

## **Royal College of Pathologists**

### **Examination regulations - 2010**

#### **Immunology**

**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 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 is not intended to be prescriptive.

##### **Part 1**

###### **Medical candidates**

The college recommends that the candidates attempt the Part 1 examination after a minimum of two years of JCHMT/PMETB-approved training in immunology. For medically qualified overseas trainees, who do not train within the JCHMT system, a minimum of two years' training in approved diagnostic laboratories serving a large hospital or group of hospitals is required before entry to the Part 1 examination. Because of the clinical component in FRCPATH examinations, overseas trainees are strongly advised to hold appointments in general internal medicine (or paediatrics) either before or during their laboratory training. Practical experience at the bench and experience in clinical liaison must be gained in all major aspects of immunology.

###### **Non-medical candidates**

The college recommends that the candidates attempt the Part 1 examination after completing a minimum of three years' training in a Grade A training programme approved by the Association of Clinical Scientists in Immunology. The training and entry requirements for non-medical candidates in other posts or from overseas will be judged by the College on an *ad hominem* basis.

##### **Part 2**

Candidates must have passed the Part 1 examination and normally have completed a minimum of three years of higher specialist training in posts recognised by (a) the JCHMT or (b) Association of Clinical Scientists in Immunology or (c) by the College in the case of overseas candidates or candidates in other posts.

## **STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION**

### **Part 1**

The Part 1 examination comprises a written examination.

#### **Written examination**

There are two three-hour written papers, comprising short-note style questions and structured essay-style questions.

Paper 1 will examine the knowledge of scientific principles underpinning the practice of clinical and diagnostic immunology, which all candidates will be required to answer.

Paper 2 will test knowledge of the clinical aspects of immunology and will comprise of two alternative versions. The first version, which is for medically qualified candidates, will include questions that address clinical assessment and therapy of patients with disorders of the immune system. The second version, for non-medical candidates, will replace those questions that specifically address clinical assessment and therapy with questions testing in-depth scientific principles of immunology or the effective delivery of diagnostic immunology services or research knowledge. It is axiomatic that the two versions will share some questions

### **Part 2**

The Part 2 examination will comprise a written component, a practical examination and an oral examination. The same Part 2 examination practical examination will be offered to medical and non-medical candidates. With respect to the oral exam questions on clinical management of patients will be replaced by other, appropriate questions for non-medical candidates. To obtain an overall pass in the Part 2 examination the candidates must achieve a pass in the written component, the practical examination and an oral examination. Candidates must initially apply for the practical and oral examination in the same session. Candidates failing any component will only have to repeat that component.

**Candidates who have completed the “old” Part 1 (with practical examination) only have to sit the “new” part 2 oral examination and will not have to attempt the practical examination.**

#### **Written component**

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

- A. PhD/MD thesis, normally completed during the training period
- B. a series of refereed, published papers (or in press)
- C. a casebook containing eight cases covering clinical, audit, laboratory practice and management or communication topics

Although candidates may wish to undertake project work relevant to the Part 2 before passing the Part 1 examination, the finished project may not be submitted as an option for the Part 2 until after success in the Part 1. **Candidates must submit an initial proposal prior to commencement of the project.**

The written component does not need to be passed prior to admission to the Part 2 practical examination and oral examination. However, a pass in the written component is still required for the award of FRCPATH and, given the time required to mark the written component, candidates are advised to submit 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 '*Guidance for candidates undertaking written projects for the Part 2 examination*' and Immunology Part 2 candidate information in the on the Exams section of the college website.

### **The practical examination**

The examination will be held over one day. The practical exam will be a 'dry' examination with a structured format where candidates move between a series of stations testing individual modules of laboratory skills, comprising of immunochemistry, autoimmunity, Flow cytometry, ELISA, Quality Control and Assurance, laboratory safety, troubleshooting in any of above and clinical vignettes for data interpretation and drafting succinct, clinically relevant reports based on the results of laboratory tests. The modules will include components of adult and paediatric immunodeficiency, organ specific and non-organ specific auto immunity, and allergy.

### **The oral examination**

The oral examination will be held on the day after the practical examination. The oral examination will assess clinical liaison skills in addition to the candidates' knowledge of laboratory management and management structures, budgetary control, audit, health and safety at work, quality assurance and training. Candidates must also demonstrate awareness of recent developments and scientific advances in the field, as well as new technologies.

The oral examination will last for one hour. It will be immediately preceded by a 30–60 minute period, during which the candidate will have the opportunity to examine material relevant to the practice of immunology. This material will include clinical case histories, laboratory reports and quality assurance data.

## **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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