

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. We hope this information will provide the details you require. The Regulations for each examination 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?

Examinations will normally run for one or two days depending on the number of candidates.

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?

No. Oral Medicine, Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Restorative Dentistry consist of a Clinical section, a Management of Health Care Delivery section and a Critical Appraisal paper.

Dental Public Health consists of a Desktop Exercise, a Management of Health Care Delivery section and a Critical Appraisal Paper.

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 management section. The desktop exercise will be based on material provided by the examiners.

All Other Specialties

No. You will only be questioned about the clinical cases and management scenarios provided by the examiners.

What are the rules for cross-compensation?

The outcome (pass or fail) for the clinical section, the section on management of health care delivery (in all specialties) and the desktop exercise (for DPH) will depend on reconciliation of the grades awarded for each scenario (or component) by each examiner, with low grades being compensated by high grades. There is, however, no compensation between any of the three sections. A fail in one section cannot be compensated by a good performance in another section.

What should I expect from the critical appraisal section?

The critical appraisal section is a written paper lasting 2 hours designed to test the knowledge and skills required for evidence-based practice.

For further information on the content of this part of the examination, please refer to the document 'Introduction to the Critical Appraisal Section (including example questions)' which can be found on the website.

What is the pass mark for the critical appraisal section?

The critical appraisal paper will be double marked. The pass mark will be based on the perceived degree of difficulty. It will be decided in advance by the examiners and reviewed at the adjudication.

What should I expect from the management of health care delivery section?

Dental Public Health

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 viva. At the examination, you will have a viva lasting 1 hour during which the examiners will ask you questions. 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.

All Other Specialties

Candidates will be presented with a number of scenarios about management issues. You will be given time to 'assimilate' or review the scenario and make notes before entering the viva. Specimen scenarios can be found on the website.

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?

Dental Public Health

Two examiners will be present at the viva, each of whom will award a grade independently. An overall mark will then be obtained from the two marks and a pass or fail decision will be reached.

All Other Specialties

Two examiners will be present at each scenario viva, each of whom will award a grade independently. This process will give rise to several scores (up to 12 for a section with six 10-minute scenarios). When the section has been completed, the grades 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 desktop exercise or clinical section?

Dental Public Health – Desktop Exercise

Candidates will be presented with a number of scenarios based on issues relevant to the practice of Dental Public Health. You will be given time to ‘assimilate’ or review the scenarios and make notes before entering the viva.

All Other Specialties – Clinical Section

Candidates will be presented with a number of clinical scenarios for their specialty. Clinical material such as study casts, radiographs, clinical photographs etc. may accompany the scenario. You will be given time to ‘assimilate’ or review the scenario and make notes before the viva. Specimen scenarios can be found on the website.

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. Two examiners will be present during the viva(s), each of whom will award a grade independently. This process will give rise to several scores (up to 12 for a section with six 10-minute scenarios). When the section has been completed, the grades 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. Results will be posted to candidates after the examination.

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

Yes. You will be sent feedback from the Chair of the examination Board by post following the examination. 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 sections 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 must normally pass the whole examination within 2 years of his/her first attempt and will normally be allowed three attempts to pass the examination.

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

Candidates will only be eligible for the award of the Diploma once confirmation of completion of their training has been received from their Postgraduate Dental Dean. For further information on the process for issuing the Diploma, please refer to the document ‘Processing for Issuing Diploma’ which can be found on the website.

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 by contacting the Secretariat prior to your diploma being issued.