

Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examinations Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to frequently-asked questions regarding the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examinations in Dental Public Health (DPH), Oral Medicine, Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Restorative Dentistry are given below.

The Regulations for the examinations are available on the ISFE pages of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow's website at www.rcpsg.ac.uk. However, if you wish to make any further enquiries, please e-mail the Secretariat at isfe@rcpsg.ac.uk

How many days will the examination last?

Part A: All specialties will sit the examination at the same diet. The exam will be held online and will last 3 hours.

Part B: There will be individual diets for each specialty. The exam will normally run over one or two days, depending on the number of candidates. Each exam diet will be held in one venue in either Glasgow, Edinburgh, London or Dublin. If necessary it may be held online. Details of examination venues will be advised to registered candidates once confirmed.

Will I know in advance who the examiners are?

No. Candidates are not informed in advance who will be examining.

Will there be any live patients or actors?

No.

Do all the ISFE examinations have the same format?

The Part A is the same format for all specialties. It includes two specialty specific questions and one generic question.

The Part B for Oral Medicine, Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Restorative Dentistry will consist of a Clinical section and a Management of Health Care Delivery section.

The Part B for Dental Public Health will consist of a Desktop Exercise and a Management of Health Care Delivery section.

Please see the regulations for each specialty for full details.

Will there be any questions about work undertaken, courses attended and projects completed during training?

Dental Public Health

Yes, but only in the Desktop Exercise section where four of the scenarios will be based on material from the candidate's submitted Portfolio.

All Other Specialties

No. Scenarios will be based on clinical cases and management scenarios set by the examiners.

What are the rules for cross-compensation?

There is no cross-compensation between Part A and Part B, or between sections within the Part B. A fail in one section cannot be compensated by a good performance in another. However, within the Clinical or Desktop Exercise and the Management of Healthcare Delivery sections, candidates may compensate for a poor performance in one scenario with a good performance in another scenario. The same applies in the Part A exam, with a high mark in one extract potentially making up for a lower mark in another, amounting to an overall pass.

What should I expect from the Part A - Critical Appraisal exam?

The Part A is a written paper lasting 3 hours designed to test the knowledge and skills required for evidence-based practice. Candidates will receive three extracts from published research and other scientific publications, along with questions to answer on each extract. Two of the extracts will be appropriate to the exam specialty and the third will be appropriate to all specialties.

What is the pass mark for the Part A - Critical Appraisal exam?

The critical appraisal paper will be double marked with the marks awarded being averaged to achieve the overall mark for each extract. Each extract will have equal weighting. The pass mark will be based on the perceived degree of difficulty of each extract. The standard set pass mark will be set in advance of the marking by the examiners and reviewed at the adjudication.

What should I expect from the Part B - Management of Health Care Delivery section?

All Specialties

Candidates will be presented with six scenarios about management issues. Each scenario will last a total of 25 minutes comprising a 10 minute assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination. During assimilation you will review the scenario and make notes before entering the structured oral.

Am I expected to know about management policies and procedures throughout the UK and Ireland?

No. You are, however, expected to be familiar with your own trust's policies and procedures.

How are marks awarded for the section on Management of Health Care Delivery?

All Specialties

Examiners will agree the passing criteria in advance based on the perceived degree of difficulty of each scenario. Two examiners will be present at each structured oral, each of whom will award a grade independently. When the section has been completed, the marks awarded will be added together to provide an overall mark and a pass or fail decision will be

reached. Therefore, if you feel that you have done badly on one scenario, try to forget about it right away. You can compensate with a better performance on your next scenario.

What should I expect from the Part B - Desktop Exercise or Clinical Section?

Dental Public Health – Desktop Exercise

Prior to the examination, candidates will submit a portfolio of projects reflecting their experience in Dental Public Health. Examiners will review the portfolio in advance of the examination and will set a range of questions to be asked at the structured oral. For further information on the portfolio, please refer to the document 'Guidance on the preparation of portfolios for Dental Public Health' which can be found on our website.

Candidates will be presented with eight scenarios. Four scenarios will be based on the candidate's submitted portfolio each lasting a total of 15 minutes comprising a structured oral examination. Four scenarios will be based on unseen cases each lasting a total of 20 minutes comprising 5 minutes assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination. During assimilation you will review the scenario and make notes before entering the structured oral.

All Other Specialties – Clinical Section

Candidates will be presented with eight clinical scenarios for their specialty, each lasting 20 minutes comprising 5 minutes assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination with a pair of Examiners. Clinical material such as study casts, radiographs, clinical photographs etc. may accompany the scenario. During assimilation you will review the scenario and make notes before entering the structured oral.

How are marks awarded for the Desktop Exercise or Clinical section?

The method of marking for the desktop exercise (DPH) and the clinical section (all other specialties) is the same. Examiners will agree the passing criteria in advance based on the perceived degree of difficulty of each scenario. Two examiners will be present during the structured oral, each of whom will award a grade independently. When the section has been completed, the marks awarded will be added together to provide an overall mark and a pass or fail decision will be reached. Therefore, if you feel that you have done badly on one scenario, try to forget about it right away. You can compensate with a better performance on your next scenario.

Will I receive my results on the day of the examination?

No. For Part A results will normally be issued within four weeks of the examination. For Part B results will normally be issued 4 working days after the conclusion of the examination diet.

If I am unsuccessful, will I receive feedback on my performance?

Yes. You will automatically be sent feedback from the Chair of the examination Board normally within 10 working days of the issue of results. You will not receive any feedback on the day of the examination.

Will I have to re-sit the whole examination?

No. You will only be required to re-sit the section(s) you have failed. However, at subsequent

sittings you must re-sit all the sections you have failed.

Is there any limitation on how many times I can sit the examination?

Yes. Candidates will have four attempts at Part A and four attempts at Part B. In addition, candidates must normally pass the Part B by the end of their training programme or within 2 years of their first attempt at Part B.

If I am successful, when will I receive my Diploma?

Having passed Part A and Part B, candidates will be eligible for the award of the Diploma. The Secretariat will notify the candidate's preferred College of affiliation (as detailed on their application form) that the candidate has passed the examinations and can be awarded the Diploma of Fellowship. The College of affiliation will then contact the candidate directly to complete the application process.

When I receive my Diploma, which College will I be affiliated to?

Candidates may affiliate to any of the four Surgical Royal Colleges in the United Kingdom and Ireland. This should be stated on your application form at the time of application, but can be changed at any time prior to the publication of results by contacting the Secretariat.