MFSRH Online Examination Misconduct Policy

Introduction

This document covers all components of the part I and the Part II examination and must be read in conjunction with the respective MFSRH Online Examination Protocols. This outlines the policy and procedures surrounding candidate misconduct when sitting an online examination for the MFSRH.

FSRH are committed to ensuring reliability and fairness in all forms of assessment within its qualifications. Any aspect of misconduct during MFSRH examinations will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the following misconduct policy.

Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Failure to abide by the instructions of an Invigilator.
- The use of, or access to prohibited materials during an examination.
- Any attempt to communicate with another individual, with the exception of the Invigilator or Role Player (in an OSCE).
- Attempts to reproduce and/or distribute exam material, by any means, including reconstruction of questions through memory for release to a third party.
- Candidates are prohibited from any kind of recording of the exam procedures
- Falsification or alteration of eligibility or identification documents
- Making arrangements or attempting to make arrangements for impersonation of a candidate.
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain confidential information about the examination from an Examiner, FSRH staff or third party.
- Unacceptable or disruptive behaviour.
- Any other form of cheating, deception, fraud or conduct that is likely to give unfair advantage to a candidate or candidates.

The MFSRH Online Examination Protocol document outlines three levels of infringements: minor, major and blocker. Definitions of each level of infringement are listed below and further examples can be found in the relevant MFSRH Online Examination Protocol document. Each level of infringement outlines behaviours that will trigger a warning or further action from an Invigilator, which includes terminating the examination and further actions as decided by the Misconduct Review Panel of the FSRH.

- A Minor Infringement is one that is deemed a low-level exception. Minor infringements may not compromise the test and can be rectified immediately however all minor infringements are logged.
- A Major Infringement is when three or more minor infringements are recorded. If a major infringement is recorded, a candidate is able to complete the examination, but all evidence will be sent to the FSRH Misconduct Review Panel for formal consideration where penalties may be deemed appropriate in line with the Misconduct Policy.
- A Blocker Infringement is one that is deemed a high-level exception. One that compromises the test and causes the test to be terminated. Invigilators will warn the candidates in advance.

Policy

- Candidates are not permitted to take the following into the examination room:
  - Electronic devices including mobile phone, tablet, smart watches
o Revision notes or textbooks
o Paper and pens/pencils (unless permitted within the relevant protocols)
  o Calculator

- Candidates must ensure their test environment meets the requirements (e.g. private, quiet, no second screen) and show the room to the Invigilator when requested.
- Candidates sitting the MFSRH examination online consent to being recorded (using microphone and webcam) and receiving communications from the assigned Invigilator during the examination.
- Recordings of candidates will be stored in line with the Data Protection Policy and GDPR legislation and can be used in evidence for any misconduct cases.
- Invigilators will observe candidates through the online platform via webcam and microphone and will record any suspicious behaviour or breaches of the MFSRH Online Examination Protocols.
- Candidates will receive a notification if an Invigilator suspects potential breach of the rules and they must confirm acknowledgement before continuing the examination.
- Invigilators will record any suspected misconduct in line with the processes outlined within the MFSRH Online Examination Protocols.
- Any instances of alleged misconduct will be investigated by FSRH staff and Examiners who will form a Misconduct Review Panel.
  o The Misconduct Review Panel will consist of: Director of Education & Training or nominated deputy, Examinations Committee Chair, Examinations Committee Deputy Chair, Examination Convenor and a nominated representative of Examinations Committee.
- If an investigation of misconduct is carried out, candidates will have the right to review the recorded evidence and submit a statement in response.

**Procedures**

**Reporting allegation of misconduct**

- In the event that a candidate is suspected of misconduct by an Invigilator a record will be made.
- Following the examination, an Invigilator will immediately notify the Director of Education & Training, or nominated deputy, of the alleged misconduct and will provide a detailed written report which includes the infringements and actions log.
- On receipt of the report, the Director of Education & Training, or nominated deputy, will review the alleged misconduct to determine if there is sufficient evidence to warrant the incident being passed to the Examinations Committee’s Misconduct Review Panel for formal consideration.
  o Where, following a review of the report, the Director of Education & Training or nominated deputy consider the incident to be a minor issue, then no further action will be taken.
  o Where, following the review of a report and consultation with FSRH staff/witnesses as necessary, the Director of Education & Training or nominated deputy deems that there is sufficient evidence to prove a case of misconduct, the Director of Education & Training will inform the Candidate of the allegations in writing. The Candidate will be allowed 7 working days, from the date of the letter, to accept or challenge the case against them. Responses must be made in writing.
Examination results of candidates cited for alleged misconduct will not be processed until a decision has been reached. Investigations will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and the Candidate will be kept informed of progress.

All evidence, reports and correspondence regarding the allegation will be sent to the Misconduct Review Panel to review and determine an appropriate penalty.

Reviewing allegation of misconduct

The Misconduct Review Panel will examine the evidence of the case and assess the strength and integrity of the information provided. A timeline for the Panel to review evidence and meet to decide the outcome will be communicated with the Panel and Candidate.

The Misconduct Review Panel will decide whether the allegation of misconduct is proven within 10 working days.

Only documents submitted through the correct procedures and within the set deadlines will be considered in evidence. Deadlines will be communicated to all parties.

Neither the Panel nor the Candidate will be given information regarding the Candidate’s result or performance in the examination in question.

Where the Panel consider a case to be proven, an appropriate penalty will be agreed and communicated in writing to the Candidate.

Penalties for proven misconduct

Where the Misconduct Review Panel agree that the case in whole or in part is proven either through admission of the candidate or the outcome of the Panel’s findings, they will consider the following before a penalty is agreed:

- The need to preserve the integrity of the examination
- The severity of the proven infringement
- Consistency with previous penalties awarded
- The evidence of remorse and the admission of understanding the seriousness of the case

The Misconduct Review Panel may consider awarding one of the following standard penalties or award a more specific penalty where considered appropriate:

- No further action
- Result of the examination to be declared void
- Candidate barred from applying for MFSRH examination for a specific period or indefinitely.

The Misconduct Review Panel reserve the right to share details of the case to the General Medical Council, and in the case of UK Trainees, their Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director.

Where a Candidate’s examination result is declared void, the attempt will be recorded against their exam history and will count towards their total number of attempts.

Candidates have the right to appeal the Misconduct Review Panel’s decision and should follow the MFSRH Complaints & Appeals Policy.