

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2021

VIROLOGY

These regulations 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 educational supervisor as to when to sit the examination. Planning should take into account 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

Medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised Regional Specialist Training Programme in microbiology or virology for a period of normally not less than 12 months.

Non-medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised training programme in microbiology for a period of normally not less than 12 months. In addition, they must be state registered, or the equivalent of state registered in another country.

Part 2

Medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised Regional Higher Specialist Training Programme in virology for a period of normally not less than three years.

Non-medically qualified candidates must be state-registered and normally have at least four years' experience in a clinical virology laboratory recognised for higher specialist training.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

For medically qualified candidates in a UK training programme, information regarding the Infection Part 1 examination is available in the Infection Regulations and Guidelines.

For overseas based and scientifically qualified candidates, the Part 1 examination consists of 125 multiple-choice questions (MCQ). The three-hour examination is designed to test both knowledge and understanding.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination consists of a written examination and an Objective Structured Practical and Clinical Examination (OSPACE) held over two days. Both components will be held together and candidates must apply for and attempt both components in the same session.

Format of the written examination

The written papers will take place over one day.

Paper 1 Section A (90 mins): Long essays. Two compulsory questions, one on a clinical virology topic and one (out of a choice of two) on a management issue relevant to Medical Virology practice.

Paper 1 Section B (90 mins): Short Answer Questions. Nine compulsory short answer questions with topics from the curriculum.

Paper 2 (120 mins): Critical review of papers. A choice of 2 out of 3 published papers for candidates to review, covering clinical, laboratory and epidemiological aspects of virology.

Questions will include understanding of study design and methodologies, study objectives, data interpretation and understanding of the correct use of statistics, awareness of limitations, potential bias and confounding factors and the implications of the findings of the papers.

Format of the Objective Structured Practical and Clinical Examination (OSPACE)

The OSPACE will take place over one day. It comprises:

Section 1: Short stations. Around 90 minutes.

OSPACE Section 1 will comprise 15 questions, each typically lasting 6 minutes (up to 10 minutes for more complex questions).

Objectives: Assessment of clinical and laboratory knowledge, diagnostic skill, data interpretation, ability to trouble-shoot and understanding of quality control

Section 2: Extended stations. Around 3 hours.

OSPACE Section 2 will comprise four 30-minute practical questions and four 15-minute face-to-face verbal questions (1 minute to consider the scenario, 10 minutes verbal examination, 4 minutes change over).

Objectives: Assessment of practical skill, laboratory safety, clinical management skill, communication skill with clinical team and with patients and problem solving skill in laboratory and clinical settings.

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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