



Physician Associate Registration Assessment

Misconduct policy for governance and development groups

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Assessment Unit relies on the professionalism and commitment of a large number of healthcare professionals to support the governance and development of the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA).

All individuals involved with any RCP activity are, in the first instance, expected to follow the [RCP Code of Conduct](#). Further to this the RCP Assessment Unit has a code of conduct specifically relating to individuals who are members of one or more of the following PARA governance/development groups:

- Development Group
- Examination Board
- KBA Question Paper Review Group
- KBA Question Writing Group
- OSCE Scenario Review Group
- OSCE Scenario Writing Group

In the event of any allegation of misconduct the RCP Assessment Unit will undertake an investigation governed by the principles set out in the following misconduct policy.

There are separate [code of conduct](#) and [misconduct](#) policies for PARA OSCE examiners.

Dealing with allegations of misconduct

1. Allegations of misconduct by a group/board member (for example relating to attitudes or behaviours) may be made by other members, RCP staff, or others involved in the administration of the relevant board/group.
2. In the event of any such allegation or occurrence, in accordance with RCP policy, all complaints that have a conduct element are first referred to the RCP Registrar for review. Upon review, the Registrar may exercise the right of their office to move the processing of the case outside the RCP Assessment Unit and into the RCP misconduct processes.
3. If the Registrar is content that the complaint should be investigated through RCP Assessment Unit processes, the investigation will be conducted as follows:
 - 3.1 The investigation will be led by the PARA Senior Examiner¹ and RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards².
 - 3.2 Within 10 working days of receiving a report of suspected misconduct, the RCP Assessment Unit will inform the member via email that an allegation has been made about them and provide them with a copy of this policy.
 - 3.3 No definitive action will be taken against any member until the investigation is complete, however, in some instances it may be necessary to suspend the individual from their PARA duties pending investigation.
 - 3.4 If the member is also a PARA OSCE examiner, they will be suspended from examining until the investigation is concluded.
 - 3.5 The anonymity of the member will be protected as far as is possible.
 - 3.6 On completion of the investigation the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards will inform the member of the detail of the allegation(s) via email. The member shall be asked to comment on the allegation(s) and invited to admit or deny them.
 - 3.7 The member shall provide their response to the allegations via email within 10 working days. If no response is received within 10 working days, then a reminder email shall be sent. If no response is received to this reminder after a further 10 working days, then the case will continue without the member's submission.
 - 3.8 If the investigation substantiates the allegation, the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards will make recommendations to the PARA Senior Examiner regarding the member's future involvement in the PARA.
 - 3.9 The PARA Senior Examiner may accept the recommendations of the RCP Assessment Unit Head of Development & Standards, partially or in full, or recommend an alternative course of action.

¹ Or nominated deputy

² Or nominated deputy

- 3.10 The RCP Assessment Unit uses the balance of probabilities when deciding as to whether allegations of misconduct are substantiated. Recommendations on a member's future involvement will be made if the RCP Assessment Unit considers that, on the evidence available, the occurrence of the event was more likely than not.
 - 3.11 Once a decision has been made, this will be communicated to the member via email within 10 working days.
 - 3.12 Where a decision is not possible within 10 working days this will be communicated to the member and an updated timeline provided.
 - 3.13 Where a member wishes to appeal against a decision, they must do so via email within 10 working days of the original decision being communicated to them. Any appeal will be referred to the RCP Assessment Unit Clinical Lead for Assessment, whose decision will be final.
 - 3.14 The RCP Assessment Unit may also refer the member to their regulatory body, where appropriate.
4. An investigation may involve asking other members to comment on any allegations or observations. In this case, all members are expected to respond to any such approaches in an open and timely manner. Any information shared with other members is strictly confidential.