

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2010

CLINICAL EMBRYOLOGY

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 as to when to sit the examination, by speaking to a senior colleague who has knowledge of the candidate's expertise and by consulting the online resources available at www.rcpath.org. Planning should take into account completion of training (where applicable) and state registration, 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 is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Part 1 will normally be taken following a **minimum** of three years' training in departments or laboratories that are recognised by the College it is recommended that the three years' training requirement for Part 1 includes two years of clinical practice.

Candidates may sit the Part 1 practical examination at the next examination 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

All candidates must have passed the Part 1 examination. For science graduates, the Part 2 examination will normally not be taken until eight years after obtaining the degree entry qualification.

Please note this does not necessarily mean there has to be a large gap between Parts 1 and 2. A candidate entering Part 1 at about 6–7 years post-degree or later could progress rapidly to Part 2.

Candidates for the Part 2 examination are required to give evidence of widening their experience over a minimum period of two years of training by examination of a written component and an oral examination.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

The examination consists of two components:

- two three-hour written papers
- one three-hour practical paper

Written examination

The written examination consists of two papers of three hours each, taken on the same day. The first paper comprises several short answer questions. The second requires written answers to four out of five questions, in note or essay format.

Practical examination

The practical examination lasts for three hours. The practical examination contains a mixture of analytical, problem-solving, interpretative questions. Candidates must answer all questions. Tasks will involve data, images, reports, and simulations that do not make use of live human gametes or embryos.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination will comprise a written component and an oral examination.

Written component

The written component of Part 2 will be one of the following options:

- a) a casebook
- b) a dissertation
- c) a minimum of three refereed published papers
- d) a PhD/MD thesis, normally completed during the training period.

The casebook should consist of seven or eight cases with a total length expected, excluding references, in the range of 10,000 to 20,000 words, and would not normally exceed 20,000 words.

If published papers are submitted, these should be accompanied by a narrative placing the papers in context with the applicant's practice and relevant surrounding literature. In the case of multi-authored papers, the candidate should explain exactly his/her contribution to the work. Relatively more multi-authored papers may be required, than single author papers, depending upon the extent of the candidate's contribution and the nature of the work presented.

The research work used for the basis of a dissertation or PhD thesis should be on the topic of human clinical embryology. The work should also be reasonably up to date. Thus a PhD obtained before the attainment of the Part 1 examination will probably not be acceptable for submission. However, the research work done can be rewritten as a dissertation that brings the results and subject matter up to date in the light of current research and publications.

Candidates are required to submit a proposal of their intended topic for a dissertation, as described in the College guidance (detailed below). Candidates are required to submit the written work within three years of having the proposal approved. Candidates who fail to submit the work within that time will be required to apply for an extension, giving reasons, or submit a new proposal.

Candidates will be required to submit their written work both electronically and in duplicate hard copy. The electronic submission will be passed through source matching software which will highlight any passages or phrases that match with material available on the internet or in other submitted work. This is a means by which plagiarism can be detected. Candidates submitting material electronically to the College will be deemed to have consented to this test. It is therefore vital that all sources of information in written submissions should be correctly documented and referenced to avoid allegations of plagiarism. Applicants whose submitted work gives cause for concern will be invited to explain themselves and may be penalised. Each case will be considered individually.

The completed written option must be submitted to the College **at least four months before the entry closing date of the Part 2 examination for which the candidate wishes to enter.**

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.***

The oral examination

Candidates will not be allowed to sit the oral examination until the written option has been awarded a pass mark by the examiners. The oral examination will last about 1 hour.

The aim of the oral examination is to establish that the candidate has demonstrated a level of competence appropriate for independent practice at consultant level.

The examination will test the candidate's:

- Scientific knowledge relevant to clinical embryology, including recent relevant literature
- Ability to apply basic knowledge successfully and appropriately in a clinical context
- Understanding of laboratory organisation and direction, including principles of budget control, quality control, safety and staff management
- Practice in terms of ethics, regulations and standards.

Each of these areas will occupy approximately one quarter of the examination. The candidate should pass in all four areas.

Although the dissertation, casebook or thesis has already been examined and approved, the examination may include a discussion of their submission and the College may ask candidates to bring it with them to the oral.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 written examination is offered once a year in Spring. The Part 1 Practical examination is offered once a year in Autumn.

The Part 2 oral examination is offered twice a year in Spring and Autumn.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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