



## **New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX Clinical) policy on:**

- **pass criteria**
- **serious concerns and critical incidents**
- **requests for resits**
- **feedback**
- **recounts of results.**

### **Policy statement**

The goal of NZREX Clinical is to provide a valid, fair, reliable assessment. The objective of the examination is to determine if candidates have sufficient knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration in the provisional general scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Expected standard of practice**

The expected standard of practice is that of a newly-qualified graduate of an Aotearoa New Zealand medical school, commencing medical practice as an intern. Council applies the standards set out in *Good Medical Practice* and other statements published by the Council.

Further information about the expected standard of practice is available in the NZREX Clinical candidate handbook and other information on the Council's website.

### **Pass criteria**

This policy outlines how the examination results are determined, to confirm whether the candidate has passed the NZREX Clinical.

NZREX Clinical will be conducted in accordance with the principles of consistency, transparency and accountability.

### **Serious concerns and critical incidents**

To ensure the integrity of the examination, policy and procedures are required to ensure that serious concerns and critical incidents will be identified, documented and addressed promptly, fairly and transparently. This policy sets out the definition of a serious concern and critical incident, how the concern or incident will be documented and managed, and the implications of these concerns and incidents being raised.

### **Request for resit on basis of impairment or incident during examination**

Candidates may request an opportunity to resit the examination on the basis that their performance during the NZREX Clinical was affected because of impairment at the time of the examination, or an incident that occurred during the examination.

### **Feedback**

The Medical Council of New Zealand (Council) will provide feedback to all candidates who did not pass NZREX Clinical.

### **Recount**

NZREX Clinical candidates can request a recount of their NZREX Clinical result.

This policy outlines

- how the examination results are determined, to confirm whether the candidate has passed the NZREX Clinical
- how serious concerns and critical incidents arising during an examination are identified and managed
- how requests to be permitted to resit the examination on the basis of incident or impairment are considered
- how feedback will be provided to unsuccessful candidates; and
- then process followed if a candidate requests a recount.

### **Pass criteria**

To pass NZREX Clinical a candidate must, in a single sitting:

- achieve an overall score greater than the cut score; and
- receive at least **seven** overall pass or borderline results out of the 12 stations.
- have no more than **two** “serious concerns” raised by examiners.

The cut score is determined using internationally recognised statistical methods used for scoring the objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs).

A candidate may also fail the NZREX Clinical if a critical incident occurs, or if a candidate is found to have engaged in examination misconduct. The severity of the incident may lead to other limitations on future exams and registration.

### **Serious concerns and critical incidents**

Examiners and staff may raise a serious concern or critical incident about a candidate during the NZREX Clinical.

If a candidate’s clinical performance or professional behaviour is considered to be significantly below the expected standard during the NZREX Clinical, this will be considered a serious concern.

If a candidate’s behaviour constitutes a breach of acceptable professional standards (including professional boundaries) or ethical conduct this will be considered a critical incident.

In assessing whether actions or behaviours constitute a breach of professional standards or ethical conduct, the Examinations Director and Assistant Examinations Director will apply the standards set out in *Good Medical Practice* and other statements published by the Council.

#### **Definition of a serious concern (tier 1)**

A serious concern is raised when an examiner considers a candidate’s clinical performance or professional behaviour to be significantly below the expected standard during the examination.

#### **Definition of a critical incident (tier 2)**

A critical incident is when a candidate acts in a manner which is a significant breach of acceptable professional standards or ethical boundaries. Examples are harassment or inappropriate behaviour towards staff, examiners or actors, crossing professional boundaries, and cheating.

Examples of a serious concern or critical incident could also include items listed under examination misconduct at appendix 1.

#### **How are serious concerns (tier 1) documented and managed?**

1. If an examiner believes a candidate's clinical performance or professional behaviour in their station is significantly below the expected standard, they must record this as a serious concern on the candidate's marksheet, including the reason or reasons for the concern.
2. The examiner must not tell the candidate that they are recording a serious concern but may provide brief feedback focused on protecting the safety and wellbeing of any other individuals at the exam.
3. The examiner must document any such feedback given to the candidate.

If an examiner considers the performance or incident involving a candidate is a significant breach of acceptable professional standards or ethical boundaries the examiner must complete a critical incident form. The Examinations Director or Assistant Examinations Director should consider this in line with management of critical incidents (see below).

#### **How are critical incidents (tier 2) documented and managed?**

1. When a candidate exhibits behaviour during a station that an examiner believes constitutes a critical incident, the examiner must complete an examination incident report and provide this to a staff member.
2. The Examinations Director or Assistant Examinations Director will consider the incident report completed by the examiner.
3. The Examinations Director or Assistant Examinations Director will interview the examiner and actor.
4. The Examinations Director and Assistant Examinations Director will discuss the incident and decide whether the incident represents a significant breach of acceptable professional standards or ethical conduct, or whether it instead may be considered a serious concern and managed in line with the steps above, or the incident does not meet the threshold for either a critical incident or a serious concern and recorded as such.

#### **Implications of serious concerns (tier 1)**

1. If a candidate receives three or more serious concerns during the examination, the candidate will fail the examination overall.
2. The feedback provided to unsuccessful candidates will include that serious concerns were raised, where relevant.

#### **Implications of a critical incident (tier 2)**

1. A candidate will score zero for a station where their behaviour is considered to be a critical incident.
2. The Examinations Director or Assistant Examinations Director may decide to withdraw the candidate from the examination.
3. The Examinations Director or Assistant Examinations Director may determine that a candidate who is the subject of a critical incident who would otherwise have passed the examination, should instead fail the examination.
4. The candidate will be advised of the critical incident in their feedback letter and given an opportunity to respond.
5. The Chief Executive of the Medical Council of New Zealand will consider the severity of the incident, and the candidate's response, and may determine that:
  - the candidate is not permitted to re-sit the NZREX Clinical
  - the candidate is only permitted to re-sit the NZREX Clinical after providing evidence of completing appropriate remediation.
  - details of the critical incident should be provided to the individual's employer, should they be subsequently registered.

## **Request for resit on basis of impairment, incident during examination, or way in which the examination was conducted**

Candidates may submit a request to resit the examination on the basis that their performance during the NZREX Clinical was affected because of impairment at the time of the examination, or an incident that occurred during the examination.

### **Impairment**

A candidate may, following the examination, request an opportunity to resit the examination where they believe that they may have been disadvantaged during the NZREX Clinical due to an impairment that occurred close to, or during the examination that affected their performance. This may include situations such as illness or stressful or serious domestic circumstances.

The impairment must be both serious and unexpected and be shown to have had a direct, identifiable, impact on the candidate's ability to perform during the examination.

Candidates making such a request must include:

- details of the event that led to the impairment
- an explanation of how the impairment was serious, unexpected, and directly impacted on the candidate's ability to perform during the examination
- supporting documentation or evidence such as a medical certificate or letter from another person who can attest to the circumstances.

The information submitted must be sufficient to allow independent judgement of the merits of the submission.

### **Incident arising during examination or the way in which the examination was conducted:**

A candidate may, following the examination, request an opportunity to resit the examination where they believe that:

- an incident that occurred during the examination and outside their control, or
- that the way the examination was conducted impaired their performance in the examination.

A request may not be made on the sole grounds of an examiner's decision or how the decision was reached.

Candidates making such a request must include:

- details of the incident that occurred
- an explanation of how this impacted on the candidate's performance in this examination
- any supporting documentation or evidence that relates to the incident.

The information submitted must be sufficient to allow independent judgement of the merits of the submission.

### **Process for making a resit request**

1. Candidates must email their requests on the basis of impairment to [examinations@mcnz.org.nz](mailto:examinations@mcnz.org.nz), within **3 working days** of the examination.
2. Candidates making requests will be asked to pay a fee, which is found [here](#).

### **Consideration of resit requests**

- A candidate's submission will be considered by the Registrar, and further information may be requested if necessary.
- If a candidate's request is accepted, the outcome will be either a refund of your examination fee, or a resit at the next available examination at no charge.

- A candidate’s result will not be amended as the result of a successful request.
- If the request to resit is due to an incident, and the Council is found in error during the incident, the fee a candidate paid to make the request may also be refunded.

### Feedback to candidates

Council will provide limited feedback to candidates who do not pass the NZREX Clinical to assist them in understanding their result. Feedback will not be provided to candidates who pass NZREX Clinical.

This feedback will provide candidates with their grade in each station relating to communication, professionalism, cultural safety and competency, history taking, physical examination, investigations and clinical reasoning, and management. Possible grades are ‘very poor, poor, satisfactory, good, and excellent’.

The candidate can then refer to the competency skills sheet for the skills being assessed in that domain.

### Process to provide feedback:

Candidates who do not pass NZREX Clinical will receive an email containing feedback on their performance within **30 working days** of the NZREX Clinical examination.

**Council will not provide any additional detail requested.**

### Recount of results

Candidates who think their NZREX Clinical result does not accurately reflect their performance in the examination can request a recount.

The allocation of marks given to candidates by an examiner in individual stations will not be reassessed or altered as part of the review.

### Recount process

- If paper marking is used in place of electronic marking by an examiner, the individual results candidates have achieved in such stations will be checked to ensure they have been correctly recorded.
- The candidate’s overall result will be checked to ensure that it has been correctly calculated.
- The candidate’s overall result will be checked to ensure it has been correctly compared to the cut score required to pass the examination.
- The outcome of this recount will be communicated to the candidate.
- If the candidate’s overall result has changed, we will refund the recount fee.

### Process for making a recount of results request

1. Candidates must email their request for a recount to [examinations@mcnz.org.nz](mailto:examinations@mcnz.org.nz), within **10 working days** of receiving their feedback. We send feedback to unsuccessful candidates within 30 working days of the examination.
2. Requests must include the reasons for requesting the recount. Candidates making recount requests will be asked to pay a fee, which is found [here](#).

### Result of recount is final

The result of the recount is final. We will not accept an application for a further recount.

Version management	
Date	Details

	Approved by Registrar
	Replaces the following documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on critical incidents during the NZREX Clinical – August 2017 DM 310883</li> <li>• Policy on examiners raising serious concerns about candidate performance during the NZREX Clinical – August 2017 DM 7478915</li> <li>• Policy on the NZREX Clinical pass and fail criteria – August 2017 DM 301483</li> <li>• Policy on recount (of results) and appeals for the NZREX Clinical – November 2015 DM 301486</li> <li>• Policy on the NZREX Clinical feedback – September 2020 – DM 301513</li> </ul>
<b>March 2029</b>	<b>Scheduled for review</b>

Policy – New Zealand Registration Examination (NZREX Clinical) policy on:

- pass criteria
- serious concerns and critical incidents
- requests for resits
- feedback
- recounts of results – March 2024

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## Appendix 1

### Examination misconduct

Here are some examples of examination misconduct:

- introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information during the examination (or attempting to), which could be examination-related, by means of talking, written papers/notes, telephone or recording examination scenarios
- attempting to solicit information about the examination from candidates from an earlier time slot
- copying from another candidate
- collusion
- disruptive behaviour during the examination
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examination
- failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an examiner or Council staff member in relation to the examination rules
- impersonation: pretending to be someone else or arranging for a third party to take the candidate's place in an examination
- misuse of examination material, for example by passing or attempting to pass such material to a third party after the examination (this includes sharing any examination scenarios or examination information in any public or private forum)
- bribing or attempting to bribe an examination official
- behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the examination
- contacting or attempting to contact examiners before or after the examination for any reason.