

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2018

Immunology

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the document *College Examinations for Fellowship and Diplomas - Regulations and Guidelines for 2018*.

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 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 candidates attempt the Part 1 examination after a minimum of two years of JRCPTB / GMC-approved training in Immunology. For medically qualified overseas trainees, who do not train within the JRCPTB / GMC 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 candidates attempt the Part 1 examination after completing a minimum of three years training in a Clinical Scientist (Grade A) training programme or equivalent

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 JRCPTB/GMC for medical candidates, or HSST for clinical scientists.

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. All candidates will be required to answer this paper.

Paper 2 will test the knowledge of the clinical aspects of immunology. The paper comprises of questions that address both the clinical and laboratory assessment, and the treatment of patients with disorders of the immune system. The questions on therapy of diseases of the immune system will be modified for non-medical candidates, by replacing those questions requiring in depth knowledge of clinical assessment and treatment with alternative questions concerning the effective delivery of diagnostic immunology services. The answers expected and the standard setting for Medical candidates and Clinical Scientists will take into account the differences in their curriculum and training programs.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination will comprise a written module, a practical examination module, and an oral examination module. The practical examination offered to medical and non-medical candidates will be identical. With respect to the oral examination, 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 module, the practical examination module and the oral examination module.

Candidates must initially apply for the practical and oral examination in the same application, but may elect to defer sitting either the practical examination or the oral examination until the following sitting if they so wish. Candidates who fail to pass a module will only have to repeat that module.

Candidates who have completed the “old” Part 1 (with practical examination) only have to sit the “new” Part 2 oral examination and will not to attempt the Part 2 practical examination. This option will remain available until 2020.

Written module

The written module of the Part 2 examination 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), with a commentary
- 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 for the Part 2 examination until after success in the Part 1 examination. **Candidates must submit an initial proposal prior to commencement of the project.**

The written module does not need to be passed prior to admission to the Part 2 practical examination and oral examination. However, a pass in the written module is still required for the award of FRCPath and, given the time required to mark the written module, 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 candidate Information in the online Examinations section of the College website.

The practical examination module

The examination will be held over one day (with a short fixed break for lunch), either the day before or the day after the oral examination. The practical examination will be a ‘dry’ examination with an objective structured format where candidates move between a series of stations testing individual modules of laboratory skills, comprising of immunochemistry and electrophoresis, autoimmunity, flow cytometry, data analysis, Quality Control and Assurance, laboratory safety, troubleshooting in any of the above, and clinical vignettes for data interpretation and drafting succinct, clinically relevant reports based on the results of laboratory tests. The stations will include components of adult and paediatric immunodeficiency, allergy, and organ specific and non-organ specific auto-immunity.

The oral examination module

The oral examination will be held on either the day after or the day before the practical examination. The oral examination will have four questions covering allergy, immunodeficiency, autoimmunity, quality assurance, and recent scientific, translational and technological advances in the field.

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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