

Changes to the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examinations (ISFEs)

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Following an academic review of the content and format of the six Specialty Fellowship Examinations, the Specialty Fellowship Examinations Executive (SFEE) announced in 2020 that changes to the examinations are to be introduced in 2021. The changes are in the context of this review and in line with the current curriculum for each specialty and the General Dental Council's 'Standards for Specialty Education' (published in January 2019).

This document provides a summary of the changes to be implemented. Roll out of these changes will begin in autumn 2021 to run in parallel with final diets of the current exam format in each specialty. Details of transitional arrangements for candidates can be found in the document 'ISFEs Transitional Arrangements 2021-22' which is available on our website.

Further documentation relating to the new examination format, including Regulations, will be published on our website shortly.

New Examination Format

Part A – Critical Appraisal

- A stand-alone written examination of 3 hours' duration
- Candidates will be given three extracts from published research – two extracts will be specialty specific and the third will be generic to all specialties. Each extract will have equal weighting.
- Candidates can attempt Part A at any time during higher specialty training
- Candidates must pass Part A before proceeding to Part B
- Part A will be held online in February and September each year beginning in September 2021

Part B – Management of Healthcare Delivery and Clinical or Desktop Exercise

- A stand-alone examination with two components
- Candidates must attempt both components at their first sitting
- At any subsequent sitting, candidates need only re-sit the section(s) which they have not passed at their previous attempt
- Candidates can attempt Part B only once they have passed Part A, and when they meet the eligibility requirements, which will be detailed in the regulations. Eligibility criteria are awaiting formal approval but will be broadly similar to the eligibility requirements for the current format exam.

Management of Healthcare Delivery Format (All specialties)

- Six scenarios, each lasting a total of 25 minutes comprising 10 minutes assimilation, followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination with a pair of Examiners

Clinical Format (Oral Medicine, Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Restorative Dentistry)

- Eight scenarios, each lasting a total of 20 minutes comprising 5 minutes assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination with a pair of Examiners

Desktop Exercise Format (Dental Public Health)

- Candidates must submit a portfolio comprising four projects reflecting their experience in Dental Public Health
- Eight scenarios comprising:
 - Four based on unseen cases each with 5 minutes assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral with a pair of examiners
 - Four based on the candidate's submitted portfolio each with a 15-minute structured oral with a pair of examiners

Limitation on attempts and Timing

- Candidates must normally pass Part A within two years of their first attempt at Part A
- Candidates must pass Part A before applying to sit Part B
- Candidates must normally pass Part B by the end of their training programme, or within two years of their first attempt at Part B
- Candidates will have a maximum of four attempts at Part A and four attempts at Part B
- For re-sit candidates who move from the current to the new format exam, attempts taken under the current exam format will count towards the total number of attempts for the Part A and Part B