



Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Changes to MRCPCH Part One examination

FROM FIRST EXAMINATION OF 2004

- TWO – PAPER PART ONE EXAMINATION
- END OF EIGHTEEN MONTH ENTRY REQUIREMENT
- SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PAPER ONE A ALLOWS UP TO THREE ATTEMPTS AT DCH CLINICAL

From the first examination in 2004, the MRCPCH Part One examination will consist of two papers.

Paper One A (Basic Child Health) will focus on the areas of child health that are relevant to those who will be working with children in their medical careers, not just those entering mainstream hospital-based paediatrics. The areas to be tested will be those conditions likely to be seen in 6 to 12 months of hospital, community or primary care practice.

Paper One B (Extended Paediatrics) will focus on the more complex paediatric problem-solving skills not tested in Paper One A, and on the scientific knowledge underpinning paediatrics. This is equivalent to the current MRCPCH Part One paper.

The regulations for entry have been relaxed to allow candidates to enter the examination upon completion of their primary medical degree. The previous regulation asking for a period of at least eighteen months since the date of graduation has been discontinued.

Both papers will be held on the same day, Paper One A in the morning and One B in the afternoon. Candidates can choose to enter both papers on the same day or to enter only one and attempt the remaining paper at a later date.

Candidates for MRCPCH must successfully complete both Paper One A and One B before being allowed to enter MRCPCH Part Two. A candidate who, for example, successfully completes Paper One A but who fails Paper One B will only be required to re-enter Paper One B at subsequent sittings.

Candidates will have a period of seven years within which to complete all sections of the MRCPCH, the seven-year period will commence upon successful completion of Paper One B.

Paper One A (Basic Child Health) will replace the current Diploma in Child Health (DCH) written papers. Successful completion of this examination will entitle the candidate to up to three attempts at the DCH Clinical examination before being required to re-enter the written examination.

Both written papers will be 2½ hours in duration and consist of between:

40-45	Multiple true-false questions	worth 5 marks each (1 per item)
17-20	Best of five questions	worth 4 marks each
7-9	Extended matching questions (EMQ)	worth 9 marks each (3 per item)

Multiple true-false questions are most useful when testing knowledge when there is an absolute Yes/No answer.

They can cover several aspects of a topic, including pathogenesis, clinical signs, genetics and treatment. e.g. “The following statements about X condition are true”

Alternatively they might test whether a candidate has true knowledge of a fact or thinks that something similar (but wrong) sounds vaguely familiar. e.g. “Characteristic features of X condition include”

Click [here](#) to download examples of questions within the new papers

Best of Five questions are used to test judgement and experience. A simple statement or short clinical scenario leads in to five options. All could be possible but only one is completely or the most correct. The candidate has to choose the best option and is prevented from regurgitating lists learned in the library.

They should only cover one aspect of the topic so suitable stems might be:

“ The most likely diagnosis is”

“ The most useful investigation would be”

“The next best step would be”

“ The best advice to give to the parent is”

“ The pathogenesis of this condition is best described as”

“ The commonest cause of this condition is”

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Extended matching questions (EMQs) are used in much the same way as Best of Five questions. In this case a list of 10 possible answers is offered with three statements or clinical scenarios.

The candidate chooses the best option from the introductory list. Again, all could be possible but only one is completely or the most correct.

EMQs are often accompanied by laboratory results or clinical pictures that are similar but with key differences.

They should only cover one aspect of the topic so suitable questions might be:

“For each of the following case scenarios select the most likely diagnosis from the list above”

“For each of the following case scenarios select the investigation most likely to give a definitive diagnosis from the list above”

“For each of the following scenarios select the most appropriate action from the list above”

Click [here](#) to download examples of questions within the new papers

The pass mark for each examination will be calculated with reference to the predicted difficulty of each question. Grades will be assigned to each item depending on how vital the subject is for a candidate to know as well as the expected competence of a borderline candidate at that stage of their career.

Appropriateness is graded	E = Essential	Difficulty is graded	1 = very difficult
	I = Interesting		2 = quite difficult
	A = Acceptable		3 = easy

More information on the changes to MRCPCH Part One will be published on this website in the coming months. Please check for regular updates.