

Dermatopathology examination regulations

2026

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the 'Regulations and guidelines – College examinations for membership and diplomas'.



Entry and training requirements

The standard required to pass the diploma in dermatopathology is that of a medical expert specialist offering a diagnostic opinion in dermatopathology to local and often more distant colleagues. Candidates for the examination will be expected to demonstrate considerable knowledge in all aspects of dermatopathology, at a standard beyond that required to pass the FRCPath examination in histopathology.

Candidates must hold a minimum of either the FRCPath in histopathology or hold the Certificate of Competence of Training (CCT) in dermatology or be within a year of being eligible for the CCT in dermatology. Candidates from countries other than the UK must have an equivalent qualification or similar accreditation status.

Newly qualified candidates (with FRCPath and CCT in dermatology) to the examination will normally be expected to have undertaken a minimum of 1 year's training at a centre with a specialised dermatopathology service and a consultant dermatopathologist who holds the diploma in dermatopathology. The candidate should spend the year in a specialised service with rotations through dermatology/pathology depending on background.

Experienced candidates may occasionally be permitted to sit the examination without completing the training programme at a training centre as described above. This variance will be at the discretion of the chair of examiners in dermatopathology and Clinical Director of Training.

The same standards will apply to both histopathologists and dermatologists in respect of their knowledge to pass the examination.

Structure and format of the examination

The content of the examination will include written, practical and oral components.

Written examination

The written examination consists of two 3-hour essay papers. Paper 1 comprises questions on basic principles and general aspects of dermatopathology. Paper 2 concentrates on more specific aspects of dermatopathology.



Candidates must have passed the written part of the examination before they can proceed to the practical examination.

Practical and oral examination

The practical examination is held over 2 days.

On the afternoon of the first day, there is a 3-hour microscopy session, comprising 20 histopathology sections to cover dermatopathology and other relevant aspects of histopathology that may become manifest within the skin.

On the morning of the second day, there is a 2-hour microscopy session, comprising 6 or more complex cases that test clinical knowledge and relevant specialised techniques in histopathology. The clinical component may include colour prints or patient examination. Particular emphasis will be placed on clinicopathological correlation in this part of the examination.

The oral examination is undertaken during the afternoon of the second day and is for 30 minutes.

Particular significance will be given in the marking of the examination to errors that could be of clinical consequence to the patient, in terms of either potential inappropriate management or an adverse clinical outcome.

Timing of the examinations

The written part of the diploma will be held once a year in the spring. The practical examination will be held once a year in the autumn.

