



ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS AND
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

Regulations relating to the Surgical Fellowship Examination in Ophthalmology Parts 1, 2 and 3

leading to
MRCS (Ophth) (Glasg)
And
FRCS (Ophth) (Glasg)

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1. Introduction

This document contains the examination regulations and outlines the scope and format of the Surgical Fellowship examination in Ophthalmology.

Success in this examination will provide the main route to Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (Glasgow).

2. Admission as a Member or Fellow

2.1 Candidates who are successful in both the Part 1 and Part 2 examinations, or who hold a valid exempting qualification for Part 1 and are successful in the Part 2 examination will be admitted to the College as Members qua Surgeon in Ophthalmology subject to:

- Election as a Member qua Surgeon in Ophthalmology;
- Payment of the current joining fee; and
- Completion and return of the signed Declaration Form.

2.2 Candidates who are successful in the Part 3 Examination will be admitted to the College as Fellows qua Surgeon in Ophthalmology subject to:

- Election as a Fellow qua Surgeon in Ophthalmology;
- Payment of the current joining fee; and
- Completion and return of the signed Declaration Form.

Further information is available in Appendix 1.

3. The Role of the Examination

The role of the examination is to set standards of ophthalmic care among ophthalmologists. The examination provides a quality marker to recognise best practice. Candidates achieving this standard are judged to have the skills of a General Ophthalmologist and to be able to manage patients and their ophthalmic conditions independently in a safe and professional manner. The examination syllabus draws upon sub-specialist expertise.

The award of Membership and Fellowship by examination is considered to be the validation of an ophthalmologist's knowledge, experience and training. Fellowship is not intended to validate sub-specialist expertise. Entry to specialist training in the UK is governed by strict rules that would preclude automatic entry to specialist training of holders of the Fellowship. However, the Fellowship is recognised for the purpose of registration with the General Medical Council of the UK.

4. Format of the Examination

The examination is conducted in English and consists of three parts: each part must be passed before proceeding to the next. The syllabus outlines the areas of knowledge that may be examined.

4.1 Part 1

The Part 1 examination takes the format of a multiple choice question paper of 2 hours' duration, normally comprising 160 questions in single best answer format. This paper encompasses basic sciences in relation to ophthalmology.

4.2 Part 2

The Part 2 examination takes the format of a multiple choice paper of 2.5 hours' duration normally comprising 180 questions in single best answer format.

This paper encompasses the topics of ophthalmic medicine and surgery and general medicine and neurology with particular reference to ophthalmology, including the management of acute medical emergencies.

4.3 Part 3

Part 3 consists of two sections and candidates must sit both parts of this examination at each attempt.

a) **Structured oral examination** – consisting of 3 x 20-minute examinations covering the following subject areas:

- Lids, Oculoplastics and Anterior Segment
- Posterior Segment and Glaucoma
- Neurology, Motility and General Medicine

The principal aims of the structured oral examinations are to assess:

- The application of knowledge to clinical situations
- Reasoning power and problem-solving ability
- Decision-making
- The ability to communicate information and ideas
- The ability to manage common acute medical emergencies

b) **Clinical examination** – consisting of 4 x 12-minute examinations covering the following subjects:

- Anterior Segment Disorders
- Posterior Segment Disorders
- Neuro-ophthalmic and Ocular Motility Disorders
- Oculoplastic and Lid Disorders

Candidates are invited to examine patients using standard ophthalmology equipment and clinical examination methods. Each candidate will see two patients in each of the four stations in the clinical examination. The purpose of the clinical examination is to ensure that the candidate is able to demonstrate clinical findings and to appreciate and attach due significance to clinical symptoms and signs. The candidate is expected to communicate effectively with both the patient and the examiner and to discuss the clinical findings and the appropriate management for each case.

In order to pass the Part 3 examination, candidates are required to achieve a pass in the clinical component – see ‘Candidate Guidance and Information’ for further details.

5. Entry to the Examination – Eligibility and Exemptions

5.1 Eligibility

To apply for the examination a candidate must have achieved the following, by the closing date for applications:

5.1.1 Part 1

- A primary medical qualification that is acceptable to the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom and;
- A minimum of 2 years post-qualification experience, including at least 1 year in pre-registration training.

5.1.2 Part 2

- A primary medical qualification that is acceptable to the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom;
- Successful completion of Part 1, or possession of an exempting qualification (see Exemptions in section 5.2) and;
- A minimum of 6 years post-qualification experience, including at least 1 year in pre-registration training and 4.5 years in clinical Ophthalmology posts.

5.1.3 Part 3

- A primary medical qualification that is acceptable to the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom, and;
- Successful completion of Part 1, or its equivalent, *and* Part 2 or;
- Successful completion of Part 1, or its equivalent, the exempting qualification for Part 2 and completion of the clinical experience requirements for Part 2 as detailed in section 5.1.2.

Candidates who do not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the exam they are applying for as detailed above, by the closing date for applications, will not be accepted under any circumstances.

5.2 Exemptions

5.2.1 Part 1

Exemption from the Part 1 examination may be granted to candidates who hold, by the closing date for applications, an exempting qualification as detailed on the College website. Candidates who apply for an examination diet and then request an exemption after the closing date will not be entitled to any refund of examination fees.

5.2.1 Part 2

Exemption from the Part 2 examination may be granted to candidates who hold, by the closing date for applications, the exempting qualification as detailed on the College website. Candidates who apply for an examination diet and then request an exemption after the closing date will not be entitled to any refund of examination fees.

6. Limitation on the Number of Attempts

- 6.1 With effect from January 2014, candidates are permitted a maximum of six attempts for each part of the examination.
- 6.2 Candidates who have had the maximum number of attempts may apply for one additional attempt under the Additional Attempts policy. Candidates can apply for an exam only once their additional attempt application has been processed and an additional attempt has been granted under the policy.
- 6.3 An attempt is defined as an occasion when a candidate commences, but does not necessarily complete the FRCS Part 1, Part 2 or Part 3 examination.

7. Admission to the Examination

7.1 Part 1 and Part 2 examinations

Applications can be submitted online and are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation to confirm eligibility which can be uploaded during the application process. All documents submitted should be in English and should be an attested copy of the original. Where there is any doubt regarding the validity of the attested copies provided electronically, the College reserves the right to ask an applicant to submit their original documentation for review. Applications accompanied by the full amount of the examination fee must be received by the College no later than the published closing date. Any applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

7.2 Part 3 examination

Applications can be submitted online between the published opening and closing dates. Only one form per candidate can be submitted. Terms and conditions governing the allocation of candidate places for the Part 3 examination are published separately on the College website.

The fee payable for each examination is determined by the Council: the College website shows current fees.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Candidate must make any reasonable adjustment request in writing at by the closing date for applications and provide supporting evidence in line with the College's Reasonable Adjustments Policy (published separately).
- 8.3 Candidates must notify the College 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.

- 8.4 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 College will consider any request for a reasonable adjustment on a case by case basis.
- 8.5 If the requested adjustments cannot be implemented, the candidate may either withdraw from the examination or proceed without the adjustments.
- 8.6 Special arrangements purely for candidate convenience cannot be made; candidate convenience includes provision for night shifts, courses, other examination dates and any other clinical commitments.

9. Withdrawal from the Examination

A candidate who withdraws in writing from any part of the examination may be refunded the fee paid less a 20% administrative fee, provided that notice of an intention to withdraw is received by the Examinations Unit before the closing date for applications, as shown on the College website.

Refunds are not normally made to candidates who withdraw after the closing date. Where extenuating circumstances prevent a candidate from sitting an examination, supporting documentary evidence must be provided detailing the nature of those circumstances before any request for a refund may be considered. All such applications must be submitted to the Examinations Unit within 30 days of the commencement of the examination.

The College operates 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.

10. Cancellation of Examinations

- 10.1 In the event that it is necessary for the College to cancel an examination, the College will refund the examination fee of any candidate allocated to the affected examination centre(s) or diet, or offer a transfer to another examination centre or diet if it is available. Transfers will be offered at the College's discretion.
- 10.2 The College will not be responsible for any expenses (such as travel or accommodation) incurred by a candidate in the event of such a cancellation.
- 10.3 A cancelled examination will not count as attempt.

11. Proof of Identity

Candidates must bring proof of identity to each examination. Proof of identity must be an official document, such as a current passport or driver's licence that includes the candidate's name, signature and photograph.

For the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting any examination may be required to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all or part of the candidate's face. The College will observe sensitivity in the visual identification of candidates.

12. Appeals Mechanism

12.1 Any candidate who wishes to make an appeal about the conduct of his/her examination must refer to the Appeals Regulations published on our website.

12.2 Appeals must be submitted to the Examinations Unit, along with the published appeal fee, stating the grounds for appeal (as detailed in the Appeals Regulations) within 30 working days of the publication of results on the College website.

12.3 Appeals will be considered on the grounds of marking process error or procedural defects or irregularities which could have adversely affected a candidate's performance or the outcome of the examination. Appeals will not be accepted on any other grounds, for example that a candidate:

- Failed the examination by a narrow margin;
- Believes they have been under-marked;
- Did not understand or was unaware of the Examination Regulations; or
- Disagrees with the academic judgement of examiners.

13. Improper Conduct by Examination Candidates

13.1 The standards of behaviour expected of those applying for and sitting the College's examinations are outlined in the Candidate Code of Conduct, which can be found on our website.

13.2 Candidates are advised to be aware that any breach of the Candidate Code of Conduct or examination Regulations will result in a misconduct investigation and the possibility of severe penalties, including exclusion from further examinations and reporting to the candidate's national authority/regulatory body.

14. Recommendations and Advice

All parts of the examination are conducted in English. The College advises that, in order to be sufficiently prepared to sit the examinations, candidates' English language ability should be equivalent to International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7.5. However, candidates do not need to have taken IELTS or any other language examination to sit the FRCS Ophthalmology examinations.

15. Syllabus

The syllabus outlines the areas of knowledge that may be examined.

Part 1

1. **Anatomy**

- Central nervous system relevant to ophthalmology
- Detailed anatomy of the eye, orbit and adnexae, and the visual pathways
- Head and neck anatomy
- The respiratory and cardiovascular systems

2. **Embryology**

Ophthalmic embryology and its relevance to congenital anomalies of the visual system

3. **Physiology**

General Physiology including:

- Cardiovascular system
- Respiratory system
- Haematological system
- Nervous system
- Endocrinology
- Homeostasis

Nutrition

Ophthalmic Physiology including:

- Ocular physiology
- Physiology of vision in relation to ophthalmology

4. **Pathology**

Principles of general and ocular pathology including:

- Inflammation
- Immunological mechanisms and hypersensitivity reactions
- Vascular pathology
- Degenerative disorders and aging
- Shock
- Neoplasia and the effects of treatment
- Microbiology
- Sterilisation, disinfection and asepsis

5. **Pharmacology**

General pharmacological principles

- Mode of action of drugs on receptors
- Drug toxicity

Ophthalmic pharmacology

- All drugs commonly used in ophthalmic practice
- Ophthalmic complications of drugs
- Systemic complications of ophthalmic drugs

6. Cell Biology and Biochemistry

- Cell structures and their biochemical functions
- Normal cell functions and interactions
- Connective tissue and extracellular matrix

7. Genetics

- Principles of genetics
- Modes of inheritance

8. Optics

Physical and Geometric optics

- Properties of light
- Reflection and refraction
- Prisms
- Lenses
- Lasers

Clinical optics

- Optics of the eye
- Refractive errors and their correction
- Optical principles of refractive surgery
- Low visual aids
- Biometry
- Optical principles and clinical use of ophthalmic and optical instruments

Part 2 (Multiple Choice Question Written examination) and Part 3 (Structured Oral and Clinical examinations)

Knowledge is required of the subject areas listed. Clinical problem-solving skills will be examined in written MCQ format and during the structured oral and clinical examinations. The candidate's ability to communicate with patients and colleagues and knowledge of basic medical practice will be assessed during the structured oral and clinical examinations. Candidate knowledge of ethics and the medico-legal aspects of ophthalmology and the concepts of evidence-based ophthalmology will also be assessed. Candidates are expected to read current medical journals and to be aware of important new developments in the subject of ophthalmology. Knowledge of the management of acute medical emergencies will be assessed in the Part 2 written examination.

1. Clinical History and Investigation in Adults and Children

- Visual function - acuity, colour vision, contrast sensitivity, stereopsis, and visual field examination and interpretation
- Pupil reactions and pharmacological tests
- Eyelid examination

- Ophthalmoscopy: direct and indirect
- Eye movements
- Globe dystopia - exophthalmos, vertical and horizontal globe displacement
- Retinoscopy
- Slit lamp - component parts and examination methods
- Cranial nerves
- Interpretation of investigations relevant to ophthalmology

2. **Ophthalmic Surgery**

- Sterilisation and disinfection
- Surgical instrumentation
- Sutures and their uses
- Common ophthalmic surgical procedures in relation to:
 - Oculoplastics
 - Cornea
 - Glaucoma
 - Strabismus
 - Vitreoretinal
 - Orbital
 - Cataract and refractive
 - Lacrimal
 - Paediatric ophthalmology
 - Trauma and its management

3. **Ophthalmic Pathology**

The pathology of common ophthalmic conditions in relation to:

- Oculoplastics
- Cornea
- Glaucoma
- Strabismus
- Vitreoretinal
- Orbital
- Cataract and refractive
- Lacrimal
- Uveitis
- Macular disease
- Medical vasculopathies
- Ocular tumours

4. **Ophthalmic Medicine**

Ophthalmic medical conditions and their management including:

- Acquired macular diseases
- Hereditary fundal dystrophies
- Uveitis
- Vasculopathies

5. **Paediatric Ophthalmology**

The diagnosis and management of paediatric ophthalmic and neuro-ophthalmic conditions

6. **Neuro-Ophthalmology**
 - Disorders of the visual pathways
 - Neuro-ophthalmic disorders of ocular motility
7. **Medicine and Neurology in Relation to Ophthalmology**

Two categories of knowledge are required:

Category A – Medical Emergencies: Part 2 – Multiple Choice Question Paper

Emergency situations and their management includes but is not limited to:

- The unconscious patient (including cardiac arrest)
- The shocked patient
- The management of anaphylaxis
- Chest pain
- The breathless patient
- Hypoglycaemia

Candidates must demonstrate their application of knowledge to assess the situation, establish a preliminary diagnosis and initiate measures to stabilise the patient's condition pending the arrival of specialised assistance. The ability to recognise the normal and the abnormal ECG and to recognise obvious features of myocardial infarction and arrhythmia is required.

Category B – General Medicine and Neurology: Part 2 – Multiple Choice Question Paper and Part 3 – Structured Oral Examination

- Medical and neurological conditions which have associated ophthalmological signs and symptoms.
- The medical features of these conditions and the investigations undertaken prior to medical referral.
- The ophthalmic sequelae of treatment of medical conditions. (e.g. diabetes and thyrotoxicosis)
- The ability to deal with acute medical emergencies

Appendix 1

Application for election to membership or fellowship and award of Diploma

On passing the appropriate examination requirements you must conclude your formal admission as a Member or Fellow before you are entitled to use the designation MRCS (Ophth) (Glasg) or FRCS (Ophth) (Glasg). The information below describes the election process and how to maintain your Fellowship status.

1. The list of successful candidates for the surgical membership or fellowship in Ophthalmology will be confirmed by the Director of Education and Assessment, on behalf of the President, the date of signature on the pass list being the date of election to the College.
2. The successful candidates will be invited to proceed to admission to the College and will be sent the appropriate documentation.
3. Each candidate for admission must pay the applicable joining and subscription fee, the amount to be determined from time to time by the Council.
4. Upon receipt of the completed admission documentation and payment of a joining fee, a Diploma of Membership or Fellowship and Welcome Pack will be issued to each new Member or Fellow.
5. All new Members or Fellows will be given the opportunity to attend a Diploma Ceremony – details of this will be sent at the time of admission.
6. In order to retain membership or fellowship and the use of the postnominals, each Fellow must pay the appropriate annual subscription fee, the amount to be determined from time to time by the Council.

Appendix 2

College Directory

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
232-242 Vincent Street
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