

MFDS Part 1 Examination

Online Delivery – October 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

We are committed to delivering the MFDS Part 1 examination to our candidates despite the challenging conditions being faced worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic. As you have been advised, the examination will be moving to an online delivery mechanism and we hope that the following document will answer some of the initial questions you may have. Further details on the process will be provided in the coming weeks.

If you have other questions please contact your College of entry and we will do our best to address these in one of the future webinars/recorded sessions we are planning to hold.

Is the format of the exam changing?

No, the examination questions, format and standards will not change: it is just the delivery method which will be different. You will still need to answer 180 SBA questions in three hours. The syllabus and content have not changed and so your study preparation will be the same as before.

Exam Location

Where can I sit the exam?

You are best placed to identify a location, but you should give serious thought to your selection. It is important that the venue should be:

- Quiet;
- Where you will not be disturbed during the whole period of the exam;
- Comfortable and well lit;
- A location with good, reliable Wi-Fi.

This might be your home or it could be your work environment. It is acceptable to choose to sit the exam in your home, but if you are doing this we would recommend that you will be alone in the house, or in a room where you can guarantee you will not be disturbed. It is vital that you can concentrate on the exam in the same way that you would in an exam hall. You should not attempt to sit the exam at home if you have caring responsibilities for anyone in your home, unless you have made arrangements for additional help that day.

If your home location is not going to be suitable, we recommend that you consider booking a room for use at your place of work or at a postgraduate training centre. The criteria above should apply to the chosen room. We know that it can be difficult to secure a room where you are confident you won't be disturbed and for that reason you may wish to enlist the support of a clinical supervisor to ensure that you have an appropriate venue. This individual would not have to invigilate the exam (this will happen online as explained later) but they should ensure that the booked space will be completely quiet and you won't be asked to move to another room or to be disturbed.

You should check with your IT department if you intend to sit at a venue at work, or using a device supplied by your employer, as security measures may affect the download and running of the examination.

Can I sit the exam in a location with other candidates?

No, it is not possible to have several candidates in one room attempting the exam. You must be alone in the exam room throughout the exam.

Computer equipment

What computer equipment will I need?

In order to sit the exam you will require a laptop or personal computer with an integrated camera or attached webcam. This will enable the exam to be invigilated throughout the exam. If you are using a laptop you should ensure that this is fully charged and plugged in for the duration of the exam. Appendix 1 to this document provides the minimum system requirements and Appendix 2 has guidance to help you to troubleshoot.

How can I be sure that my equipment will be capable of hosting the exam?

As an initial test please go to <https://prod.examity.com/systemcheck/check.aspx>. You should do this in your expected exam location using the equipment you would like to use for the exam. This will provide information on your system. You may need to follow some of the guidance in Appendix 2 to amend settings if any parts of your system are not shown as acceptable.

The following minimum system requirements are needed:

- Latest operating system available installed (Mac - minimum 10.12 Sierra, Windows - minimum Windows 7). Please note, Linux does not meet requirements.
- Stable internet connection and sufficient bandwidth. Do not use a Hotspot
- Internet speed must be at least 2 Mbps download and 2 Mbps upload
 - Web Browser with popup block disabled (Firefox: Version 60, Chrome: Version 78 - *this is the recommended browser*, Edge: Version 79, Safari: Version 12)

Can I use a tablet to sit my exam?

No, you should use a laptop or desktop computer.

Can I attach a keyboard/mouse if I am using a laptop?

Yes – it's important that you choose a set up that is comfortable for your use. You should do this using equipment that feels comfortable and natural for you.

Can I use a second screen?

No, you cannot use a second screen for your laptop or PC.

What if I lose my login details?

Contact the College who will re-send your details to you.

What happens if it is not possible to sit the exam remotely?

If you believe that it will not be possible for you to sit the exam remotely, you should contact your College of entry and we will discuss and review this with you. If there are particular issues regarding the country in which you live, we will work with you to consider alternatives. There is no facility for candidates to be able to choose whether to sit the exam remotely or in a centre.

Will I get a chance to see the system?

Yes – we will provide video guidance which will allow you to see the system and how it works. You will also have a chance to test your equipment prior to the exam.

How will I know the exam is secure?

There will be a secure website providing the paper, which is impossible to open before the exam time. It will be permanently deleted from your computer at the end of the exam. Throughout the exam, you will be observed by online proctors (or invigilators).

I have applied for a reasonable adjustment. Will the exam delivery platform be able to take account of the adjustments I require?

If you have been granted a reasonable adjustment your College of entry will contact you to confirm the details.

Will I be watched throughout my exam? Will the invigilator be male or female?

The invigilator could be either male or female. If you have any specific concerns regarding the gender of the invigilator, please contact your College of entry.

Will my image be recorded?

Yes. Your examination will also be recorded for the purposes of resolving any conduct issues only. While the recordings may be used to gather evidence within a complaint or appeal, this is not the primary purpose of the recording. They cannot be used to dispute the academic judgement of Examiners and will not be used to re-assess an exam outcome. Recordings are for internal use only and will not be released to candidates or examiners. The recordings will be destroyed shortly after the exam.

What happens if I am disturbed by someone during the exam?

The proctor will note any disturbances during the exam and may ask you to confirm what has occurred. You may be asked to re-confirm that you are alone in the room.

Can I wear headphones/earbuds and listen to music to help me to focus?

No headphones/earbuds are permitted during the exam period.

Can I ask questions of the invigilator during the exam?

You can speak to the invigilator if problems arise during the exam.

Examination Day

What happens if I log in late to take the exam?

You must be on time for your exam as you may not be admitted after the scheduled start time. You should therefore ensure that you are ready to start the test at the time stated on your examination schedule.

What will the online proctor (or invigilator) do during the exam?

The online proctor will have the same duties as an invigilator in the exam hall. They are there to ensure that you start the exam at the correct time, know how much time remains, assist you with any issues during the paper (eg if you require a bathroom break or feel unwell) and to ensure that the exam environment is secure. They will do this via webcam rather than being there face-to-face.

At the start of the exam, the proctor will check your identification and will explain how to start the exam. During the exam they will not be visible on your screen but will be available should you need to alert them to a problem. At the end of the exam they will ensure that you have completed the exam and that your answers have been safely uploaded to the system.

What if I experience problems during the exam?

You will be provided with details of how to contact the online proctor or College staff during the exam if you experience any issues. Help will be on hand throughout the examination, and one of the team will work with you to get you started again. Even if you have internet problems during the exam, everything that you do will be saved to the system and none of your answers will be lost.

If I need to take a bathroom break, will additional time be added on to my paper?

No, as in an exam hall, should you need a bathroom break, you will not be awarded any additional time unless this is related to a reasonable adjustment request that has been granted in advance of the exam with appropriate medical information. Just as in an exam hall, you should let the proctor (invigilator) know that you wish to take a bathroom break and this will be noted.

Next Steps

When will I find out more?

We will continue to provide information over the coming weeks and you will receive guidance on the software and the proctoring. We will ensure that you have all the information you require in the weeks leading to the exam.

Can I pull out of the exam if I don't want to sit online?

All written examinations will be delivered electronically for 2020. Candidates should be aware that this may be extended to 2021 and should think carefully before deciding to withdraw from an examination. All arrangements are dependent on the ongoing COVID-19 situation. We want to provide as much certainty as we can to all of our candidates but absolute certainty is just not possible as official guidance continues to change on gatherings, social distancing, and travel restrictions. Candidates with specific concerns should contact their College of entry.

Contact Details

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh:

mfds.exams@rcsed.ac.uk

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow:

mfds@rcpsg.ac.uk

Appendix 1 – Equipment Specifications and Test Link

Minimum requirements and system readiness check

In preparation for taking your examination, please ensure that your device meets the following specifications by completing a system readiness check.

<https://prod.examity.com/systemcheck/check.aspx>

Minimum Device Requirements (see Appendix 2 'how to' guide):

- Desktop or laptop required - tablets, Chromebook and mobile phones do not meet requirements. Laptops should be fully charged and connected to a power source.
- Latest operating system available installed - Linux does not meet requirements.
 - **Mac - minimum 10.12 Sierra**
 - **Windows - minimum Windows 7**
- A working built in or external webcam and microphone
- Stable internet connection and sufficient bandwidth. **Do not use a Hotspot**
- **Internet speed must be at least 2 Mbps download and 2 Mbps upload**
- Web Browser with popup block disabled:
 - **Firefox: Version 60**
 - **Chrome: Version 78 - *this is the recommended browser.***
 - **Edge: Version 79**
 - **Safari: Version 12**
- Sufficient hard drive storage space minimum 20GB free space on PC/laptop
- Memory (RAM) 4GB minimum, 8GB recommended
- It is important to check your set up in the conditions and location you intend to take the exam.
- Proctoring uses a video link, like a Zoom conference call – if you have had issues with your Wi-Fi/internet connection when using this type of software seek advice. If you have used Zoom or similar software successfully you should be able to take your exam with confidence.

Appendix 2: Guide to carry out complete system checks

How to clear website data

Safari - Mac

1. Open the Safari app on your Mac, choose 'History' from the menu bar
2. Select 'Clear History', then click the pop-up menu
3. Choose how far back you want your browsing history cleared (recommend clearing all)
4. Select 'Clear history'

Chrome - Computer

1. On your computer, open Chrome.
2. At the top right, click 'More' (represented with 3 dots).
3. Click 'More tools'. Clear browsing data.
4. At the top, choose a time range. To delete everything, select All time (recommended).
5. Next to "Cookies and other site data" and "Cached images and files," check the boxes.
6. Click 'Clear data'.

Firefox - Computer

1. Click the Library button (four vertical lines in the top right), click History and then click Clear Recent History
2. Select how much history you want to clear (we recommend you clear all data)
3. Use the check boxes to select what information you want to clear from your history (we recommend you clear all data).
4. Click the Clear Now button. The window will close and the items you've selected will be cleared from your history.

New Edge - Computer

1. Click the "Settings and more" button (In the top right hand corner of your Edge browser's window, you will see a small button with 3 dots in it. This is the "Settings and more" button).
2. Click it. It will reveal a menu with more options. One of them will be named "Settings".
3. Select the "Settings" menu item
4. At the bottom of the large menu which just appeared, the bottom item will be called Settings. Click on it. The Settings menu will now appear.
5. Go to the "Clear browsing data" section
6. In the large menu which just appeared, there will be a section called Clear browsing data.
7. In it, there is a button labelled Choose what to clear. Click on it.
8. Choose what to clear from Edge (we recommend to clear everything).
9. Click the "Clear" button
10. Once it's finished, it will say All clear! underneath the Clear button. Now you can then simply close the Settings menu and continue browsing.

How to update browser

Chrome

1. Open the Google Chrome **browser**.
2. Click the Customize and control Google Chrome button in the upper-right corner of the screen.
3. From the drop-down menu that appears, select Help, then select About Google Chrome.

4. The window that appears will automatically check for **updates** and show you the current version of Chrome.

How to update iOS

Mac

1. Plug your device into power and connect to the internet with WiFi
2. Go to Apple menu > choose System Preferences
3. Click Software Update

Tip: You can also choose Apple menu > About This **Mac**, then click Software **Update**

Checking hard drive storage

Windows

1. Open File Explorer. You can use the keyboard shortcut, **Windows** key + E or tap the folder icon in the taskbar.
2. Tap or click This PC from the left pane.
3. You can see the amount of free **space** on your **hard disk** under the **Windows (C:) drive**.

Apple Mac

1. Open the Apple menu, then select About This **Mac**.
2. Click the **Storage** tab in the toolbar to see how much **disk space** you have available. (On OS X Mountain Lion or Mavericks, click the More info button, then click **Storage**.)

Checking memory (RAM)

Windows

1. Click on start menu
2. Type 'about' and press enter when 'about your PC' appears
3. Scroll down, and under device specifications, see 'installed RAM'

Apple Mac

1. Open the Apple menu
2. Click on the Apple logo in the top-left corner of your screen and select About This **Mac**. On the Overview tab, the **Memory** line lists the amount of **RAM** in GB

Maximising available RAM

Apple Mac

1. For disabling auto-start software, on Mac go to: apple -> system preferences
2. -> Users & Groups -> Login Items and remove all items from the "These items will open automatically when you login" by selecting an item, and using the '-' button underneath the box.

NB. After removing the auto-start items, you should reboot the computer.

iOS - power the device down, and restart.

Windows

1. Click on start menu
2. Select Settings > Apps > Start Up
3. Disable all Apps for automatic start up

If you do not see Start Up option in Settings:

1. Right click Start
2. Select Task Manager

Select the Start Up (if you do not see Start Up, then select More Details)