

Molecular pathology (acquired disease) 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

Candidates must be Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC)-registered clinical scientists. There is no specific timing for entry to the examination. Candidates undertaking the higher specialist scientist training (HSST) curriculum would normally have taken the Part 1 examination by the end of the second year. Candidates should obtain guidance from their educational supervisor as to when to sit the examination. Candidates should apply only when they are ready. It is very important that candidates do not sit the examination too early before they have acquired the necessary experience. Some general guidance is given below, but apart from the sequence in which the examinations can be sat, it is not intended to be prescriptive.

Please note that candidates will not be permitted to sit the oral and practical examination until the proposal for the written option has been submitted and approved by the examiners. The final project may be submitted either before or after taking the practical and oral examination.

Part 1

In order to achieve the standard required to pass the Part 1 FRCPATH examination, candidates will normally require at least 12 months of practice in molecular pathology (i.e. a minimum of 4 years' relevant postgraduate study and practice).

Part 2

Candidates may not sit the Part 2 examination until having successfully completed the Part 1 examination and having acquired significant experience of practice in molecular pathology.

Structure and format of the examination

Part 1

The Part 1 examination will be a written assessment of knowledge and clinical and laboratory judgement and comprises two 3-hour written papers. Both papers will be marked using an open marking scheme with a pass mark calculated using a modified Angoff method.



It is a test of knowledge of the application of technologies as indicated in the curriculum and their application to the following disorders: haematopoietic neoplasms, solid neoplasms and predisposing conditions and tumour immunology and transplantation.

Paper 1: Long answer paper

Paper 1 consists of 5 long answer questions. Candidates answer 4 of 5 questions as directed.

Paper 2: Short answer questions paper

Paper 2 contains 20 short answer questions (SAQs) designed to elicit knowledge across the whole breadth of the curriculum.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination will comprise one 3-hour practical paper followed by a 1-hour oral examination.

The written option

- A PhD thesis.
- A series of refereed papers.
- A dissertation, which must extensively cover an aspect of molecular pathology at advanced level. This option should be applicable to those candidates whose PhD thesis subject does not fall within specific areas of molecular pathology. Candidates choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice on their chosen subject before proceeding.
- 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 of 14,000–20,000 words.
- Candidates who are undertaking a course leading to a professional doctorate (DClinSci) as part of the Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) programme must submit their project proposal to the relevant university, who will arrange for the



proposal to be reviewed and approved by the College in order to ensure that it would also satisfy the requirements for an FRCPATH dissertation.

Candidates are required to submit the written work within 3 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 must have their proposal approved ahead of applying for the examination.

Timing of the examinations

The Part 1 and Part 2 examinations are offered once a year in autumn.

