



Examinations Department's Frequently Asked Questions

In 7 sections:

- Eligibility and fellowship
- Completing the application form
- Part 2 Projects (written options)
- Preparing for your examination
- Results
- Additional information for overseas candidates
- Complaints

ELIGIBILITY

1. (a) Am I eligible to enter for the FRCPATH Part 1 examination?

You are eligible to enter for the FRCPATH examination if you are deemed ready to sit the examination by your Educational Supervisor or equivalent and are either in a recognised training programme or have fulfilled the recommended training requirements. Please note that the College does not have a list of recognised training programmes/centres.

You will need to hold a qualification approved by the College if you are a medical or dental candidate and have the relevant recognition with the General Medical or Dental Council. If you are a non medical candidate, your qualification will need to be one approved by the Council (such as veterinary qualifications or a first or second class Honours degree in the appropriate science subject).

Overseas candidates must read the advice given in section 7 of the Regulations and Guidelines before applying.

If you are a medical trainee in a specialty training programme it is advised that you do not attempt the Part 1 examination before completing at least one year of specialty training.

If it is clear from your application that you are not eligible to sit the examination then we will write to you explaining this and your fee will be refunded.

(b) Am I eligible to enter for the FRCPATH Part 2 examination?

If you are planning to enter the Part 2 examination you must have previously passed the relevant Part 1 examination.

If you are a medical trainee in a specialty training programme it is advised that you do not attempt the Part 2 examination before completing at least two years of specialty training.



2. Are there exemptions from any part of the FRCPATH examination?

There are no exemptions from any part of the FRCPATH examination.

3. Can I become a Fellow of the College without sitting the FRCPATH examination?

Fellowship to the College may also be granted through Published Works (<http://www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=48>) or by invitation of the Council (<http://www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=24>). This is normally reserved only for academically distinguished pathologists and is not normally appropriate for those in training programmes.

4. How many attempts can I have at the FRCPATH/Diploma examination?

Each part of the FRCPATH/Diploma examination can be attempted four times; unless you first sat the examination in or prior to autumn 2004, in which case you have six attempts at each component of the FRCPATH part 1.

5. Is there a time limit between taking Part 1 and Part 2?

There is no time limit between taking FRCPATH Part 1 and FRCPATH Part 2.

There is also no time limit between taking the written and practical components of the Part 1 examination in specialties which have both.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

6. Who should act as my sponsor?

A Fellow of the College **must** act as your sponsor. When this is impractical, the signature of your Head of department may be accepted.

7. How many pictures do I have to submit with my application?

You have to send only one picture. Please staple it to the application form.

8. How do I get my photograph endorsed?

Your photograph must be signed and endorsed by a Fellow of the College or overseas equivalent as a true likeness of yourself (i.e. stating *this is the true likeness of...*).

9. What is the fee for my examination?

A list of examination fees is available on the Examinations section of the College website: <http://www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=1556> .

10. Can I pay with my debit or credit card?

We can now only accept on-line payment. Full details about payment via WorldPay are in the Examinations section of the website (<https://wsecure.thedriveris.com/rcpath/index.asp?PageID=1505&SessionID=>).

11. Can I pay by cheque?

Cheques are no longer accepted. You must pay your fees by debit/credit card via WorldPay.

12. Can I send cash to pay for my fees by post?

Please do not send cash by post. You must pay your fees by debit/credit card via WorldPay.

13. How can I get a receipt for my examination fee?

Receipts are issued only on request. To obtain one you must contact the College's Finance Department on 020 7451 6750 or at finance@rcpath.org.

14. When can I send in my application form?

As soon as the application forms are made available on the College website under the Examinations section. This is usually at least one month before the closing date. Information about the following year's examination sessions (dates, application forms etc) is normally published by the end of November of each year.

15. How will I know that my application form has arrived at the College?

Along with your application form you must send a self-addressed postcard or envelope so that receipt of your application can be acknowledged by the Examinations Department.

We strongly recommend that you send your application form using recorded delivery and retain proof of postage in the event that your form is lost in the post.

16. When will I know that I have been accepted to sit the examination?

Applicants for the Spring examination session will be notified by the end of January. Applicants for the Autumn examinations session will be notified by the end of July.

17. Can I make a late entry for the examination?

Late applications **cannot** be accepted.

18. How do I withdraw from the examination?

You must notify the College in writing, either by letter or e-mail, if you wish to withdraw from the examination. Please note that a withdrawal from the examination does not count as an attempt.

19. Can I withdraw from the examination and defer my entry to the next session?

If you withdraw up to two weeks after the relevant closing date then you may defer entry to the next session or have your fee refunded. If you withdraw after this point you will forfeit the entire fee.

Forfeiture of the fee will only be waived in exceptional circumstances.

If you withdraw in the Autumn session – and if you are eligible for a refund – your fee will not be kept by the College and you will receive a full refund. You will not be entered for any future examination session until you have paid the current fee. Fees for Spring sessions may be transferred to the Autumn session should the candidate wish. Please note that if a candidate withdraws more than twice in subsequent examination sessions his/her fee will normally be refunded and he/she will need to apply for the examination again (i.e. send the appropriate fee, a fresh application form and a CV).

If you withdraw during an examination, or a component of an examination, your fee will be forfeited, your answers will not be assessed and you will not receive a result. However, Histopathology Part 2 candidates and Neuropathology candidates who sit one of the components of their examination but withdraw from the other due to exceptional circumstances will receive one result only. Please contact the Examinations Department urgently if you withdraw due to illness. In case you would like the forfeiture of the fee to be waived evidence of illness/condition may be required.

20. Can I transfer to another examination centre?

No. For the majority of practical and oral examinations, there will be only one centre. For practical examinations with multiple centres, candidates will be allocated to the nearest centre with space that is not within their training Deanery (and offering the candidate's choice of cytology preparation in the case of Histopathology). FRCPATH Diploma written and Part 1 written examinations candidates are allocated to their nearest centre with space.

21. My contact details have changed. What do I do?

You will need to send us an e-mail or a letter with your new contact details.

PART 2 PROJECTS (WRITTEN OPTIONS)

22. I have to send in a written option for my Part 2 FRCPATH examination. When do I have to send it in to the College?

At least four months before the closing date of the Part 2 examination session that you wish to enter. The closing dates are normally the first Friday of January, for the spring session, and the first Friday of July, for the autumn session. So projects are expected to be submitted by the end of March and September, respectively.

23. How many copies of my written option/portfolio do I need to send in to the College?

You will need to send **two** copies to the College. Please retain proof of posting for this.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION

24. When will I find out the date and venue of my practical/oral examination?

Examination period dates are available on the Examinations section of the College website. You will be notified of the exact date and venue at least three weeks prior to the date of the examination.

Dates for practical and oral examinations are posted on the website as soon as they are confirmed (<http://www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=1096>).

25. Is there a reading list for the FRCPATH/Diploma examination?

General recommendations for reading are made in the specialty curricula but there is no specific reading list for the examinations. The key document for candidates is the curriculum and all candidates are strongly advised to ensure that they are familiar with their specialty curriculum, which the examinations are mapped to. Many of these are available at www.rcpath.org/training.

26. Are there any past or sample papers that I can look at?

Past and sample papers can be found on the Examinations section of the College website (<http://www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=51>).

27. Does the College publish any books which contain sample questions for the examination?

No. However, sample papers for some specialities are available on the College website in the Examinations section.

28. Does the College run any courses to prepare candidates for the examination?

No, it doesn't. Although some FRCPath courses may be available locally but these are **not** organised by the College and the Examinations Department do not have any information regarding them.

29. What identification do I have to take with me to the examination?

You must bring official identification with a photograph (for example, passport, driving licence, national identity card). Candidates without appropriate identification will **not** be admitted to the examination.

Please note that NHS ID cards are no longer accepted for this purpose.

RESULTS

30. Will my examination result be available on the internet?

A list of results will be available, by candidate number only, on the Examinations section of the College website (www.rcpath.org/exams) from 12:00 on the results day.

31. What membership category will I be eligible for?

On passing the College's Part 1 examination candidates are eligible for Associate membership. On passing the College's specialist Diploma in Dermatopathology or Diploma in Forensic Pathology examination candidates are eligible for Diplomate membership. And on passing the College's Part 2 examination candidates are eligible for Fellowship.

32. If I do not pass can I get more feedback on my result?

Unsuccessful candidates sitting a practical and/or oral examination will receive limited feedback and reasons for the failure to discuss with an appropriate specialty adviser or educational supervisor. For the Part 1 written examination involving essay papers, the specialty adviser or educational supervisor can obtain a summary of your performance for each question from the Examinations Department. Please see section 22 of the Regulations and Guidelines on the Examinations section of the College website for further details.

33. Can I make an appeal against the result of my examination?

Appeals can **only** be made within one month of the examination in writing to the Examinations Department of the College if a candidate considers that an administrative or procedural irregularity has occurred. **In no circumstances** will papers be re-marked. Please see section 23 of the Regulations and Guidelines on the Examinations section of the College website for further details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR OVERSEAS CANDIDATES

34. Am I eligible to enter for the FRCPATH examination?

Please see question one. Overseas candidates must read the advice given in section 7 of the Regulations and Guidelines before applying.

Please note that the examinations department is unable to advise potential candidates on an individual basis as to their eligibility to sit the examination.

35. Are there examination centres overseas?

Yes. Diploma and Part 1 written examinations can usually be arranged in Mumbai, Jeddah, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuwait and Oman.

Please note that Diploma practical and Part 1 practical/oral examinations and all Part 2 examinations can only be sat in the UK.

36. I wish to sit the examination overseas. How should I submit my application form?

Applications should be made to the College on the forms found on the College website on the Examinations section (www.rcpath.org/exams) and sent to the Examinations Department through the post.

37. Is the FRCPATH/Diploma written examination sat overseas at the same as the written examination is sat in the UK?

Yes, it is. The written examination last 6 hours and is held from 09:30 (GMT or British Summer Time) to 12:30 and from 13:30 to 16:30. The multiple-choice-question (MCQ) and extended-matching question (EMQ) examinations last 3 hours and are held in the afternoon only, from 13:30 to 16:30. The written examinations will take place at the equivalent times overseas.

38. Do overseas candidates need to have passed the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) Test or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) before applying for the FRCPATH examinations?

If you do not work or do not intend to work in the UK you do not need to prove your English language skills before sitting the FRCPATH examination. However, all FRCPATH examinations are conducted in English and prospective overseas candidates must ensure that they are sufficiently prepared in this regard.

COMPLAINTS

39. I am unhappy with the way I have been treated as a candidate. How do I complain?

We hope that you will have no reason to be dissatisfied with the service you receive from us. If, however, you do experience a problem that cannot be immediately resolved you will find full details of our complaints procedure on the Examinations section of our website www.rcpath.org.uk/exams. Please note that this procedure covers all the activities managed by the Examinations Department not directly linked to an outcome of an examination. Candidates wishing to appeal about an examination result should see the appeals section of the *Regulations and Guidelines for college examinations* - (please see question 32).