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PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION SYSTEM HANDBOOK

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

**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 AND/OR TAKING AN EXAMINATION

EFFECTIVE: OCTOBER 2018

**THIS HANDBOOK WAS LAST UPDATED IN MAY 2023
PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION REGARDING EXAMINATIONS**



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

Contents

1. What is PRES and who can apply for it?	4
1.1. Introduction	4
1.2. What is PRES?.....	4
2. How does one know if one is eligible to sit the PRES Examination?	5
2.1. Applying for Registration	5
2.2. Application Documents.....	5
3. PRES Level 2.....	6
4. PRES Level 3.....	7
4.1. General Information.....	7
4.1.a. What is Level 3?.....	7
4.1.b. Where can Level 3 be taken?	7
4.1.c. How does one apply for and find out about Level 3 dates?	7
4.1.d. Level 3 Validity	7
4.2. Before the Level 3	8
4.2.a. How does one book a place in the Level 3?	8
4.2.b. What happens if there are no available places to sit the exam that I want?	9
4.2.c. Examination cancellation	10
4.2.d. Fees for the PRES Level 3	10
4.2.e. How does one withdraw/cancel their place?	10
4.2.f. Late withdrawal or absence on the day of a Level 3	11
4.3. The Level 3	12
4.3.a. What is the format of the Level 3?.....	12
4.3.b. Pass Mark	14
4.3.c. Time	15
4.3.d. Common mistakes that candidates for Level 3 make	16
4.4. On the Day of the Level 3.....	18
4.4.a. What time should one arrive at the Examination Venue?.....	18
4.4.b. What should one bring to the Examination Centre?	18
4.4.c. What happens at Examination Registration?	19
4.4.d. What should one wear to the Level 3?	20
4.4.e. The holding of candidates before/after their Level 3	20
4.4.f. Information about the examination centre	21
4.4.g. Complaints.....	22
4.4.h. Adverse Circumstances which affect the Conduct of the Examination	23



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

4.4.i. Cheating and misconduct	23
4.4.j. Sanctions/enforcements	24
4.5. After the Level 3	25
4.5.a. Results	25
4.5.b. Breakdown of Results	25
4.5.c. Appeals	26
4.5.d. How many times can one attempt Level 3?.....	27
4.5.e. Re-apply for eligibility having not passed Level 3 within time allowed	27
4.5.f. Re-apply for eligibility having failed Level 3 three times	27
4.5.g. Reference Number and Change of Address	27
5. Is there exemption from the PRES?	28
5.1. Exemption from the PRES Level 3	28
5.2. Accepted Alternative to PRES Level 2	28
6. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice	29
7. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).....	30
7.1. Reference Number	30
7.2. Change of Address	30
7.3 Changes to Passport.....	30
7.4. Can the Medical Council help with Visa Applications?	30
7.5. Can the Medical Council recommend a hotel?.....	30
7.6. Where can one obtain information about living and working in Ireland?	31
7.7. Where can one obtain information about transportation in Ireland?	31
7.8. Does the Medical Council provide any Past Papers?	31
7.9. Does the Medical Council recommend any preparation courses?.....	31
7.10. Does the Medical Council recommend any Textbooks?.....	31
7.11. What is the syllabus for the PRES?	32
7.11.a. Medicine.....	32
7.11.b. Surgery	32
7.11.c. Obstetrics & Gynaecology	32
7.11.d. Paediatrics.....	32
7.11.e. General Practice	32
7.11.f. Psychiatry.....	33
8. Contacting the Medical Council about the PRES Examination	34



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

1. What is the 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 Medical Council has made Registration Rules under Section 11 of the Act, and the Register of Medical Practitioners is established under section 43 of the Act.

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

1	Document Examination	For all applicants
2	Clinical Examination	Where applicable
3	Evaluation of internship	Where applicable
4	An assessment of the applicant's postgraduate education, training, qualifications and experience to establish the applicant's eligibility for specialist registration.	Applicants for specialist registration only

The Register of Medical Practitioners comprises four Divisions. **General Registration** is the only form of registration available for medical practitioners who do not practise in individually numbered, identifiable training posts, who have not been proposed for a post in the Supervised Division, and who have not completed recognised specialist medical training. **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.

1.2. What is the Pre-Registration Examination System (PRES)?

The PRES examinations are primarily a test of knowledge and clinical skills in the main clinical disciplines of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Surgery, and Medicine/General Practice.

The PRES examinations are based on the Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice as devised by Medical Council.

All applicants for registration will be required to undergo assessment and verification of their documentation prior to eligibility for the PRES Level 2 or Level 3 being granted.

PRES **Level 2** is an assessment of doctor's clinical knowledge. PRES **Level 3** is an assessment of doctor's clinical skills through a data interpretation exam and an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

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

2.1. Applying for Registration

If you wish to apply for registration, you should refer to the [eligibility chart](#) to check which division of the register you would be eligible to apply for and how to apply for registration. You should also refer to the information available on the Medical Council's website relating to First Time Applications [here](#).

Once you have determined that you are eligible to apply for the PRES, you should create an online account and submit an application for registration through the PRES Route.

To create an online account go to the [Doctor's Portal page](#), and click on "Register Now". Verify your email address and enter your personal details. You will be assigned a 6 digit reference number after you create your account.

Once you have logged in to your Doctor's Portal account, you can begin your online registration application. The documents required for applications through the PRES Route is outlined below.

2.2. Application Documents

Document Checklist for Applications through the PRES Route

1. Notarised/ attested copy of current passport
2. Original Certificate of Good Standing/ Current Professional Status, dated within the last 3 months, to be sent by post directly to the Medical Council from every registration body with whom you have held registration in the past five years.
3. An EPIC report verifying your basic medical qualification to be sent directly to the Medical Council through EPIC. English translation, if applicable, should be included with the EPIC Report.
4. An EPIC report verifying your Internship Certificate to be sent directly to the Medical Council through EPIC, if applicable. An English translation, if applicable, will be included with the EPIC report.
5. Documentary evidence of effective communication skills which are sufficient for the practice of medicine. Accepted evidence of effective communication skills is listed on the Medical Council website [here](#).
6. If applying for the PRES Level 3 you must provide confirmation that you have passed the PRES Level 2, or an alternative exam that the Medical Council has deemed to be an accepted equivalent.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

3. PRES Level 2

What is the PRES Level 2?

The PRES Level 2 is a written exam made up of multiple choice questions which you must answer within three hours. Each starts with a short scenario followed by a question. You need to choose the right answer out of the possible answers given. For more information on what is examined in the PRES Level 2, please download the PRES Level 2 Blueprint from the Medical Council website [here](#).

When and where can it be taken?

The PRES Level 2 is currently being held in Dublin only. More information about upcoming exams can be found on the Medical Council website [here](#).

How does one apply for the Level 2?

All applicants for registration will be required to undergo assessment and verification of their documentation prior to eligibility for the PRES Level 2 being granted. Only candidates who have been declared eligible to sit the PRES Level 2 are eligible to apply for the exam. Eligible candidates will receive an eligibility email from the Medical Council which gives details on how to book the Level 2. More information about booking your place in a Level 2 exam can be found on the Medical Council website [here](#).

Level 2 Validity

The PRES Level 2 must be passed within **two years** from the date a candidate is declared eligible. Candidates may attempt the Level 2 up to **three times** within the two years they are eligible.

If a candidate DOES NOT pass Level 2 within two years, or fails Level 2 THREE times, your eligibility will automatically expire. If your eligibility expires and you wish to attempt the Level 2 again, you will need to submit a new application.

Once you have passed the Level 2, you will be eligible to sit the Level 3 exam. If a candidate does not pass the Level 3 within two years from the date that they were declared eligible to sit the exam, or they fail the Level 3 three times, their eligibility will automatically expire. If your eligibility expires you will need to submit a new application for the Level 2.

Please note: The PRES Level 2 is accepted by the Medical Council only. The Level 2 is not accepted by any other international regulator.

PRES Level 2 Alternative Exams

If you have completed an alternative exam which the Medical Council has deemed to be an acceptable equivalent, you are not required to sit the PRES Level 2 and you may apply directly to the [PRES Level 3](#).

The accepted alternatives to the PRES Level 2 are listed under section **5.2. Accepted Alternatives to the PRES Level 2**.

PLEASE NOTE: 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.



4.1. General Information

4.1.a. What is Level 3?

Level 3 is a clinical based assessment of Communication, Interpretation and Practical Skills, and takes the form of an OSCE and a data interpretation exam. Level 3 is the second part of the PRES examination.

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. A blueprint has been designed which establishes the scope of content for each Level 3 examination. Further information can be found on our website [here](#).

4.1.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, Galway or Limerick. There are currently no overseas centres for Level 3.

4.1.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 endeavors 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.

Candidates must pass one of the acceptable alternative examinations **before** being permitted to sit Level 3. These candidates will also be informed by email 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 email address. The Level 3 application form and further information is also available on the Medical Council's website [here](#).

4.1.d. Level 3 Validity

Candidates must pass Level 3 within two years from the date of eligibility. If a candidate DOES NOT pass Level 3 within two years or fails Level 3 THREE times, they should refer to Sections 5.5.e. and 5.5.f. for further information.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

4.2. Before the Level 3

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

i) Notification of Level 3 dates

Notification of Level 3 dates is emailed to every eligible candidate along with the Level 3 application form and further information. The Level 3 application form and further information is also made available on the Medical Council's website.

Once an eligible candidate has received their Level 3 notification they should read and follow the instructions in the email, 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:

- This, the Pre-Registration Examination Handbook; and,
- 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.

ii) Allocation of places

The numbers of Level 3 places available are limited for each examination.

Candidates should note that scheduling for the Level 3 is prioritised on a first-come-first-served basis in order of:

1. First attempt candidates at Level 3 who have never sat Level 3 before;
2. Candidates whose eligibility is due to expire before the next Level 3 examination session;
3. All other applications.

It should be noted that candidates being awarded priority status **does not** guarantee that they will be allocated a place for a particular exam sitting.

The aim of this approach is to ensure that all candidates have an opportunity to complete the Level 3 as quickly as possible within their eligibility period.

iii) If the candidate wishes to sit the Level 3

Level 3 places are allocated on a *strictly priority and first-come-first-served basis* on receipt of a *fully completed* Level 3 application form AND confirmation of payment being accepted. 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 candidate's 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.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

If a candidate wishes to apply for a Level 3, they should complete the Level 3 application form **CAREFULLY**. (Application forms filled and/or signed by third parties will be rejected), and return it with the application fee to the Medical Council as soon as possible, on or before specified closing date either:

- a) **scanned and emailed** to: pres@mcirl.ie with the subject heading of PRES Level 3 Application form followed by their Medical Council Reference Number, **OR**
- b) You can, if you wish, send the Level 3 application form by **post** addressed to: PRES Level 3 Examination, Examinations Section, Medical Council, Kingram House, Kingram Place, Dublin 2, Ireland. However, you should be aware that your Level 3 application form may be received by post after allocations for the Level 3 examinations have been made.

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 to confirm whether or not they have been allocated a place.

If a candidate has been allocated a place, they will be emailed their Level 3 admission letter and other relevant details i.e. examination venue information or other important notifications with their confirmation email. *If a candidate has recently renewed or obtained a new passport, they will be required to provide the Medical Council with a notarised copy of their passport prior to sitting their Level 3.*

The confirmation of a place usually takes **10 working days**. We would request that candidates please **refrain from telephoning or emailing the Medical Council** regarding confirmation of receipt of their application as this will delay the processing of the Level 3 applications.

4.2.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 may be filled up 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:

- a) Placed on a standby list (if there are no more places available for the one Level 3) OR
- b) 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.

(i) Standby places

Occasionally, due to the supply and demand for Level 3 places, the Level 3(s) may be filled before the deadline. If this is the case, all applicants who have NOT been allocated a place will be contacted by email to notify them of this situation and they will be placed on a standby list for any places that become available.

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



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

be received. **Candidates are advised that there is no need to contact the Medical Council regarding their place on the standby list, as the Medical Council will contact candidates should a place become available.**

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.

If the candidate wishes to accept the offer of a place, payment of the Level 3 fee will be taken immediately; a candidate's examination place is not guaranteed until payment has been processed. If a candidate is offered a place and fails to respond within the specified time or does not wish to accept the place, the place will be offered to another doctor on 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.

4.2.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. Should this occur, candidates will be notified at the earliest possible opportunity and will be allocated a place in the next available examination date.

4.2.d. Fees for the PRES Level 3

Click [here](#) for the current Level 3 fee and further details regarding payment. The Level 3 fee should be made payable to the Medical Council in Euro either by credit or debit card (Visa or Mastercard). CASH AND/OR CHEQUES CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AS A MEANS OF PAYMENT.

Each time a candidate attempts Level 3, the current Level 3 fee 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.

4.2.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 on 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 available on the Medical Council's website, and return it to the Medical Council either by post or email 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.

Withdrawing from a Level 3 does not constitute an attempt at the Level 3.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

4.2.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. Absence from a Level 3 does not constitute an attempt at the Level 3.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

4.3. The Level 3

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

The 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. A blueprint for the Level 3 examination has been established which sets out the scope of content that can appear for each diet of the PRES Level 3. Further information on this can be found on our website [here](#).

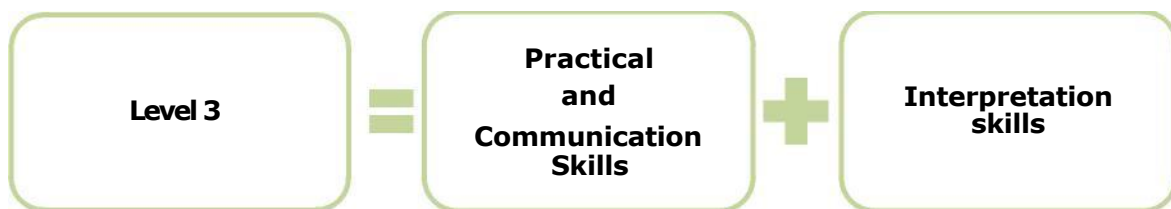
The cases used in the PRES Level 3 represent the kinds of patients and medical conditions normally encountered during medical practice in Ireland. Most cases are specifically designed to elicit, through the process of examining a candidate's practical, communication, and interpretation skills, the examinee's 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 one exam 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, where candidates rotate through a series of clinical scenarios or skill stations
- **Interpretation skills** are examined in ONE examination, which may be a paper based written exam or a computer based exam.



Further details are available in the following pages.

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.

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: the scenarios below are given as examples of practical skills and may or may not be part of the examination.

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 auroscope, 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>



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

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>

Candidates 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.

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.

On occasion, genuine patients may be used.

Please note: the scenarios below are given as examples of communication skills and may or may not be part of the examination.

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>
Communication skills (Written)	<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>
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/	<i>With a patient, relative or colleague.</i>



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

preventive strategies	
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 focused 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>

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 station before the time is over, they should not engage in small talk with their examiner/simulated patient/invigilator.

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:

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

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>

Candidates are being examined on the same issues as **either** a paper based written exam or a computer based exam. If a candidate finishes before the time is over, they should not engage in small talk with other candidates/examiners/invigilators.

4.3.b. Pass Mark

Each station/question is marked out of a total of 20. Each skills component (communication, interpretation and practical) is marked out of 120 marks. A candidate must achieve a minimum level of competence (marks) as determined by the Modified Angoff or Borderline Regression in each of the three types of skills (communication, interpretation and practical) to be awarded a pass in the Level 3.

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**.

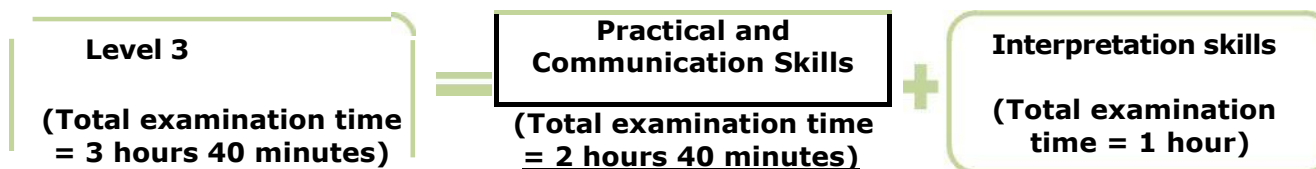


MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

- 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).

4.3.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.

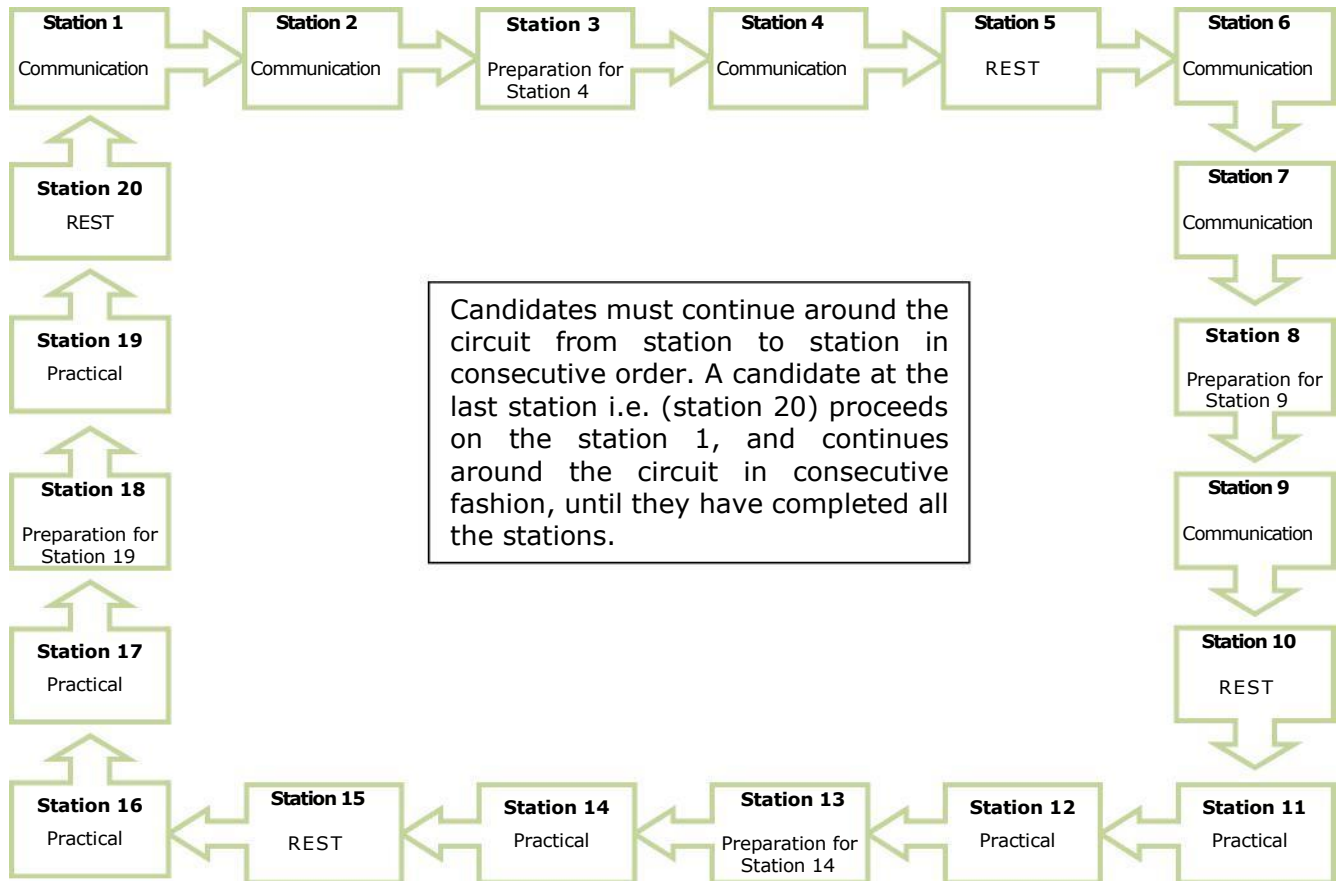
Interpretation skills are examined in ONE data interpretation examination.

i) Practical and Communication Skills

- This consists of ONE practical examination.
- The examination will last 2 hours 40 minutes.
- This consists of 12 “active” stations, rest stations and preparatory stations. At a preparatory station candidates have to read instructions/information regarding the next station.
- Each station is seven minutes in duration. A period of up to one minute transfer time between stations will be given.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK



ii) Interpretation skills

- This consists of ONE examination which may be either a paper based written exam or a computer based exam.
- The examination will last 1 hour
- This consists of 6 questions.
- Each question is marked out of 20 marks.

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

- Not reading the stations/exam question instructions carefully or misinterpreting the instructions. Candidates should not assume that they know what the station/exam question 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 use set phrases designed to show understanding but use them in the wrong context.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

- 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 a 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 early. If the candidate is finished early at the station they should sit down/stand by the side and wait for the end of station 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.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

4.4. On the Day of the Level 3

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

Candidates are required to present themselves at the Examination venue for registration **AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER**. Candidates who are late may be excluded from the examination at the discretion of the exam coordinator.

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.

The Level 3 itself normally lasts for approximately 3 hours 40 minutes

- Practical and Communication skills = 2 hours 40 minutes
- Interpretation skills = 1 hour

In total the candidate may be at the examination venue for approximately five and a half hours.

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

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

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

- their **admission letter** (which will be sent to candidates by email once they have been allocated a place), and,
- Their **current, valid Passport**, which is the same evidence of identity as shown on the admission letter. Only candidates who have refugee status may use their Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) Card along with their valid Travel Document, as a form of identity for this examination. ***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 the exam.***

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

Candidates presenting without these 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.

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

- their **own pens/pencils (and eraser if considered necessary)** and,
- their **own watch (showing seconds)**
- their **own stethoscope(which they may use during this examination);** and,
- depending on the venue, candidates **may** also be requested to bring their **own white coat** which they will wear during this examination. Candidates will be notified on this requirement in their admission letter.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

IT IS THE CANDIDATES RESPONSIBILITY 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.

All equipment necessary for the 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.

4.4.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.

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 the registration staff:

- admission letter, and
- current, valid Passport

They are also asked to sign the Level 3 Register and non-disclosure agreement. The non-disclosure agreement confirms that the candidate will NOT disseminate or reveal to others the content of the Level 3. This means that they CANNOT discuss or disclose the Level 3 content even after the examination is over including sharing Level 3 content with future candidates and posting of Level 3 content and questions online.

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.

Candidates will be given:

- exam labels (which has their name, Level 3 number and Medical Council reference number on it)
- their starting place number (for the Communication/Practical Skills)
- 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

Candidates may be given:

- a map/layout of the circuit (which shows the Type of Station e.g. Communication and Specialty of Station e.g. Psychiatry)
- Additional documentation (as circumstances depend)



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

Candidates will be asked to attach one of their examination labels (which contains their starting place number for the Communication/Practical Skills) 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 AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER, TO ENSURE THE SMOOTH RUNNING AND TIMING OF THE EXAMINATION.**

4.4.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 bear in mind that it may be much colder than they are used to and should dress accordingly.

Please note: Do not wear neck ties, shorts or sandals.

If an examination centre has a specific dress code, for example – the wearing of white coats, or being bare below the elbow, then candidates will be advised of this in their admission letter.

4.4.e. The holding of candidates before/after their Level 3

- To ensure confidentiality and security of the Level 3, candidates may be requested to remain in a holding room 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 asked to remain on the holding room before/after their Level 3 can be found in the timings of their admission letter.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

- Whilst in the holding room, 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 whilst in the holding room, 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 their stay in the holding room, as Medical Council staff/invigilators will NOT accede to the request by the candidate.*

4.4.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, tablets 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



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

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). Please note that no responsibility can be taken for lost or stolen items.

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.

4.4.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 informed of the exam venue and times for the exam well in advance of their exam date. 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 required to present themselves at the Examination venue for registration **ON TIME AT THE TIME STATED ON THEIR LEVEL 3 LETTER**, TO ENSURE THE SMOOTH RUNNING AND TIMING OF THE EXAMINATION. 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.

PLEASE NOTE: 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.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

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

Instructions for each station/exam question 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. The interpretation skills questions are designed to be completed within the time allowed.

4.4.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 Examinations Sub-Committee. The Examinations 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.

4.4.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;



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

- 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;
- 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 attempt to reproduce examination materials will be considered a breach of examination procedures and will be reported to the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee of the Medical Council
- o) 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 by the examination coordinator/Medical Council representative (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 3, pending the completion of investigations into the alleged irregularity or misconduct.

4.4.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 Examinations Sub-Committee after the examination.

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

- decide not to take any action in relation to the alleged offending conduct;



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

- request explanation, comments and/or further information in writing or in person by the Candidate;
- ask that the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee impose penalties on the Candidate. The penalties that the Registration and Continuing Practice Committee may recommend to impose on a candidate include, without limitation:
 - no penalty;
 - awarding the candidate a zero mark (or failure) for the station/exam question or the whole Level 3;
 - expulsion from the examination process; for a certain period as decided by the Committee;
 - informing the Council of the Medical Council who will decide if further disciplinary/registration action may be taken.

Within a reasonable period after the Examinations Sub-Committee and/or Registration and Continuing Practice 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 Examinations Sub-Committee and/or Registration and Continuing Practice Committee against the decision. The appeal should be supported with relevant information or evidence.

4.5. After the Level 3

4.5.a. Results

The Medical Council will notify all candidates 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 for 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 e-letters are issued.

All enquiries about the Level 3 results must be made in writing to the Examinations 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 in writing.**

Successful candidates

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

Unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful candidates are issued with a breakdown of their results. Further details regarding their examination are enclosed in their results e-letter.

4.5.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. Candidates who were unsuccessful will receive a



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

breakdown of their results giving the individual marks obtained at each Level 3 station/exam question and an overall score. 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 in writing.

Candidates who are successful will not receive a breakdown of results but will instead be issued with details on how to complete their registration.

4.5.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 in writing.

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 credit or debit 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 the candidate believes that there is evidence of substantive irregularity in the conduct of the Level 3.
- (b) That the 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. The Examination Coordinator will inform the Medical Council, in writing, of the results of the appeal.

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



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

All correspondence regarding an appeal, including the Examination Coordinator's response, will then be considered by the Medical Council's Examinations Committee. **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 Registration and Continuing Practice 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.

4.5.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 were declared eligible for the PRES Level 3. If a candidate is unsuccessful in the Level 3, they may attempt the examination up to and including a maximum of three times, within the two years allowed, until they either **pass** the examination, they **fail three times** or their **eligibility expires**.

4.5.e. Re-apply for eligibility having not passed Level 3 within time allowed

If a candidate does not pass the Level 3 exam within the two years allowed, and still wishes to attempt the exam, they must make a new online application for Registration.

4.5.f. Re-apply for eligibility having failed Level 3 three times

The Medical Council currently imposes a limit of three attempts at the Level 3 examination. If a candidate does not pass the Level 3 exam within three attempts, and still wishes to sit the PRES exams for the purpose of obtaining Registration, they must make a new application for Registration. Information in relation to submitting an application can be found under section 2.1. Applying for Registration .

4.5.g. 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, may also 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 candidate's date of birth and mother's birth surname 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.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

5. Is there exemption from the PRES?

5.1. Exemption from the PRES

Refer to the Medical Council website [here](#) for further information regarding exemption from the PRES.

5.2. Accepted Alternatives to the PRES Level 2

Accepted Alternative to PRES Level 2		Evidence Required
Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) Part 1	A pass will be accepted as valid for the same period considered by the awarding body. i.e. dated within 3 years.	Copy of Results
United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) Step 1 and 2	A pass will be accepted as valid for the same period considered by the awarding body. i.e. dated within 7 years.	Official Results Transcript
Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination	A pass will be accepted as valid for the same period considered by the awarding body.	Copy of Statement of Results
Australian Medical Council MCQ	A pass will be accepted as valid for the same period considered by the awarding body.	Copy of Results Letter and Candidate Feedback Sheet



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

6. Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice

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

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 and values that the Medical Council expects of doctors who practise in Ireland.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

7. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

7.1. Reference Number

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

7.2. Change of Address

Where possible, the PRES section use email to contact exam candidates so that information can be communicated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The postal address specified by the candidate on the application form for PRES may also 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 candidate's date of birth and mother's birth surname must be included as a security measure. Failure to notify the Medical Council of a change of contact details may result in unnecessary delays in candidates receiving correspondence from the Medical Council.

7.3 Changes to Passport

The Medical Council use passports as a form of identification for doctors sitting the and Level 3 exams. If you renew or replace your passport while you are eligible for the PRES exam, you must provide the Examination Section with a notarised/attested hard copy of your passport either by post, or by presenting the original passport to the Medical Council offices.

All copy documents must be notarised by a Notary Public or attested by a Justice of the Peace/ Commissioner for Oaths/ Member of An Garda Síochána (documents signed by a Police Officer from another State are not acceptable). They should confirm that the copy is a true copy of the original document, provide their full name and sign, date and officially stamp each copy document. Documents which are not stamped clearly or have not been properly notarised/attested cannot be accepted and will cause a delay in the processing of an application. Documents which are not stamped clearly or have not been properly notarised/attested cannot be accepted and will cause a delay in the processing of an application.

7.4. Can the Medical Council help with Visa Applications?

The Medical Council is 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 Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service on any candidate's behalf. **THE MEDICAL COUNCIL HAS NO ROLE TO PLAY IN THE GRANTING OR REFUSING OF VISAS.**

The Irish Immigration Service has further details in relation to visa applications and requirements on their website www.irishimmigration.ie. The Irish Immigration Service 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 PRES. The onus is on you, the candidate, to allow enough time to complete all necessary processes to enable you to sit the PRES.

Public service information is found on the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie. Information regarding employment permit applications is available on the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation website [here](#).

7.5. Can the Medical Council recommend a hotel?

The Medical Council cannot recommend accommodation to PRES candidates.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

7.6. 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 www.citizensinformation.ie or www.immigrantcouncil.ie.

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

Information regarding transportation in Ireland can be found at this Citizens Information *link*. The *National Journey Planner* provides journey planning and timetable information from all licensed public transport providers across Ireland.

7.8. 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 7.10. Does the Medical Council recommend any Textbooks?

7.9. 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.

7.10. 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 2011)

Psychiatry

Puri, Laking, and Treasdon: *Textbook of Psychiatry* (Churchill Livingstone 2011)

Cowen, Harrison, and Burns: *Shorter Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (Oxford University Press 2012)

Katona and Robertson: *Psychiatry at a Glance* (Wiley Blackwell 2012)

Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Collins, Arulkumaran, Hayes, Jackson and Impey: *Oxford Handbook of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* (Oxford University Press 2013)

Paediatrics

Lissauer and Clayden: *Illustrated Textbook of Paediatrics* (Mosby 2011)

Marcidante, Kliegman, Behrman, and Jenson: *Nelson Essentials of Paediatrics* (Saunders 2010)

Rudolf, Lee and Levene: *Paediatrics and Child Health* (Wiley Blackwell 2011)

Bernstein and Shelov: *Paediatrics for Medical Students* (Lippincott Williams and Wilkins 2011)

Gill and O'Brien: *Paediatric Clinical Examination Made Easy* (Churchill Livingstone 2006)

Stephenson, Wallace, and Thomson: *Clinical Paediatrics for Postgraduate Examinations* (Churchill Livingstone 2003)

Longmore, Wilkinson, Baldwin, and Wallin: *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* (Oxford University Press 2014)
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 2012)

Ethics and Professional Conduct

[Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners](#)

(Medical Council, 8th Edition 2019)

7.11. What is the syllabus for the PRES?

7.11.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.

7.11.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.

7.11.c. Obstetrics & 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 diseases 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.

7.11.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



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

7.11.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.

7.11.f. 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.



MEDICAL COUNCIL PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

8. Contacting the Medical Council about the PRES Examination

If you have any queries regarding the PRES examination itself, please contact the PRES Officers at the Examinations Section by email to: pres@mcirl.ie

If your query relates to registration with the Medical Council, please contact the Registration Section using the [Registration Contact Form](#).

The Medical Council's address is:

Medical Council
Upper Ground Floor and 5th Floor
Block 9 (Europa House)
Harcourt Centre
Harcourt Street
Dublin 2
D02 WR20

The main telephone number is: 00353-1-4983100

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.