

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2018

HISTOCOMPATIBILITY AND IMMUNOGENETICS

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

ENTRY & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific timing for entry to the examination. Candidates should obtain guidance from their training advisor as to when to sit the examination and should apply only when they are ready. Candidates undertaking the HSST curriculum would normally take the Part 1 examination by the end of the second year. Some general guidance is given below, but apart from the sequence in which the examinations can be sat this is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Training must be comprehensive in both theoretical and applied aspects of the field. Part 1 will normally be taken after a minimum of 3 years training in an approved laboratory.

It is recommended that the training includes at least 2 years of clinical practice in H&I. Most science graduate candidates will have gained HCPC registration and will have undergone at least 5-6 years of training in pre- and post-registration grades

Part 2

Part 1 is a pre-requisite for Part 2 and candidates will not sit the Part 2 Examination until at least 12 months after passing the Part 1 Examination.

For science graduates the Part 2 examination will normally be taken after a minimum of 8 years training following obtaining the degree entry qualification. HCPC registration (or equivalent qualification in another country) is a mandatory requirement.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

The Part 1 written examination consists of a short answer question (SAQ) paper and an essay paper lasting three hours each. The first paper requires written answers to four out of six questions unless otherwise stated, in note or essay format. The second paper comprises 20 SAQ each with several sub-sections, all of which should be answered.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination will comprise a written component and a practical and oral examination, which may be taken in any order

The written option

- a) an up to date PhD thesis, which must contain novel work relevant to histocompatibility and immunogenetics
- b) a series of refereed papers
- c) a dissertation, which must extensively cover an aspect of histocompatibility and immunogenetics at advanced level. This option should be applicable to those candidates whose PhD thesis subject does not fall within specific areas of histocompatibility and immunogenetics. Candidates choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice on their chosen subject before proceeding
- d) a casebook, which must be a comprehensive work to an advanced level. The casebook should consist of 7-8 cases with a total length, excluding references, in the range 14,000-20,000 words. Cases should be selected to cover the main areas of clinical practice including solid organ and haematopoietic stem cell transplantation, blood transfusion and immunogenetic testing. A clinical audit should also be included as one case. Candidates choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice on their chosen subjects before proceeding.
- e) a research thesis completed during study for a professional doctorate. The subject and content of the research project must be approved as relevant to H&I and candidates are strongly advised to seek advice on their project proposal before proceeding if they intend to submit the thesis as a part 2 written option.

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.

The written option does not need to be passed before sitting the Part 2 Practical and Oral examination but candidates are strongly advised to have their proposal approved ahead of applying for the examination.

Practical Examination

The practical examination is held on one day and will concentrate on analytical and interpretive skills along with basic clinical interpretation of H&I data. The practical examination is designed to assess all aspects of clinical H&I laboratory practice including interpretation of HLA typing and HLA antibody identification data, donor selection and assessment of donor compatibility. Case studies and interpretation of laboratory data, together with statistical manipulation, will usually be provided.

Oral Examination

The Part 2 oral is a one hour examination. 30 minutes is spent discussing three short cases, for which the candidate has 30 minutes to prepare. The remainder of the examination will consist of a number of additional questions that will test scientific knowledge, the ability to apply knowledge in a clinical context and understanding of laboratory organisation and direction.

Candidates who have sat the old format examination

Candidates who have passed the Part 1 written examination but not the old Part 1 practical examination will transfer to the examination structure described above.

Candidates who have passed the old Part 1 examinations (written and practical) will proceed to the old style Part 2 Oral Examination. In order to pass the entire examination and receive award of FRCPATH they will still have to submit a satisfactory written component (dissertation, MD/PhD or portfolio of published works) but candidates may take the Oral Examination at any session after entry for Part 2 and will not have to wait until the written component is completed. Candidates will continue to be subject to the maximum number of re-sit attempts stipulated in the Regulations.

The Part 2 examination will be available in this format until 2020; after that date candidates will have to take the Part 2 practical and oral examination.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 examination is offered once a year in the Autumn sitting. The Part 2 examination is offered once a year in the Spring session.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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