

**The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
The Royal College of Surgeons of England
The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland**

**INTERCOLLEGIATE SPECIALTY FELLOWSHIP BOARD IN
DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH**

**REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE TO CANDIDATES
FOR
THE INTERCOLLEGIATE SPECIALTY FELLOWSHIP EXAMINATION
IN
DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH FDS (DPH)**

JUNE 2021

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1. Eligibility

Before admission to the examination candidates must produce evidence satisfactory to the Joint Meeting of Dental Faculties.

1.1 Part A

- 1.1.1 Evidence of enrolment with the Specialist Advisory Committee (SAC) in Dental Public Health under Joint Committee for Postgraduate Training in Dentistry (JCPTD) or with the Education Committee of the Faculty of Dentistry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (FoDRCSI).
- 1.1.2 Evidence of having written confirmation of satisfactory progress from the Training Programme Director.

1.2 Part B

- 1.2.1 Evidence of having passed Part A
- 1.2.2 Evidence of possessing an approved academic qualification in Dental Public Health.
- 1.2.3 Evidence of completion, by the date of commencement of the examination diet for which the candidate is applying, one of the following training requirements. This requirement may be interpreted flexibly at the discretion of the Board Chair to allow candidates the opportunity of attempting the examination in the two diets immediately before completion of training. Candidates must have completed either:
 - i. a minimum of 2 years full-time equivalent specialty training in Dental Public Health where the above-mentioned academic qualification was obtained prior to entry to the formal higher training programme (or pro-rata for those in less than full time training), or;
 - ii. of having completed a minimum of 3 years full-time equivalent specialty training where that period included the obtaining of academic qualifications (or pro-rata for those in less than full time training).
- 1.2.4 Evidence of having written confirmation of satisfactory progress from the Training Programme Director.

2. Eligibility for the Award of the Diploma

Having achieved a pass at the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examination Parts A and B, the FDS in the relevant specialty will be awarded.

3. Application

3.1 Candidates should submit a separate application form for each part of the examination. Application forms should be submitted by the closing date for the diet they wish to sit. This is normally 16 weeks before the examination. The current fee as published on the website must be paid once eligibility is confirmed.

3.2 Candidates applying for the Part B examination will be required to submit a portfolio for the Desktop Exercise section of no more than 15,000 words comprising four projects reflecting their experience in Dental Public Health and covering a wide spectrum of Dental Public Health practice. Submission must normally be made 1 month before the examination.

4. Format and Scope of the Examination

4.1 The exam consists of two parts Part A (Critical Appraisal) and Part B (Desktop Exercise and Management of Healthcare Delivery). To pass the examination the candidate must pass both parts. There will be no compensation between examination parts.

4.2 Candidates may be examined in any subject area falling within the SAC approved curriculum. While no syllabus can be comprehensive an attempt is made in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 to give an indication of the scope of the enquiry in each section.

4.3 The detailed practical arrangements for the examinations may vary between examination diets and will be advised to candidates by the ISFE Secretariat. Dependent on candidate numbers for the Part B examination there may be a requirement to add a 'wait station' to the programme.

5. Components of the Examination

5.1 Part A – Critical Appraisal

5.1.1 The purpose of the Part A is to test the knowledge and skills required for evidence-based practice.

- 5.1.2 This is a stand-alone written examination of 3 hours' duration. At the commencement of this exam candidates will be given reference material consisting of three extracts from published research and other scientific publications. Two of the extracts will be appropriate to the examination specialty and the third will be appropriate to all specialties.
- 5.1.3 Candidates are referred to the Critical Appraisal syllabus, which is published separately, for a list of subject headings which define the scope of this section.

5.2 Part B – Desktop Exercise

- 5.2.1 This section of the examination is designed to test not just factual knowledge but understanding, reasoning power, intellectual ability, attitudes, professional values and the candidate's ability to communicate.
- 5.2.2 It will be based on issues relevant to the practice of Dental Public Health such as: a described scenario where a Senior Clinical Post's input is requested; audit; or the development of practical tools for needs assessment.
- 5.2.2 This will consist of eight scenarios. 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 where the candidate will be questioned by a pair of examiners. Four scenarios will be based on the candidate's submitted portfolio each lasting a total of 15 minutes comprising a structured oral examination where the candidate will be questioned by a pair of examiners.

5.3 Part B - Management of Healthcare Delivery

- 5.3.1 The aim of this section is to assess the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the management of healthcare delivery and its regulatory mechanisms and their readiness for a leadership role in a senior post.
- 5.3.2 This will consist of six scenarios. Each scenario will last a total of 25 minutes comprising 10 minutes' assimilation followed by a 15-minute structured oral examination where the candidate will be questioned by a pair of examiners.

5.3.3 A candidate may be examined on any of the following headings:

- Health services management, administration and use of resources;
- Evidence-based practice, clinical guidelines and outcomes;
- Medico-legal responsibilities, jurisprudence and ethics;
- Clinical effectiveness/clinical audit;
- Appraisal/performance assessment/peer review;
- Clinical risk management/complaints;
- Teaching/training/assessment/continuing professional development; and
- Confidentiality/freedom of information/data protection.

5.3.4 It is acknowledged that the healthcare systems within the UK are structured differently, regulated differently and supported by different agencies. Candidates are only expected to be familiar with the structures, regulations and agencies that exist in the country where their training is based but should have some idea of how these are different in other parts of the UK and Ireland.

6. Entry to the Examination

6.1 Candidates must pass Part A before applying to sit Part B.

6.2 Candidates must attempt both sections of Part B at their first sitting.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

7.1 Any candidate who has a physical disability, specific learning difficulty or any other condition that they believe would disadvantage them compared with other candidates in an examination, may be entitled to reasonable adjustments.

7.2 Candidate must make any reasonable adjustment request in writing by the closing date for applications and provide supporting evidence in line with the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

7.3 Candidates must notify the Secretariat of any request for a reasonable adjustment at each examination attempt. Candidates should not assume that previously agreed reasonable adjustments will be carried forward to a future examination.

7.4 An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. The needs and circumstances of each candidate are different. The Secretariat will consider any request for a reasonable adjustment on a case by case basis.

- 7.5 If the requested adjustments cannot be implemented, the candidate may either withdraw from the examination or proceed without the adjustments.
- 7.6 Special arrangements purely for candidate convenience cannot be made; candidate convenience includes, but is not limited to, provision for night shifts, courses, other examination dates and any other clinical commitments.

8. Resitting

- 8.1 Passes obtained are 'permanent' and re-sitting is necessary only for parts or sections that have been failed.
- 8.2 Candidates re-sitting Part B must attempt all sections which they have not passed at their previous attempt(s) e.g. Part B (Desktop Exercise) and/or Part B (Management of Healthcare Delivery).
- 8.3 The fee for re-sitting one or two sections of the Part B examination will be determined by the Specialty Fellowship Examinations Executive (SFEE).

9. Number of Attempts and Timing

- 9.1 Candidates will normally be allowed a maximum of four attempts at Part A and four attempts at Part B of the examination. In exceptional circumstances, a special case can be made to the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Board for the specialty by the relevant Training Programme Director, with the support of the relevant Postgraduate Dental Dean/Director, for one additional sitting by a candidate.
- 9.2 An attempt is defined as an occasion when a candidate commences, but does not necessarily complete the Part A, Part B (Desktop Exercise) or Part B (Management of Healthcare Delivery) examination.
- 9.3 There is no time limit between passing Part A and registering for Part B.
- 9.4 A candidate must normally pass both sections of the Part B examination by the end of their training programme (whole time equivalent training) or within two years of their first attempt at Part B.

10. Announcement of Results

- 10.1 For Part A, candidates will be advised of their results within 3 weeks of the examination.
- 10.2 For Part B, candidates will be advised of their results on the fourth working day after the examination; the first weekday after the conclusion of the examination diet being the first working day.

11. Appeals

- 11.1 Appeals Regulations published by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow apply to all Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examinations and are published separately. Candidates wishing to submit an appeal should refer to the appeals regulations for details of appropriate grounds for appeal, the appeals process, and fees charged.
- 11.2 Appeals must be submitted to the ISFE Secretariat within 30 working days of result publication.
- 11.3 Appeals against the academic judgement of examiners will not be allowed.

12. Misconduct

- 12.1 The standards of behaviour expected of those applying for and sitting the examinations are outlined in the Candidate Code of Conduct which is published separately. By applying for the examination, candidates are deemed to have read and accepted the code of conduct.
- 12.2 Candidates should be aware that any breach of the Code of Conduct may result in a misconduct investigation and the possibility of penalties, including exclusion from further examinations and reporting to the General Dental Council (UK) or the Dental Council of Ireland.

13. Withdrawal

- 13.1 A candidate withdrawing from the examination must do so in writing.
- 13.2 The examination fee less a 20% administration fee may be returned when written notice of withdrawal is received prior to the examination closing date. Refunds are not normally made to any candidate who withdraws after the closing date.
- 13.3 Withdrawal from the examination due to illness, accident or on compassionate grounds should be reported to the ISFE Secretariat as early as possible. This can be done by telephone to 0141 221 6072 or by email to isfe@rcpsg.ac.uk. Notification received by telephone must be confirmed in writing within 30 working days following the candidate's programmed examination date.
- 13.4 In the case of illness or accident, a medical certificate and a letter from the Training Programme Director should accompany the written notice of withdrawal. In the case of withdrawal on compassionate grounds, appropriate documentation confirming the circumstances and a letter from the Training Programme Director should accompany the written notice of withdrawal. Each such notification must be submitted to the ISFE Secretariat within 30 working days following the candidate's programmed examination date.

- 13.5 The Colleges operate a 'Fit to Sit' policy in relation to these exams. If a candidate attends and sits an examination, they are declaring themselves mentally and physically fit to do so. If a candidate becomes unwell during an examination or receives notification of a personal circumstance during the course of an examination which may impact their performance, but chooses to continue with the examination, they are declaring themselves mentally and physically fit to do so. Candidates will not be able to subsequently claim that their performance was affected by mitigating circumstances. Candidates will therefore need to take responsibility for assessing their own circumstances and deciding in advance whether they are fit to sit the examination.

14. Cancellation of examinations

- 14.1 On very rare occasions, it may be necessary to cancel an examination. In these circumstances, the examination fee of any candidate will be refunded in full or be transferred to the next available examination date.

Unfortunately, the Colleges cannot be responsible for any expenses (such as travel or accommodation) incurred by a candidate in the event of such a cancellation.

A cancelled examination will not count as an attempt.