed Level 3 application form AND payment going through. It is advisable that eligible candidates submit their Level 3 application to the Medical Council without delay. Candidates risk not being allocated a place in the Level 3 if their application is received after allocations for places have been made, if a candidates application form is not fully completed or is illegible, or if their payment does not go through. Candidates should ensure that they complete the application form carefully and accurately.
- ↓ If a candidate wishes to apply for a Level 3, they should complete the relevant sections of the Level 3 application form and return it (by post/fax) with the application fee to the Medical Council as soon as possible, on or before specified closing date. They must personally sign the application form. Application forms signed by third parties will be rejected. The application form and fee should be posted if the candidate is paying by bank draft, postal order or cheque or faxed if the candidate completes the credit/laser card payment section on the application form. If the candidate is faxing this form, they are not required to send the original form, as a double booking may occur.
- ↓ When an application is received, it is reviewed before being sent to the Finance Department for the payment to be processed.
- ↓ Once received back from the Finance Department the candidate will be contacted by email.
- ↓ If a candidate is allocated a place, an email will be sent to them confirming this.
- ↓ The candidate's Level 3 admission card, Level 3 admission letter and other relevant details i.e. examination venue information, withdrawal form, or other important notifications, will be posted to them separately as soon as possible after the processing of their application.

The confirmation of a place usually takes between 7-10 working days.

If a candidate is submitting their application by fax or post, we would request that they please refrain from telephoning or emailing the Medical Council regarding confirmation of receipt of their application as this will delay the process of processing the Level 3 applications.

ii) IF THE CANDIDATE DOES NOT WISH TO SIT THE LEVEL 3

If a candidate **DOES NOT WISH** to apply for a Level 3, they should complete the relevant Sections of the Level 3 Application form, and personally sign the form. They should return the Application form **WITHOUT DELAY** to the Medical Council either by post or by fax at the contact details given.

5.2.b. What happens if there are no available places to sit the exam that I want?

The Medical Council cannot guarantee a place in the Level 3(s) being held.

Due to the demand and supply of Level 3 places, places in the Level 3(s) may be filled before the Level 3 deadline.

If a candidate's complete Level 3 application is received after allocations for the Level 3 have been made, the candidate may be

i) Placed on a standby list (if there are no more places available for the one Level 3)

OR

ii) Allocated a place in the list for their second or subsequent preference (if there is more than one day for sitting the Level 3). This does not guarantee an automatic place in the other Level 3 venues. The candidate may also be placed on a standby list.



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i) Standby places

Occasionally, due to the demand and supply of Level 3 places, the Level 3(s) may be filled before the deadline. If this is the case, an announcement will be made on the Medical Council's website and all candidates who have NOT been allocated a place will be contacted by email to let them know about this situation, and also to place them on a standby list.

If candidates who are eligible to sit the Level 3 wish to apply for a place on the standby list for a Level 3, they will be asked to complete the STANDBY LEVEL 3 application form (which will be located on the Medical Council's website under Level 3 when the standby announcement is made) and return it to the Medical Council.

Please be advised that a candidate having their name on the standby list does not guarantee that the candidate will be offered a place at the Level 3. If there are withdrawals/cancellations at the Level 3, it may be possible to offer doctors on the standby list a place. The Medical Council cannot predict if or when withdrawals/cancellations may be received.

If a candidate is offered a place from standby, they will be given a limited period of time, usually 24 hours, but less as the Level 3 approaches, to respond. Candidates on the standby list will be initially contacted by telephone, and then by email, so candidates should ensure that all their contact details are accurate and up-to-date.

In the event that a candidate is offered a place from standby and they wish to accept this offer, they will be required to **pay the Level 3 fee immediately** (refer to Section 4.2.b. regarding current fees), and a candidate's place in the examination will not be guaranteed until payment is received. If a candidate is offered a place and fails to respond within the specified time, the place will be offered to another doctor from the standby list.

ii) Second or subsequent preference

If there are a number of different Level 3 dates, the Medical Council cannot guarantee that a candidate will be placed in their first preference of the Level 3. If the candidate is not allocated a place in their preferred Level 3 date/venue, they will be placed in the list for their second and then subsequent preference (ONLY IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE DATE/VENUE FOR SITTING THE LEVEL 3). They may also be placed on a standby list. This does not guarantee an automatic place in the other Level 3 dates/venues. It is very unlikely that there will be any vacant places in the Level 3 venues.

5.2.c. Examination cancellation

The Medical Council also reserves the right not to hold an examination at the listed date if there are insufficient candidate numbers or if there are circumstances beyond our control. Candidates will be moved to the next available examination date.



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5.2.d. Fees

Click here for the current Level 3 fee (excluding credit card charges). The Level 3 fee should be made payable to the Medical Council in Euro either by bank draft, cheque, postal order, credit card (Visa and Mastercard only) or Lasercard. **CASH IS NOT ACCEPTED AS A MEANS OF PAYMENT.**

- **Bank draft**

(Candidates should quote their Reference number on the back of their bank draft).
Bank drafts should be made payable to the Medical Council.

NOTE: Bank drafts are acceptable provided:

- a) they are in Euro and are payable at an Irish Bank in Ireland.
(If they are in Euro but payable at a foreign bank these will be returned and the application will be rejected as they will incur bank charges which of course differ from day to day.)*
- b) they are in Sterling and are payable at a British Bank in the United Kingdom*
- c) they are in U.S. dollars and are payable at an American Bank in the United States.*

The Medical Council is unable to advise on currency exchange rates. The current local exchange rate will be quoted by a bank when any bank draft is purchased. Any additional bank charges will be the responsibility of the applicant and must be paid in full by the candidate prior to sitting the Level 3.

- **Cheque**

(Candidates should quote their Reference number on the back of their cheque).
Cheques should be made payable to the Medical Council.

NOTE:

- a) Irish Bank cheques are acceptable and must be made out in Euro.*
- b) Sterling cheques are acceptable and must be made out in Sterling and payable at a British Bank in the United Kingdom.*
- c) U.S. dollar cheques are acceptable and must be made out in U.S. dollars and payable at an American Bank in the U.S.*

- **Postal order (Irish)**

(Candidates should quote their Reference number on the back of their postal order).
Postal orders should be made payable to the Medical Council.

- **Credit card or Laser card**

(Payment by Credit card or Laser card may be made by completing the Level 3 application form).

NOTE:

- a) A fee of 2% will apply to all VISA and Master Card payments and €0.25 for all Laser Card transactions.*
- b) Candidates should ensure that the correct numbers/digits is entered in the credit card payment section, that their credit card will not be declined and that they have sufficient funds available in their account.*

Each time a candidate attempts Level 3, the current Level 3 fee (excluding credit card charges) will apply.

In the event of a third party paying the fees for the Level 3 on a candidate's behalf, and the fees being refunded, the candidate will be issued with the refund and not the third party.



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5.2.e. How does one withdraw/cancel their place?

If a candidate is allocated a place in Level 3 but they are unable to attend, they **SHOULD** formally withdraw/cancel their place from the Level 3. This will allow other candidates who are in a standby list to have the opportunity to apply to sit the Level 3.

Candidate's wishing to withdraw/cancel should complete the LEVEL 3 WITHDRAWAL FORM which they received with their Level 3 admission card and letter (and which is also available on the Medical Council's website under PRES Level 3), and return it to the Medical Council either by post or by fax at the details located on the LEVEL 3 WITHDRAWAL FORM. Emails or telephone conversations with the Medical Council is NOT a sufficient means of withdrawing and will NOT be accepted as such. The Level 3 fee (less service charge) will be forfeited unless the Medical Council receives prior notification on or before the specified closing date. Please note that the Medical Council cannot assist candidates with their visa applications.

Transfers to another Level 3 in another venue/session or the next Level 3 are not permitted. Candidates must formally withdraw and re-apply with the Level 3 application and fee when they wish to take the Level 3.

5.2.f. Late withdrawal or absence on the day of a Level 3

If a candidate withdraws after the deadline for withdrawal of a Level 3 they will forfeit the full Level 3 fee paid. The Level 3 fee paid will not be transferred to another Level 3.

Should the candidate arrive late and is not admitted to sit the Level 3 at the time/group stated on their admission letter, they will not be able to sit in a Level 3 later that day/next day (if applicable/available). The Level 3 fee paid will not be transferred to another Level 3.

If a candidate is absent on the time and date of the Level 3, they will forfeit the full Level 3 fee paid.

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5.3. THE LEVEL 3

5.3.a. What is the format of the Level 3?

Level 3 is primarily a test of clinical skills, knowledge and attitude in the main clinical disciplines of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, Medicine and General Practice. The Level 3 is based on the Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice as devised by Medical Council (refer to 4. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice for further information.)

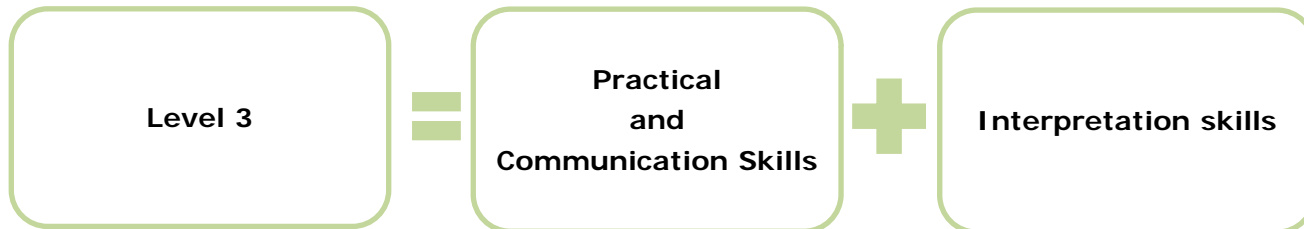
The cases that are used represent the kinds of patients and medical conditions normally encountered during medical practice in Ireland. Most cases are specifically designed to elicit through the process of examining a candidate's practical, communication, and interpretation skills which demonstrates the examinee's clinical ability.

There are three types of skills being assessed namely **Practical**, **Communication** and **Interpretation**.

In the current Level 3 format, Practical and Communication Skills are being held together and the Interpretation skills are being examined as a written paper either on the same day or on another separate day.

The Level 3 is split into TWO:

- **Practical and Communication Skills** are examined in ONE clinical examination.
- **Interpretation skills** are examined in ONE paper based written examination.



In the **Practical and Communication Skills**, candidates rotate through a series of clinical scenarios or skill stations, so that for any one station all candidates are assessed on the same issues by the same examiners.

In the **Interpretation skills**, candidates are being examined on the same issues as a written paper.

Further details are available in the following pages.



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i) Practical skills

This assesses the candidate's practical skills ability, such as performing a physical examination, demonstrating a practical procedure, using diagnostic/therapeutic instruments, or examination of a patient's mental state. These practical skills may include:

Assessment of a patient's mental state	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing this.</i>
Clinical Procedural skills	<i>The candidate will be expected to demonstrate clinical procedural skills which may include to perform / take / use auriscope, blood pressure (BP), an electrocardiogram (ECG), ophthalmoscope, peak flow rate, etc.</i>
Injection Techniques	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing these skills correctly and safely.</i>
Inserting a cannula	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing these skills correctly and safely.</i>
Pharmacology and Prescribing Medication	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing these skills correctly and safely.</i>
Physical examination of an adult or child	<i>Candidates must focus only on the physical examination requested. Apart from the initial introduction, no marks will be awarded for anything other than physical examination. Candidates will need to explain to the examiner what they are doing and why, as they proceed. If equipment that a candidate needs is not on display they should indicate to the examiner what they would use, how they would use it and why. Invasive procedure should not be performed on simulated patients but should usually be completed on anatomical model.</i>
Suturing/dressing change	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing these skills correctly and safely.</i>
To demonstrate the ability to respond to emergency situations Emergency Cardiovascular Care (i.e. cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), BLS, ACLS, AED – this list is not exhaustive)	<i>The candidate will be assessed performing this skill correctly.</i>

Practical skills will usually be assessed using a simulated patient or anatomical model in a variety of simulated clinical situations. However, on occasion, genuine patients may be used.

Please note: these are given as examples and may or may not be part of the examination.

When a candidate enters a practical skills station they should give their exam label to the examiner who will place it on their answer sheet.

Candidate MUST use the hand gel provided if they have contact with patients or are performing practical skills.

If a candidate finishes a practical skills station before the time is over, they should not engage in small talk with their examiner/simulated patient/invigilator.



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ii) Communication skills

This assesses the candidate's ability to obtain a history, to demonstrate interviewing and communication skills and/or to apply clinical management skills with patients/relatives/children/healthcare professionals from a wide variety of demographic/cultural/religious/socio-political and ethnic dimensions/backgrounds. These communication skills may include:

Breaking bad news to a patient	<i>The candidate will be asked to convey "bad news" (such as an unfavourable outcome, unsatisfactory care or poor prognosis) to the patient demonstrating not only a knowledge of the subject but also an ability to communicate with empathy.</i>
Ethics	<i>The candidate should understand and apply the general principles as outlined in the Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners.</i>
Explaining diagnosis, investigation and treatment	<i>The candidate will be given information about a specific condition or the result of an investigation and will be expected to communicate this information to the patient in the context of a clinical situation. The candidate may also have to explain options available i.e. the option not to treat, and the opportunities available for further information including a second opinion. It may also include an assessment of a patient's mental state.</i>
Patient management plan/ education exercises/ health education promotion/ Preventive strategies	<i>With a patient, relative or colleague.</i>
Seeking / obtaining informed consent for standard procedures	<i>The candidate will be advised as to the specific procedure the patient is to undergo. The candidate will be asked to obtain consent from the patient for the procedure.</i>
Taking a history	<i>The candidate will be expected to demonstrate an ability to obtain a focussed medical history with relevant key points, in a variety of clinical situations, appropriate to the clinical case i.e. fit for purpose.</i>
Working in a team	<i>The candidate will be expected to provide information to the simulated patient who is acting as a member of the team (nurse, paramedic, other colleague, senior medical colleague (i.e. registrar or consultant)) providing appropriate information for the clinical scenario presented.</i>
Written communication skills	<i>The candidate will be expected to demonstrate an ability to show their written communication skills through medical records, discharge letters, investigation request form or clinical letters to medical colleagues.</i>

Communication skills will usually be assessed using observed behaviour during role-play in a variety of simulated clinical situations. However, on occasion, genuine patients may be used.

Please note: these are given as examples and may or may not be part of the examination.

While the communication skills stations last seven minutes and candidates are assessed on their interaction with simulated patients, we do not suggest that tasks such as breaking bad news would be completed within the time allowed in the real clinical environment.

When a candidate enters the communication skills stations they should give their exam label to the examiner who will place it on their answer sheet.

If a candidate finishes a communication skills stations before the time is over, they should not engage in small talk with their examiner/simulated patient/invigilator.



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iii) Interpretation skills

This assesses the candidate's ability to be able to interpret results from tests and procedures. This may involve the candidate interpreting:

An Electrocardiogram (ECG)	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>
Pharmacology and Prescribing Medication	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>
Laboratory tests	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>
Paediatric growth charts	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>
Photographs	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>
X-rays	<i>The candidate will be assessed to interpret this correctly.</i>

Please note: these are given as examples and may or may not be part of the examination.

Candidates are being examined on the same issues as a written paper. Candidates will have to answer the Interpretation questions on an answer sheet.

When a candidate commences the Interpretation skills, they should stick their exam label on their answer sheet and hand their completed answer sheet to the invigilator in charge.

If a candidate finishes before the time is over, they should not engage in small talk with other candidates/examiners/invigilators.



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5.3.b. Pass Mark

Each station/question is marked out of a total of 20 marks.

It is important to note that to score the highest marks it will be necessary for a candidate to demonstrate the clinical skills, knowledge and attitude.

In addition to being given a maximum mark of 20 for each station/question, candidates will be awarded a separate, overall global rating for the station as follows:

- Fail
- Borderline fail
- Borderline pass
- Pass

Using information from the marks out of 20 for each practical and communication skills station and out of 20 for each individual interpretation skills question, and the overall global rating for each station/question, a mark will be calculated out of a total mark of 360. The minimum mark required to pass the Level 3 overall is 180 marks. In addition to this minimum mark, a candidate must achieve a minimum level of competence (60 marks or above) in each of the three types of skills (communication, interpretation and practical) to be awarded a pass in the Level 3.

(Please note that this score will be subject to review and candidates are advised to consult the website for the latest information).

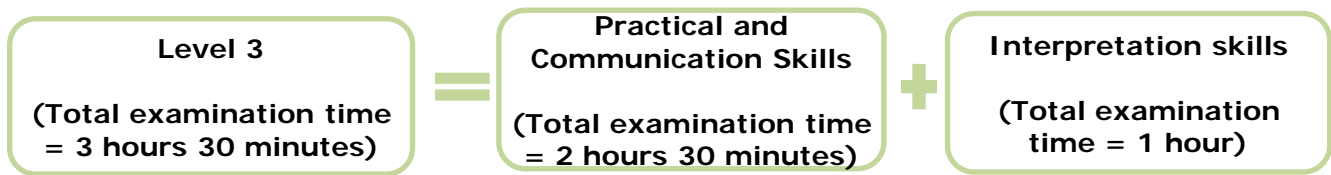
However, candidates should note the following:

- If a candidate has been deemed to have made a **clinical error that compromises the patient** (e.g. not properly clearing the airway at the start of a resuscitation procedure) or that **endangers** themselves, their patient or their surroundings (e.g. not disposing of hazardous material e.g. sharps in the correct manner), it will result in the candidate **FAILING THAT SKILL STATION**.
- If an examiner has concerns regarding a candidate's professional and/or ethical behaviour at a station, it will be recorded as a critical incident and the examiner will write their concern on the candidate's answer sheet. This will lead to a review of the candidate's performance overall by the Examination Board on an individual basis where warranted.
- This exam is NOT negatively marked.
- There is **NO** compensation **BETWEEN** interpretation skills, practical skills and communication skills.
- There **IS** compensation only **WITHIN** the range of the interpretation skills, practical skills and communication skills.
- **To pass the Level 3, candidates must pass (i.e. minimum mark or above) each of the three types of skills (i.e. Communication, Interpretation and Practical) as well as obtaining an overall pass in the Level 3.**

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5.3.c. Time

The Level 3 is split into TWO format of examination which examines clinical skills.

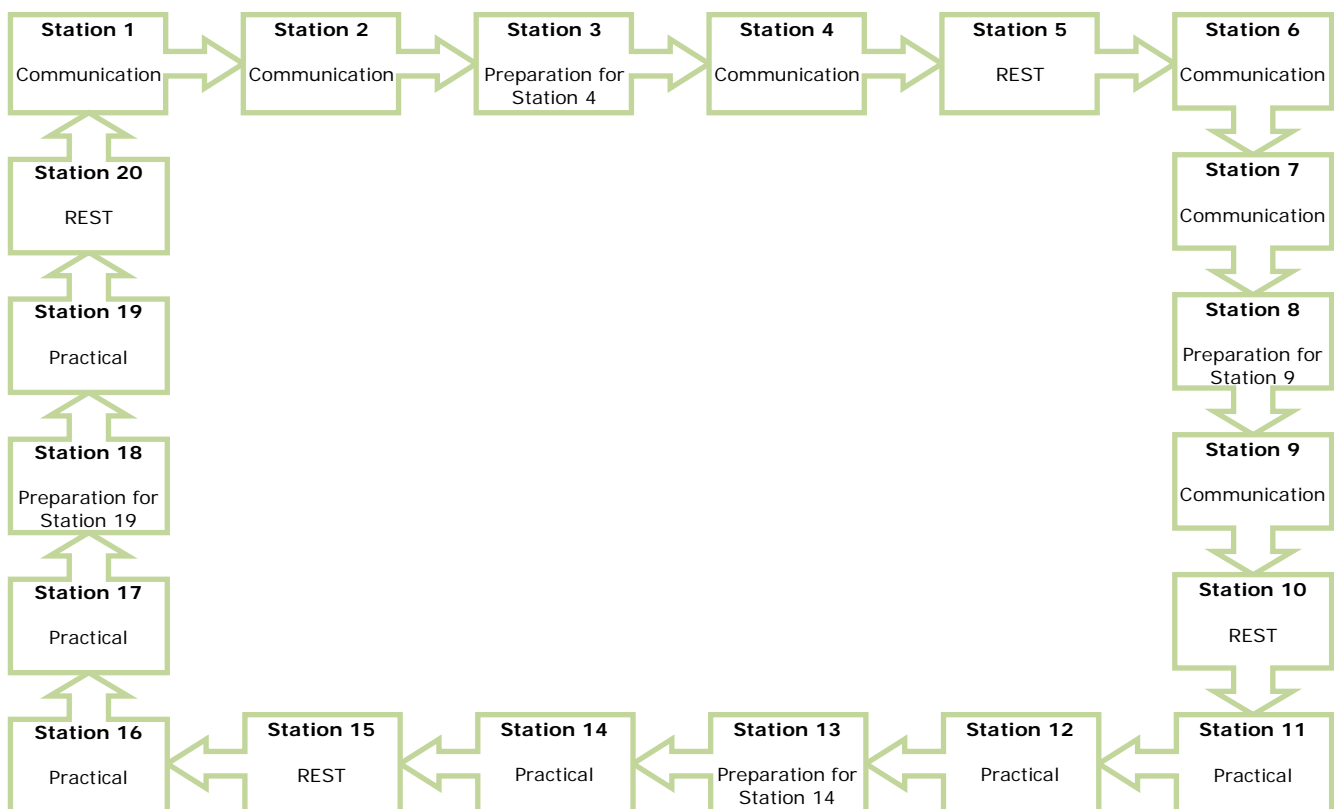


Practical and Communication Skills are examined in ONE clinical examination.

Interpretation skills are examined in ONE paper based written examination.

i) Practical and Communication Skills

- This consists of ONE practical examination
- The examination will last 2 hours 30 minutes
- This consists of 12 “active” stations, 4 rest stations and 4 preparatory stations. At a preparatory station candidates have to read instructions/information regarding the next station.
- Each “active” station is marked out of 20 marks.
- Each station is **seven** minutes in duration.
- A bell will ring at the start of the exam. A bell will ring at *six* minutes to indicate one minute remaining. When the second bell rings at seven minutes, the candidate has *30 seconds* to progress on to the next station. The bell will ring again to start the next station.
- Candidates must continue around the circuit from station to station in consecutive order. A candidate at the last station i.e. (station 20) proceeds on the station 1, and continues around the circuit in consecutive fashion, until they have completed all the stations.





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ii) Interpretation skills

- This consists of ONE paper based written examination
- The examination will last 1 hour
- This consists of 6 questions.
- Each question is marked out of 20 marks.

5.3.d. Common mistakes that candidates for Level 3 make

- Not reading the stations/papers instructions carefully or misinterpreting the instructions. Candidates should not assume that they know what the station/paper is about. Candidates should read the instructions carefully and respond in the correct manner. If candidates are asked to take a patient's history, they will not gain any marks from discussing a management plan or explaining a diagnosis with a patient.
- Not listening to or understanding a patient's response and therefore missing important information from the patient.
- Asking too many questions, talking too much or talking at the patient. Candidates are expected to speak to the patient in language that the patient will understand and the manner that they would expect. The way a candidate communicates with the patient tells both the patient and the examiner a lot about the candidate's approach with the patient. It is also important to allow the patient an opportunity to ask questions to make sure they understand.
- Giving generic information or set phrases. If candidates are asked to provide a patient with information or advice relevant to their specific problem, they should not give general statements regarding that problem. Candidates also learn and use set phrases designed to show understanding but use them in the wrong context.
- Missing scores on physical examination. Candidates should say what they are doing when examining a patient as this will aid the examiner in marking the candidate. If candidate does not discuss what they are doing when examining the patient, the examiner is left wondering whether the candidate knows what they are doing or whether they are doing what they intended.
- In practical stations, candidates sometimes do not take into account the standard precautions which would endanger themselves, their patient or their surroundings (i.e. not disposing of hazardous material e.g. sharps). This is a serious matter and will result in the candidate FAILING THAT SKILL STATION.
- Leaving or attempting to leave the communication/practical station at the first warning bell at six minutes. Each communication/practical station is seven minutes in duration. A warning bell rings at six minutes to indicate one minute remaining. Only when the second bell rings at seven minutes, does the candidate move on to the next station. They have 30 seconds in which to do so. If the candidate is finished early at the station they should sit down/stand by the side and wait for the seven minute bell to ring.
- Incidents of unprofessional behaviour identified by the examiners. (Examples of unprofessional behaviour include: lack of respect for patient or examiner, inappropriate utterances or actions, rough or inappropriate treatment/handling of patient).

It is in the interest of the candidate to avoid these mistakes.



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5.4. ON THE DAY OF THE LEVEL 3

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 3 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

5.4.a. What time should one arrive at the Examination Venue?

Candidates are normally required to present themselves at the Examination venue for registration one hour prior to the starting time of the Level 3 (unless otherwise stated). **CANDIDATES SHOULD ARRIVE ON TIME AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER.**

Candidates may be asked to arrive or remain at the Examination venue for a short period of time before/after their Level 3 starts/concludes in order to ensure security of the examinations process. This is because candidates are not permitted to meet/have any form of contact with, the group of candidates that took the examination in another/earlier group. See 5.4.d. *Detaining of candidates before/after their Level 3 for further information.*

The Level 3 itself normally lasts for approximately 3 hours 30 minutes.

- Practical and Communication skills = 2 hours 30 minutes
- Interpretation skills = 1 hour

In total the candidate may be at the examination venue(s) over ONE OR TWO SEPARATE DAYS for approximately five hours in total.

Exact details of the Level 3 will be given to candidates in their admission letter. The Level 3 are expected to run to time, however it is suggested that candidates allow time for unforeseen delays when booking tickets for a return journey.

5.4.b. What should one bring to the Examination Centre?

On the day of their Level 3, **candidates must bring with them the following:**

i) For admittance into the Level 3 Practical and Communication Skills AND Interpretation skills:

- their **admission card** (which will be sent to the candidate once they have been allocated a place)
- their **admission letter** (which will be sent to the candidate once they have been allocated a place)
- their **current, valid Passport**, which is the same evidence of identity as shown on the admission card. Only candidates who have refugee status can use their Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) Card, as a form of identity for this examination. No other evidence of identity is acceptable.

IT IS THE CANDIDATES PREROGATIVE TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THESE ITEMS WITH THEM FOR ADMITTANCE TO THE EXAMINATION.

Candidates presenting without these three documents will not be permitted to sit Level 3. In that event, they must pay the full Level 3 fee again to reschedule their Level 3.



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ii) For sitting the Level 3 *Interpretation skills* itself:

- their own pens/pencils (and eraser if considered necessary)
- their own watch (showing seconds)

IT IS THE CANDIDATES PREROGATIVE TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THESE ITEMS WITH THEM FOR THE EXAMINATION. SPARE PENS / PENCILS / WATCHES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR CANDIDATES USE.

iii) For sitting the Level 3 *Practical and Communication skills* itself:

- their own pens/pencils (and eraser if considered necessary)
- their own watch (showing seconds)
- their own white coat (which they will wear during this examination)
- their own stethoscope (which they will use during this examination)

IT IS THE CANDIDATES PREROGATIVE TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THESE ITEMS WITH THEM FOR THE EXAMINATION. SPARE PENS / PENCILS / WATCHES / WHITE COATS / STETHOSCOPES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR CANDIDATES USE.

Candidates may also bring with them a tendon hammer, tuning fork and ophthalmoscope.

All (other) equipment necessary for the relevant Practical and Communication skills stations will be provided for use should equipment be required.

Mobile phones, notes, textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, palm pilots and all other electronic devices are STRICTLY PROHIBITED from the examination centre. Mobile phones or other electronic communications devices should NOT be left powered on within the vicinity of the examination centre and should be left SWITCHED OFF in the holding room for registration.

5.4.c. What happens at Examination Registration?

- ↓ Candidates are required to present themselves at the Examination venue for registration on time at the time stated on their Level 3 admission letter. This is usually one hour prior to the starting time of the Level 3 (unless otherwise stated).
- ↓ Candidates are usually advised to meet at the reception at the venue. Information and directions to the Registration Room may be shown at reception, in which case the candidate should go to that room at the time stated for Registration. If not, they should remain at reception at the time stated for Registration.
- ↓ At the time stated for Registration on their admission letter, candidates will be brought to a holding room for registration.
- ↓ At registration, candidates are asked to present to staff of the Medical Council their:
 - admission card
 - admission letter, and
 - current, valid Passport

They are also asked to sign the Level 3 Register.



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Mobile phones, other hand held electronic devices and laptop computers will be given to the Medical Council staff member immediately when they are in the Registration Room. They will be given back to candidates only after the Level 3 and only when they are released at the end of their Level 3 session. Please refer to 5.4.f.v. Storing of personal belongings for further information.

↓ Candidates will be given from staff of the Medical Council:

i) when sitting the Level 3 Interpretation skills itself

- their seat number
- exam labels (which has their name, Level 3 number and Medical Council reference number on it).
- Additional documentation (as circumstances depend)

ii) when sitting the Level 3 Practical and Communication skills itself:

- their starting place number
- a map/layout of the circuit (which shows the Type of Station i.e. Communication and Specialty of Station i.e. Psychiatry)
- exam labels (which has their name, Level 3 number and Medical Council reference number on it).
- a form showing the candidate's current postal address that the Medical Council has. Candidates are asked to confirm their most up-to-date details on this form. Failure to notify the Medical Council of a change in address may result in unnecessary delays in sending out their Level 3 results.
- Additional documentation (as circumstances depend)

↓ Candidates will be asked to attach one of their examination labels onto their clothing as a means of identification for the duration of the Level 3.

↓ Candidates will be given brief instructions on how to complete the examination by a member of the Medical Council staff, and usually the Examination Coordinator, prior to the commencement of the Level 3. It is very important that candidates listen carefully to the information that they are given at the briefing and also follow any instructions that they are given by the invigilators during the Level 3.

↓ In an effort to minimise disruption candidates are requested to visit the toilets before the Level 3 commences. Candidates may be permitted to use the toilets escorted to the toilet by an invigilator and only when given permission to do so.

↓ Once a candidate has been registered for their Level 3, they cannot leave the examination premises.

↓ Candidates will then be escorted to the examination centre where they will be asked to stand in front of a seat/station to await further instructions.

The Registration (signing in) process usually takes approximately 40 minutes. The instructions take approximately 5 minutes. Approximately and usually around 10 minutes before the start of the Level 3, as a group, the candidates for that group will be escorted to the examination centre where they will be asked to stand in front of a station/their seat to await further instructions. **IT IS THEREFORE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR CANDIDATES TO ARRIVE ON TIME AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER, TO ENSURE THE SMOOTH RUNNING AND TIMING OF THE EXAMINATION.**



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5.4.d. What should one wear to the Level 3?

Candidates should wear clothes which are appropriate for the clinical/hospital environment and for the treatment of patients. **Candidates should bring with them their own (clean) white coat, which they HAVE TO wear for the Level 3 Practical and Communication skills examination.**

For the Level 3 Interpretation skills examination, if not being held at the same time/day as the Level 3 Practical and Communication skills examination, candidates should wear clothes which are appropriate for the examination environment.

5.4.e. Detaining of candidates before/after their Level 3

- To ensure confidentiality and security of the Level 3, candidates may be detained for a period of time before or after their Level 3, until the next group have all arrived and have registered in the Registration Room or until the earlier group have completed their Level 3. This is because candidates are not permitted to meet/have any form of contact with the group of candidates that took the examination in an earlier group or have yet to take the examination.
- Candidates may be asked to remain at the Examination venue for a short period of time (usually 30 to 60 minutes) after the Level 3 concludes in order to ensure security of the examinations process.
- In some circumstances, candidates may be asked to arrive at the Examination venue more than one hour in advance of their Level 3 starts.
- Details of whether candidates are being detained before/after their Level 3 can be found in the timings of their admission letter.
- Light refreshments such as tea/coffee/biscuits/sandwiches may be provided, though this will depend on the examination venue.
- During detaining, candidates are confined to a waiting room and may not go outside that room for any reason (e.g. to leave the examination venue, go to car, wait for their family member/friend, etc.).
- Candidates may be permitted to use the toilets escorted to the toilet by an invigilator and only when given permission to do so.
- No electronic devices may be used during detaining, such as mobile telephones, palm pilots, laptops, etc.
- *Candidates should not ask Medical Council staff/invigilators that they have to leave immediately after their Level 3 and that they cannot wait or that they wish to have their electronic device returned before or during the detaining period, as Medical Council staff/invigilators will NOT accede to the request by the candidate.*



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5.4.f. Information about the examination centre

i. Travel arrangements

Candidates must make their own provisions in relation to travel arrangements. Candidates are advised to allow for any transportation delays (i.e. heavy/rush hour traffic and delays in public transport) and unfamiliarity of the surroundings when planning their journey and time of arrival at the Examination centre. Public parking spaces (limited) may be available at/nearby certain examination venues. Further information regarding transportation is found in Section 8.

ii. Refreshment arrangements

Drinking water will be provided during the Level 3 wherever possible, though this will depend on the examination venue. It will usually be located at the Communication and Practical skills "rest" stations. At certain examination venues/times, candidates may be asked to arrive early/remain at the Examination venue for a period of time before/after the Level 3 starts/concludes in order to ensure security of the examinations process. If this is the case, light refreshments such as tea/coffee/biscuits/sandwiches may be provided, though this will depend on the examination venue.

iii. Toilet facilities

In an effort to minimise disruption candidates are requested to visit the toilets before the Level 3 commences. As candidates are under examination conditions from when they are in the registration holding room until after the end of the Level 3, they will be escorted to the toilet by an invigilator. Toilet breaks may be permitted during the Level 3 at the discretion of the invigilator and only when candidates are at a Communication and Practical skills "rest station".

iv. Smoking arrangements

Smoking is forbidden in enclosed places of work (e.g. office blocks, various buildings) in Ireland. Smoking is **NOT** permitted in the exam hall or adjacent areas (e.g. toilets). Candidates will **NOT** be permitted to leave the building for a smoke break during the exam. It may be possible to smoke in a designated outdoor smoking area outside the examination venue, but this facility is solely at the discretion of the examination venue provider.

v. Storing of personal belongings

Mobile phones, blackberry, notes, textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, palm pilots, USB, memory sticks and all other electronic devices are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** from the examination centre. **Ideally candidates should not bring such devices with them.** Mobile phones or other electronic communications devices should **NOT** be left powered on within the vicinity of the examination centre and should be left **SWITCHED OFF** in the holding room for registration.

At registration, candidates will be asked to deposit any such devices to staff of the Medical Council. Although staff of the Medical Council may store these personal belongings for the candidate, please note that no responsibility can be taken for lost or stolen items.

Where Examination halls do not have secure areas to store personal belongings, any coats, bags or other item(s) brought into the Examination hall should be deposited as directed by the invigilator(s).

vi. Waiting arrangements

Candidates are advised that it will not be possible for the Examination centre to facilitate waiting spouses, relatives or friends before, during or after the Level 3. Candidates sitting the Level 3 should plan to meet them elsewhere after the examination.

vii. Emergency Evacuation of the examination centre

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the building, the Level 3 will be terminated with immediate effect. All stations already completed will be null and void and candidates will be re-booked to a future date.



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5.4.g. Complaints

i) Before the examination

Temporary personal circumstances (such as illness or pressing domestic circumstances) which occur close to, or during the examination which might affect a candidate's performance cannot be taken into account.

ii) Problems encountered on the day of the examination

If a candidate feels that he or she has been disadvantaged during the examination (e.g. through equipment failure, human error, or otherwise), the candidate must make a complaint to the Examination Coordinator or Medical Council representative **during or immediately after** the examination, and **before** leaving the premises. All such complaints should be recorded in writing on the "Complaint/Remedy form" (available at the Level 3 venue) and signed by the Examination Coordinator and the candidate.

Complaints of this nature made at a later date are difficult to investigate or validate and therefore will not be entertained.

There are, however, certain complaints that will not be entertained and may not be further investigated. These include:

- **Not being able to find the examination centre location/delay in arriving at the examination centre location.**

Candidates are given with their admission letter clear instructions as to the location of the examination venue and the time that they have to be at the examination centre for examination registration purposes. If they are unsure as to the location of the examination centre, they should make sure that they allow ample time to arrive at the examination centre at the correct time, bearing in mind heavy/rush hour traffic and delays in public transport.

Candidates are normally required to present themselves at the Examination venue for registration **one hour** prior to the starting time of the Level 3 (unless otherwise stated on their Level 3 letter). **IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR CANDIDATES TO ARRIVE ON TIME AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER, TO ENSURE THE SMOOTH RUNNING AND TIMING OF THE EXAMINATION.** (refer to 5.4.a. - What time should one arrive at the Examination Venue? for further information)

A candidate who arrives late for the Level 3 may only be allowed sit the Level 3 at the discretion of the Examination Coordinator. It is **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** that if a candidate arrives late that they will be allowed sit the examination. Due to the nature of the examination, the examination once started cannot stop until the completion of the whole examination.

- **Not reading the instructions of the stations/paper fully and carefully**

Instructions for each station/paper are clearly stated. Candidates should read the instructions carefully and ensure that they understand what they are being asked to do. If it is a history station and the candidate performs a physical examination they will not be given marks. If an answer sheet has two pages/sides, instructions will be given to the candidate to "turn over the page/turn to the next page/P.T.O."

- **"Running out of time"**

The communication and practical skills stations are designed to be completed in seven minutes. Candidates should be conscious of the time constraint of a skills station. Candidates need to maintain a courteous manner while ensuring that they complete the essential features of the task in the available time.



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5.4.h. Adverse Circumstances which affect the Conduct of the Examination

If any adverse circumstances affect the conduct of the examination for any candidate(s), the Examination Coordinator with agreement of the Medical Council representative, will take such action as they think fit. After the Level 3, the Examination Coordinator and/or the Medical Council Representative will report to the PRES Sub-Committee. The PRES Sub-Committee will consider the effect of the circumstances and take any further action they think appropriate.

In such cases of immediate notification of a complaint, and at the discretion of the Examination Coordinator and Medical Council Representative, the candidate **may** be permitted to immediately re-attempt a maximum of **two** Level 3 Communication and Practical skills stations once the examination centre has been vacated.

5.4.i. Cheating and misconduct

It is important to note that cheating in all its forms and misconduct is deemed to be a major disciplinary offence in the Medical Council's Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES), and as such serious penalties may be imposed. Cheating in an examination is defined as the use, possession, or attempted use, of unauthorised material, unauthorised collaboration or attempted collaboration, copying or attempted copying. Misconduct in an examination is defined as unacceptable or immoral behaviour that is not in accordance with accepted moral or professional standards.

Please note the following are STRICTLY PROHIBITED and are deemed a DISCIPLINARY OFFENCE:

Cheating

- a) that a candidate brings one or more of the following with them to the examination centre - mobile phone(s), notes, textbooks, dictionaries, laptops, palm pilots and all other electronic devices;
- b) that a candidate's mobile phone(s) or other electronic communications devices is left powered on within the vicinity of the examination centre;
- c) that a candidate removes from the examination venue, any examination rough work paper/"scratch paper", whether used or unused, or other supplied material;
- d) that a candidate writes down or copies details of questions, by any means, to take out of the examination venue;
- e) that a candidate consults any materials or mobile phones or other electronic communications devices outside the examination room during periods of absence (i.e. toilet break) while the examination is in progress;
- f) that in cases of impersonation, the matter of the impersonator and the impersonated will be reported directly to the Council of Medical Council, as it is an offence under Section 41 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 "if the person makes or causes to be made any false declaration or misrepresentation for the purpose of obtaining registration".

Misconduct

- g) that a candidate aids, or attempts to aid, another candidate, or obtain, or attempt to obtain, any assistance from another candidate, or communicate in any other way with another candidate in the examination venue;
- h) that a candidate uses, attempts to use, assists another to use or attempts to assist another to use any other unfair, improper or dishonest method to gain advantage in any part of the PRES;
- i) that a candidate obtains information about Level 3 skill stations from any source including other candidates;



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- j) that a candidate is rude or abusive towards any member of Medical Council staff;
- k) that a candidate communicates with the examiners, simulated patients, invigilators, Medical Council staff or other administrative staff either during or after the examination regarding the possible outcome of their grades;
- l) that a candidate whose conduct or behaviour at an examination is thought to cause disturbance to other candidates or affecting the proper running of the Examination;
- m) that a candidate is involved in the theft or concealment of any material which is the property of the Medical Council or the Medical School/Examination Centre venue;
- n) any other form of cheating and/or misconduct not outlined above.

If a candidate does any of these things they will be reported to the Medical Council's Examination Board by the testing company or examination coordinator (apart from f). The Medical Council reserves the right to withhold publication of the results of an examination candidate suspected of having been involved in any irregularity or misconduct in connection with a Level 2 or Level 3, pending the completion of investigations into the alleged irregularity or misconduct.

5.4.j. Sanctions/enforcements

During an examination;

- if any candidate is found to be in possession of any material/electronic aids, the candidate will be issued immediately with a verbal warning from the invigilator/examiner and have the material/electronic device that the candidate brings into the examination room confiscated.
- a candidate may be removed from the examination room if by their conduct they disrupt the examination.

A written report will be drafted and signed by the invigilator/examiner and countersigned by a witness to the event. This report will be forwarded to the Examination Coordinator and Medical Council representative immediately and without delay. They will jointly decide if the misconduct is severe enough to call a meeting of the PRES Sub-Committee after the examination.

The PRES Sub-Committee may, in its absolute discretion,

- decide not to take any action in relation to the alleged offending conduct;
- request explanation, comments and/or further information in writing or in person by the Candidate;
- ask that the Professional Development Committee impose penalties on the Candidate.

The penalties that the Professional Development Committee may recommend to impose on a candidate include, without limitation:

- no penalty;
- awarding the candidate a zero mark (or failure) for the station/paper or the whole Level 3;
- expulsion from the examination process; for a certain period as decided by the Board;
- inform the Council of the Medical Council for further disciplinary/registration action may be taken.

Within a reasonable period after the PRES Sub-Committee and/or Professional Development Committee meeting, the candidate will be given a written notice of the decision concerning the alleged offending conduct. The candidate may, within one calendar month of the issue of the notice, appeal in writing to the PRES Sub-Committee and/or Professional Development Committee meeting against the decision. The appeal should be supported with relevant information or evidence.



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5.5. AFTER THE LEVEL 3

PLEASE NOTE: This information regarding Level 3 may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council. You should ensure that you read the most up-to-date information regarding examinations in this Handbook.

5.5.a. Results

The Medical Council will notify all candidates **by letter** about their results in Level 3 as soon as possible after the examination (approximately four to six weeks after the exam). An announcement will be made on the Medical Council's website as to when the results will be issued. They will **NOT** be issued before the date specified.

Candidates must not telephone the Medical Council regarding their result, as this will create unnecessary work to staff and may delay the process further. The results are issued as a Pass or Fail. No diploma or certificate will be issued to successful candidates. Results will not be given over the telephone.

The results of candidates who were successful in their Level 3 will be placed on the Medical Council website, using the Medical Council reference number, at the same time as the results letters are sent by post.

Click here for the most current Level 3 results. All enquiries about the Level 3 results must be made in writing to the Education and Training Section.

The Level 3 results will NOT be given or discussed over the telephone or in person. All correspondence regarding a candidate's Level 3 appeal will be dealt with in writing only to the candidate and the outcome will be given to the candidate by post ONLY.

Successful candidates

Provided a candidate's application for Registration is complete and satisfactory, those who are successful in the examination will also receive their eligibility letter which explains the next step in the registration process.

To open their registration with the Medical Council, successful candidates must provide the following:

- An up to date Curriculum Vitae.
- Certificate(s) of Good Standing dated within 3 months from **all** competent authorities with whom they have been registered in the past 5 years. **This should be sent directly to the Medical Council from each competent authority/ies.**
- Notarised / Attested copy of their passport.
- Appropriate registration fee.

Doctors participating in formal post graduate training programmes and who intend to occupy individually numbered, recognised training posts, should apply for Trainee Specialist registration. Please complete Form [TSR1.pdf](#).

To apply to be registered in the General Division of the Register for the first time candidates must complete Form [GF1.pdf](#)

Unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful candidates are issued with their results. Further details regarding their examination are enclosed in their results letter.



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5.5.b. Breakdown of Results

All Level 3 results are verified at least **three times** before being sent to the candidates. Borderline results (i.e. within close range of the passing score) undergo increased scrutiny. Results are issued approximately four to six weeks after the last Level 3 exam.

At the same time of the results letters being posted or shortly afterwards, candidates who were unsuccessful will also receive a breakdown of their results giving the individual marks obtained at each Level 3 station/paper and an overall score. Under no circumstances will it be emailed to candidates. No further feedback will be available.

The breakdown of the Level 3 results will NOT be given or discussed over the telephone or in person. All correspondence regarding a candidate's Level 3 appeal will be dealt with in writing only to the candidate and the outcome will be given to the candidate by post ONLY.

Candidates cannot appeal their results until after they have received and reviewed the breakdown of their results.

5.5.c. Appeals

If a candidate remains dissatisfied after they have received and reviewed the breakdown of their results, they may **appeal** their results.

The Level 3 appeal of results will NOT be given or discussed over the telephone or in person. All correspondence regarding a candidate's Level 3 appeal will be dealt with in writing only and the outcome will be given to them by post ONLY.

The "Level 3 Appeal Form" (available on the Medical Council's website from the day that the Level 3 results are announced) **MUST** be completed if a Level 3 candidate wishes to appeal their Level 3 result. The *current administration fee* which should be made payable to the Medical Council, by way of bank draft, cheque, postal order or credit card payment **must** accompany all requests for an appeal.

The "Level 3 Appeal Form" **MUST** be received by the Medical Council **within one calendar month** of the date of issue of the results.

On the Level 3 Appeal Form, the candidate should write their personal details and the grounds and reason upon which the appeal is being made. The three grounds are as follows:

- (a) That they candidate believes that there is evidence of substantive irregularity in the conduct of the Level 3.
- (b) That they candidate believes that the Level 3 mark awarded was incorrect and/or that the checking of the Level 3 results was not properly carried out.
(In particular, an appeal will not be upheld under (b) if the only evidence produced is the opinion of the candidate that they performed better than the final mark indicates i.e. "I am disappointed/surprised at my result" is not a ground for appeal).
- (c) Other

The appeal may be accompanied by such evidence as may be relevant for consideration.

On receipt of a request for an appeal, the Examination Coordinator will personally recheck the examination scripts, in the presence of an officer of the Medical Council, within **two weeks of the closing date** for receipt of requests (i.e. within six weeks after the date of issue of the Level 3 results). The Examination Coordinator will inform the Medical Council, in writing, of the results of the appeal.

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The appeal may be:

- Dismissed as not an appropriate grounds with 5.5.c (a) or 5.5.c (b) or 5.5.c (c) as above
- Dismissed because out of time or incomplete
- Upheld

All correspondence regarding an appeal, including the Examination Coordinator's response, will then be considered by the Medical Council's Professional Development Committee at its next scheduled meeting. **The Committee's decision in the matter will be final.**

The Medical Council will then provide a written response to the appellant, as soon as possible after the Professional Development Committee meeting.

- (a) In the event of a successful appeal on the grounds of (a), some form of redress will be offered to the candidate at the discretion of the Medical Council.
- (b) In the event of an appeal on the grounds of (b), if the review of the appeal shows that the candidate did reach the required pass mark in each of the three types/domains of skills stations and overall then the fail may be declared void and a pass mark awarded.
- (c) In the event of a successful appeal on the grounds of (c), some form of redress will be offered to the candidate at the discretion of the Medical Council.

5.5.d. How many times can one attempt Level 3?

The Medical Council currently imposes a limit of **three attempts** at any Level of the examinations. Candidates attempting Level 3 have a two years period of eligibility from the date when they passed Level 2. If a candidate is unsuccessful in the Level 3, they may attempt the examination up to and including a maximum of three times, until they either **pass** the examination, they **fail three times** or their **eligibility expires**.

5.5.e. Reference Number and Change of Address

The reference number allocated by the Medical Council must be quoted in all telephone calls, Emails and other correspondence relating to PRES.

The postal address specified by the candidate on the application form for PRES/ Level 3, will be used for correspondence. Any subsequent change of address must be immediately notified online on the Medical Council website, in writing or by email to the Medical Council. If the address is changed by email or letter, the date of birth of the candidate must be included as a security measure. Failure to notify the Medical Council of a change in address may result in unnecessary delays in candidates receiving their results.



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6. How does one reapply to sit the PRES exam?

If a candidate does not pass Level 2/Level 3 within two years from the date that they were declared eligible to sit the PRES, or they fail Level 2/Level 3 three times, their eligibility will automatically expire.

6.1. RE-APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY HAVING NOT PASSED LEVEL 2/3 WITHIN TIME ALLOWED

Should a candidate wish to re-apply for eligibility to sit future PRES examinations (if the candidate does not pass Level 2/Level 3 within the time allowed), they must complete the *Generic Application Form* and quote their Medical Council reference number on it (on page 5). They must also state the steps they have taken or are taking in order to improve their prospects of passing the PRES.

The candidate should return the Generic Application form with all the documents as per the checklist, including:

- document examination fee for First-time applicant (*Click here to view the current service fee (excluding credit card charges)*). The fees depend on what Division the candidates wishes to apply for.
- an original Certificate of Current Professional Status/Good Standing, dated within the last 3 months, which is to be sent directly to the Medical Council from all overseas registration authorities with whom the candidate is or has been registered within the past five years.
- Intern Training Verification Form completed by the appropriate person in each hospital where your internship training was completed.
- Hospital Verification Form completed by the competent authority (e.g. Medical Board / Medical Council / Ministry of Health) in the jurisdiction(s) where your internship training was completed.
- provide evidence of "effective communication skills".
- Notarised/attested copy of passport (showing passport number, expiry dates and personal details)
- Four (4) colour passport-size photographs signed on the back by the Applicant.

6.2. RE-APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY HAVING FAILED LEVEL 2/3 THREE TIMES

The Medical Council currently imposes a limit of three attempts at either Level 2 or Level 3 examinations. Any candidate wishing to re-attempt an examination, having failed it three times or more, must apply in writing to the Medical Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Registration Working Group, stating the steps they have taken or are taking in order to improve their prospects of passing the examination.



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7. Is there exemption from the PRES?

The Medical Council has approved new Rules governing the Registration of Medical Practitioners. The Rules came into force from 1st January 2011 and replace the previous Registration and PRES rules. The rules are available on the Medical Council www.medicalcouncil.ie/Registration/Registration-Rules and further information is available in the Guide to Registration www.medicalcouncil.ie/Registration/Guide-to-Registration and the Frequently Asked Questions www.medicalcouncil.ie/FAQ/Registration

Exemption from other Medical Council's registration examinations

Currently, there is NO EXEMPTION from the PRES itself on the basis of having passed other Medical Council's registration examinations i.e.

- Passing Part 1, Part 2 or both parts of the General Medical Council's (United Kingdom) PLAB examination **ALONE DOES NOT EXEMPT** a candidate from sitting/passing Level 2/Level 3 or both parts of the Medical Council's PRES examination.
- Passing Step 1, Step 2, Step 3 or all three parts of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) **ALONE DOES NOT EXEMPT** a candidate from sitting/passing Level 2/Level 3 or both parts of the Medical Council's PRES examination.

Refer to this [link](#) for further information regarding exemption from the PRES.



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8. English Language Requirements and Exemptions

Refer to this [link](#) for further information regarding English Language Requirements and English Language Exemptions.



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9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

9.1. Reference Number

The reference number allocated by the Medical Council must be quoted in all telephone calls, emails and other correspondence relating to PRES.

9.2. Change of Address

The postal address specified by the candidate on the application form for PRES will be used for correspondence. Any subsequent change of address must be immediately notified online on the Medical Council website, in writing or by email to the Medical Council. If the address is changed by email or letter, the date of birth and mother's birth surname of the candidate must be included as a security measure. Failure to notify the Medical Council of a change in address may result in unnecessary delays in candidates receiving their results.

9.3. Can the Medical Council help with Visa Applications?

The Medical Council and the Level 2 test provider are unable to assist candidates with visa applications. The Medical Council is not involved with any stage of a visa application and cannot enter into discussions with the Department of Foreign Affairs on any candidate's behalf. **THE MEDICAL COUNCIL HAS NO ROLE TO PLAY IN THE GRANTING OR REFUSING OF VISAS.**

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service has further details in relation to visa applications and requirements on their website www.inis.gov.ie. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) recommend that candidates should allow as much time as possible when applying for a visa and a minimum time of 8 weeks is recommended. Candidates should be aware of the documents required for visa applications. Candidates should also ensure that they contact the Visa Office in time to get an indication as to whether they have time to apply and get the visa to be able to sit the Level 2/3. The onus is on you, the candidate, to allow enough time to complete all necessary processes to enable you to sit the Level 2/3.

Information on public service information is found on the Citizens Information *website*. Information regarding employment permit applications is available on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment *website*.

9.4. Can the Medical Council recommend a hotel?

The Medical Council cannot recommend accommodation to PRES candidates, however, candidates may like to consult An Bord Failte's *website*.

9.5. Where can one obtain information about living and working in Ireland?

Although the Medical Council cannot provide this information directly to PRES candidates, there are many informative websites about Ireland's culture, tax system, housing, citizenship, health service, etc., such as, www.gov.ie or <http://working.monster.ie/> or www.immigrantcouncil.ie. Useful information for Dublin only is www.dublin.ie.

9.6. Where can one obtain information about transportation in Ireland?

Information regarding transportation in Ireland can be found at this Citizens Information *link*.



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9.7. Does the Medical Council provide any Past Papers?

The Medical Council does NOT provide any past papers in relation to the PRES. Information in relation to the subjects covered in the PRES exam is provided in 9.9. "Does the Medical Council recommend any Textbooks?".

9.8. Does the Medical Council recommend any preparation courses?

The Medical Council does NOT provide and does NOT endorse any preparation courses in relation to the PRES.

9.9. Does the Medical Council recommend any Textbooks?

The Medical Council does not require candidates to purchase or use any specific textbooks for the PRES examinations. Candidates may find it useful to review the major textbooks in the main clinical disciplines of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, Medicine and General Practice. Journals can also be used as a way to keeping up-to-date. The examinations are designed to be a test of a candidate's clinical skills, knowledge and attitude.

The Medical Council does not authorise or endorse any books/papers specifically about passing the PRES.

General Practice

- Stephenson A: *A textbook of General Practice* (Hodder Arnold Publication 2004)

Psychiatry

- Puri, Laking, and Treasdon: *Textbook of Psychiatry* (Churchill Livingstone 2002)
- Gelder, Harrison, and Cowen: *Shorter Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (Oxford University Press 2006)
- Katona and Robertson: *Psychiatry at a Glance* (Wiley Blackwell 2008)

Obstetrics and Gynaecology

- Collins, Arulkumaran, Hayes, Jackson and Impey *Oxford Handbook of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* (Oxford University Press 2008)

Paediatrics

- Lissauer and Clayden: *Illustrated Textbook of Paediatrics* (Mosby 2007)
- Kliegman, Marcantone, Jenson, and Behrman: *Nelson Essentials of Paediatrics* (Saunders 2005)
- Levene and Rudolf: *Paediatrics and Child Health* (Wiley Blackwell 2006)
- Bernstein and Shelov: *Paediatrics for Medical Students*
- Gill and O'Brien: *Paediatric Clinical Examination Made Easy* (Churchill Livingstone 2006)
- Stephenson, Wallace, and Thomson: *Clinical Paediatrics for Postgraduate Examinations* (Churchill Livingstone 2003)

General Internal Medicine

- Kumar and Clarke: *Clinical Medicine* (Saunders 2009)
- Longmore, Wilkinson, Turmezei and Cheung: *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* (Oxford University Press 2007)
- Boon, Colledge, Walker and Hunter: *Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine* (Churchill Livingstone 2006)

Surgery

- Townsend, Beauchamp, Evers, and Mattox: *Textbook of Surgery: The Biological Basis of Modern Surgical Practice* (Saunders 2007)



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9.9. What is the syllabus for the PRES?

(a) MEDICINE

Candidates are required to have a comprehensive general knowledge of the key elements of accurate history taking; the interpretation of symptoms; the analysis of cardinal physical signs; proficient bed side examination and the competent interpretative skills necessary for clinical diagnosis. Additionally they should have adequate background knowledge of genetics, immunology, pharmacology, nutrition, social and environmental factors, occupational influences and the impact of environmental hazards due to physical and chemical agents.

Candidates will be expected to have a broad knowledge of the therapeutic principles of drug action, prime drug indications, side effects of pharmaceutical agents and reasonable knowledge of the drugs used for common acute and chronic medical conditions.

(b) SURGERY

Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the basic physiology and biochemical processes in health and disease and to apply the underlying concepts, in association with anatomical and pathological principles, for the identification, investigation and treatment of surgical illnesses.

Candidates are expected to have sufficient knowledge of surgical problems in the gastrointestinal tract, vascular system, endocrine system, genitourinary system, neurological and locomotor systems, chest, head and neck, skin, connective tissue and limbs. The ability to discuss pre and postoperative care of the patient will be assessed and particular emphasis will be placed on surgical infection, wound healing, nutrition, food and electrolyte balance, haematological investigation and the planning of further investigations and management.

(c) OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Candidates will be expected to have adequate knowledge of the physiology of normal pregnancy, labour, delivery and the puerperium, together with an insight into common disease states of the pregnant woman and the newborn infant and their investigation and treatment. Candidates will be expected to have adequate knowledge of disturbance of reproductive function, including menstrual disorders, infertility, contraception and family planning, and genital infections. In addition, an understanding of the presentation, investigation and management of gynaecological malignant diseases will be required.

(d) PAEDIATRICS

This syllabus will include congenital malformations, normal growth and development of children, assessment of handicap, nutrition, common infectious diseases, accidents and poisoning, non-accidental injury, function and diseases of the heart, lung, gastrointestinal tract, genitourinary tract, blood, central nervous system and skin.

(e) GENERAL PRACTICE

Candidates are expected to understand the key characteristics of primary care and to be familiar with the broad structures of general practice in Ireland. The recognition and management of common problems in general practice, including acute self-limiting illnesses, chronic diseases and key emergencies forms the basis of this section. It is also expected that candidates are familiar with the concepts of prevention, whole-person care, the roles of families and carers in the community and the importance of problem definition in physical, psychological and social terms.



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(g) PSYCHIATRY

Candidates will be expected to have a broad knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of psychiatry including the clinical approach to the patient. The ability to elicit a comprehensive history and adequately assess the patient's mental state will be necessary.

Assessment may include personality development, organic psychiatric syndromes, schizophrenia, the affective disorders, the clinical neuroses, personality disorders, alcoholism and drug abuse, eating disorders, mental handicap, common childhood psychiatric disorders, psychosomatic disorders, forensic psychiatry, psychosexual problems and community psychiatry.

An adequate knowledge of current treatment and management approaches to psychiatric illness, including physical, psychopharmacological and psychological treatments will be required.



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10. Contacting the Medical Council about the PRES Examination

The Education and Training Section administers the PRES. If you have any queries regarding the PRES examination itself, please contact the Education & Training Section either by:

telephone at: 00353-1-4983138;

or

fax at: 00353-1-4983155;

or

by email to: pres@mcirl.ie

The Medical Council's address is:

Medical Council
Kingram House
Kingram Place
Dublin 2
Ireland

The main telephone number is: 00353-1-4983100

The main fax number is: 00353-1-4983102

The website address is: www.medicalcouncil.ie

This information may be subject to amendment/changes in whole or in part at any time at the discretion of the Medical Council.

Comhairle na nDoctúirí Leighis