



The Royal College of **Pathologists**
Pathology: the science behind the cure

Oral and maxillofacial pathology 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

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 intended certificate of completion of training (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, it is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Trainees will normally require a minimum of 2.5 years of training, which must include 1 year of practical reporting experience in general histopathology in addition to oral and maxillofacial pathology training and reporting experience. Case observation is not sufficient, and trainees will be asked to provide evidence in the form of national Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) outcomes or portfolio/logbooks.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination can normally be taken after a minimum of 4.5 years of training. Training must include reporting experience across the range of oral and maxillofacial pathology. Case observation is not sufficient, and trainees will be asked to provide evidence in the form of national ARCP outcomes or portfolio/logbooks.

Structure and format of the examination

Part 1

The Part 1 is a written test of core knowledge. The examination will comprise 2 papers with a combination of short answer questions and essays. There will be 11 questions in total, of which 8 must be answered. All questions are equally weighted.

Paper 1 will cover general pathological principles and will include aspects of general histopathology relevant to oral and maxillofacial pathology. Paper 2 will be slanted to oral and maxillofacial pathology.



Part 2

The Part 2 examination comprises practical and oral components taken over 2 days and is designed to test the capability of the candidate to be an independent specialist in diagnostic oral and maxillofacial pathology.

The examination is conducted in 5 sections (designated A, B, C, D and E) with specified objectives. Candidates must pass sections A and B in order to be eligible for a pass. The aggregation of the scores in the different parts of the examination and any compensation between parts is at the discretion of the 3 examiners, who will take into account the entire performance of the candidate over the 2 days in reaching their agreed final decision of pass or fail.

- The objective of section A is to test the candidate's competence to diagnose a wide range of the lesions that might present to an oral pathologist. Section A comprises not more than 20 cases for diagnosis and lasts 3 hours.
- The objective of section B is to test the ability of the candidate to report complex cases. Up to 6 cases will be used. These may include a large resection, cases with multiple biopsies or cases requiring special stains, immunocytochemistry or molecular biology investigations for diagnosis. Section B lasts 3 hours.
- The objective of section C is to test the candidate's ability at specimen dissection, cut-up, selection and preparation of tissue blocks for histopathological examination. Candidates should expect to be required to dissect, at least partially, an appropriate resection specimen as well as smaller biopsy material. Section C lasts not more than 45 minutes.
- The objective of section D is to assess the candidate's ability to communicate the results and interpretation of histopathological findings in the context of a consultation using a multi-headed microscope. Section D lasts not more than 2 hours.
- Section E is the oral examination and should last not more than 1 hour. The subject matter of the oral examination may include any aspect of the examination. It also includes areas not covered earlier in the examination, such as health and safety, the



regulatory framework of laboratory practice, responsibilities of consultants and aspects of laboratory management.

Timing of the examinations

The Part 1 and Part 2 examinations will be offered twice a year in spring and autumn.

