

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2010

CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Membership and Diplomas*.

ENTRY & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific timing for entry to the examination. Candidates should obtain guidance from their educational supervisor as to when to sit the examination. Planning should take into account the duration of fixed-term training contracts and planned CCT date (where applicable) but candidates should apply only when they are ready. Some general guidance is given below, but apart from the sequence in which the examinations can be sat it is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Part 1 written examination

Candidates will usually sit the Part 1 written examination when they have gained about two years of laboratory experience at higher specialist trainee level or equivalent.

Part 1 practical examination

Candidates may sit the Part 1 practical examination at the next examinations session after they are successful in the written examination. Candidates should therefore note that there is a minimum six month gap between sitting the Part 1 written and practical examinations.

Part 2

Part 2 written options

Before entering for the Part 2 oral examination, candidates must have demonstrated laboratory competence by submission of a dissertation, portfolio of papers or evidence of a higher degree.

Candidates intending to submit a dissertation must obtain agreement for their project proposal from the College. It is advisable to submit the project proposal well in advance of starting the project in case it is not deemed suitable or requires modification. Failure to submit a proposal or make any required amendments will mean that the dissertation will not be accepted. Candidates are recommended to begin to plan their project and submit a project proposal as soon as possible after entering higher specialist training or equivalent, and before completion of the Part 1 examinations.

In practice the project proposal will usually be submitted as soon as candidates have passed the Part 1 written examination, but applications will be accepted at any time after candidates have submitted their application for the Part 1 written. The dissertation itself must be submitted after passing the Part 1 examinations.

Candidates wishing to submit evidence of a research degree or published papers are advised to do so as soon as they have submitted their application for the Part 1 written to ensure that, should these not be acceptable, there is sufficient time to undertake a dissertation.

For further guidance, please see the section on 'Guidance for candidates undertaking written options for the Part 2 examination' in the ***Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Membership and Diplomas.***

Part 2 oral examination

Candidates can only enter for the Part 2 oral examination when their submission of a dissertation, portfolio of papers or evidence of a higher degree is successful. This will usually be after three or four years in a higher specialist training post or equivalent experience.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

The Part 1 written examination consists of an essay paper and a Short Answer Question (SAQ) paper lasting three hours each, which can be taken at a number of centres across the country and abroad. The Part 1 practical examination is a three-day examination, currently based in the laboratories of Nottingham University Medical School. It consists of a two-hour objective structured practical examination (OSPE), a 1½-hour data interpretation and calculation paper, and a three-hour 'wet' practical. The examination concludes with a 20-minute oral examination.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination consists of a written option and an oral examination. The written option requires the candidate to demonstrate competence in the specialty by carrying out a laboratory project that is written up and presented in a dissertation. Alternatively, evidence of experience and competence in the specialty may be presented in the form of a collection of peer-reviewed papers or a research degree (PhD or MD), for which the work was carried out during training. Details of the requirements for these routes of qualification for the Part 2 are given in the section on 'Guidance for candidates undertaking written options for the Part 2 examination'

The Part 2 examination concludes with a one-hour oral examination usually held at the College.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 and Part 2 examinations will be offered twice a year in Spring and Autumn.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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