



ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS AND
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

Candidate Guidance and Information

Surgical Fellowship Examination in Ophthalmology Parts 1, 2 and 3

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Contents

1. The Application Process	3
1.1 Eligibility	3
1.2 Limitation on the Number of Attempts	3
1.3 Examination Dates, Fees and Centres	3
1.4 Application Procedure	3-4
1.5 Communication from College	4
1.6 Withdrawals	4
1.7 Visas	4
1.8 Identification	5
2. After the Examination	5
2.1 Issue of Examination Results	5
2.2 Candidates Feedback	5
3. Admission to the College	5
4. Examination Format	5
4.1 Part 1 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Paper – Single Best Answer	5-6
4.2 Part 2 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Paper and Problem Solving Paper	6-7
4.3 Part 3 Structured Oral Examination and Clinical Examination	7-10

1. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

These notes refer to applications for the FRCS Ophthalmology Part 1, 2 and 3 examinations and should be read in conjunction with the Examination Regulations.

The College will update or amend this information as required. Please check our website for the most current version.

Further Information

All information regarding the examination can be found on our website:

<http://rcp.sg/frcs123>

1.1 Eligibility

The Examination Regulations detail the eligibility requirements, including a list of exempting qualifications, to enter this examination.

1.2 Limitation on the Number of Attempts

Candidates are permitted a maximum of six attempts for each part of the examination. Further information is available in the Examination Regulations.

1.3 Examination Dates, Fees and Centres

This information can be found on our website, including closing dates for applications.

Centres will be indicated by city: exact venue information will be sent to candidates after the closing date when final candidate numbers are known.

Please note that queries in advance of the examination should be directed to the College and not the examination centre. On the day of the examination, any queries should be directed to the examination centre.

1.4 Application Procedure

Part 1 and Part 2 applicants: the College publishes a closing date for each diet of these examinations. Applications will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis. Any application that is received after the closing date will not be accepted and will be returned.

Part 3 applicants: Candidates can apply online. Prior to completing the application form candidates are required to create an online account using their Person ID (PID) number here <https://rcpsg.ac.uk/register> . The online application form can be completed and submitted only between the opening and closing date for applications, shown on the dates and fees page. Only one form per candidate can be submitted. Candidates must not submit any payment at the time of application. Places will be allocated on a randomised selection basis after the closing date: all applications received between the opening and closing dates will be included in this process. Once all available examination and waiting list places have been allocated, application forms from those who have not been allocated a place will be destroyed. Candidates who are successful in obtaining a place on the examination will receive confirmation from the Examinations Unit and will be advised to send in their examination fee within 2 weeks of their place being confirmed. Any application received before the opening date or after the closing date will not be accepted and will be destroyed.

Applicants should refer to the additional terms and conditions of application published on the dates and fees document on the website.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the completed application form arrives within the application period or by the closing date. The College cannot take responsibility for the early or late arrival of an application form due to postal or courier services.

All paper based applications should be sent to the College address shown on the application form. Online applications do not need to be posted.

Applicants should ensure that application forms are fully completed prior to submission. A checklist of information required is in the guidance notes attached to the form. Applicants should also refer to the 'Information for Candidates' section of our website for further information regarding the submission of application forms, including details of payment methods and how to attest a document:

<http://rcp.sg/applicationguide>

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria by the closing date for applications. Candidates cannot apply for an examination diet if they are awaiting results from a previous examination attempt at Part 1, 2 or 3.

1.5 Communications from College

E-mail notifications will be issued as follows:

- To acknowledge receipt of an application (within 5 working days).
- To confirm allocation of a place on the examination (usually within 4 weeks of receipt of the application).
- To confirm payment clearance and issue of exam programme.

Alternatively e-mail notifications may be issued as follows:

- To advise that an application is incomplete and request further information.
- To advise of any issues with payment.
- To advise that there are no places available on the examination.

The exam entry confirmation email confirms your place on the examination. It will include Person ID number and Candidate number.

The programme email gives information on the examination schedule and venue information.

These emails confirm your place on the examination – there will be nothing further issued. Candidates should take a copy of their exam entry confirmation email with them to the examination centre, along with their photographic ID.

A programme for the examination is also published on our website. This should be checked regularly for any changes and candidates will also be e-mailed to advise of any updates.

If you have submitted an application but you do not receive any acknowledgement of receipt from the College by one week after the closing date, please contact us via e-mail.

1.6 Withdrawals

Candidates who withdraw from the examination prior to the closing date will receive a refund of their fee minus an administrative charge of 20%. Candidates who withdraw from the examination after the closing date shall forfeit 100% of the fee. Any refund due is processed after the date of the examination and payment made approximately one month after the examination. Fees are not normally transferable.

1.7 Visas

It is the responsibility of each candidate to obtain the relevant visa to attend the examination centre. Prior to applying for the examination, candidates should check the visa application process with their local embassy, including the likelihood of a visa being obtained.

1.8 Identification

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

2. AFTER THE EXAMINATION

2.1 Issue of Examination Results

A pass list will be published on the College website in Person ID number order, normally no later than 8 weeks after the exam. Only candidates successful in the examination will appear on the list. Candidates will be advised by e-mail prior to the examination of the exact date of publication. Results will also be sent by post following publication on the website.

2.2 Candidate Feedback

Unsuccessful candidates will be given feedback on their performance in the result letter. This will comprise a breakdown of marks for each section of the examination. Further feedback is not available.

3. ADMISSION TO FELLOWSHIP OF THE COLLEGE

Candidates who are successful in Part 3 will receive details of how to join the College from the Membership Services department after they have received their result letter.

Information on how to apply for Fellowship and award of Diploma is available in the Appendix to the Regulations.

4. EXAMINATION FORMAT

All parts of the examination will be conducted in English.

4.1 Part 1 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Paper – Single Best Answer

This paper is designed to test knowledge of Basic Sciences in Relation to Ophthalmology.

- The paper is of 2 hours' duration
- Candidates are awarded a pass or a fail

There will normally be 160 single best answer questions. Each question will have a stem and five options. Each correct answer is worth one mark. Where no answer is given there will be a mark of zero. Marks are not deducted for an incorrect answer. If you make an entry in more than one box for the same question, this will be marked as incorrect.

Candidates indicate their response on an answer sheet which will be scanned and computer marked. Mark sheets must be completed in accordance with the instructions provided.

The syllabus will be tested in roughly the following proportions:

▪ Anatomy	25%
▪ Physiology	25%
▪ Pathology	25%
▪ Embryology, pharmacology, cell biology and biochemistry, genetics and optics	25%

Sample questions for this paper and a sample answer sheet are available on our website.

4.2 Part 2 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Paper and Problem-Solving Paper

Part 2 comprises two examination papers.

With the exception of candidates who hold a qualification exempting them from the Multiple Choice Question Paper, (see Section 5 of the Regulations) candidates are required to sit and pass both sections of the examination in the same sitting to pass the Part 2 overall. Candidates who pass one paper but not the other will have to re-sit both papers at any future sitting.

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Paper - Single Best Answer

This paper is designed to test knowledge of ophthalmic medicine and surgery and general medicine and neurology with particular reference to ophthalmology.

- The paper is of 2 hours' duration
- Candidates are awarded a pass or a fail

There will normally be 160 single best answer questions. Each question will have a stem and five options. Each correct answer is worth one mark. Where no answer is given there will be a mark of zero. Marks are not deducted for an incorrect answer. If you make an entry in more than one box for the same question, this will be marked as incorrect.

Candidates will indicate their response on an answer sheet which will be scanned and computer marked. Mark sheets must be completed in accordance with the instructions provided.

The syllabus will be tested in roughly the following proportions:

▪ Lid Lesions	5%
▪ Disorders of Lacrimal Drainage	2%
▪ Conjunctiva	3%
▪ Cornea	9%
▪ Sclera	3%
▪ Lens	9%
▪ Glaucoma	9%
▪ Uveitis	6%

▪ Intraocular Tumours	4%
▪ Retinal Detachment	4%
▪ Acquired Macular Diseases	9%
▪ Hereditary Fundus Dystrophies	3%
▪ Retinal Vascular Disease	6%
▪ Strabismus	6%
▪ Orbit	5%
▪ Neuro-ophthalmology	7%
▪ General Medicine	10%

Sample questions for this paper and a sample answer sheet are available on our website.

Problem-Solving Paper

This paper is of 2 hours 15 minutes' duration.

The paper comprises four questions, each of which presents candidates with a brief description of clinical problems. Each question may be divided into several sections. Additional information may be attached to the question paper such as clinical images. If this is the case, instructions will be included in the question paper to indicate the question(s) to which such information relates.

Candidates will be provided with four answer booklets, one for each question.

Candidates must demonstrate their application of knowledge to the clinical scenario outlined in the question, to cover both differential diagnosis and management of the case.

It is important that answers are clearly written, so that examiners can readily see that all required information is included, and allocate marks accordingly. Examiners are provided with a model answer for each question in the paper.

Candidates are awarded a pass or a fail for each question in the paper. One of the four questions deals specifically with a Medical Emergency and candidates **must** achieve a Pass in the Medical Emergency question to pass Part 2 overall.

Sample questions and sample model answers are available on the College website.

4.3 Part 3 Structured Oral Examination and Clinical Examination

Part 3 comprises two sections and candidates will sit both sections of this examination at each attempt.

Candidates will be provided with a programme in advance of the examination (after the closing date): this will show two sets of dates, times and venues, on which candidates must present for the structured oral examination and the clinical examination respectively.

Candidates must attend the examination venue only on those days on which their examinations are scheduled. On completion of their examination, candidates must leave the examination venue immediately. If they do not do so, candidates may be disqualified from the examination.

Candidates must not communicate with or attempt to communicate with another candidate once the examination has commenced. This includes communication with candidates in different examination sessions. Mobile devices will be collected from each candidate at the beginning of their examination session and will be returned on their departure from the examination venue.

Observers

Candidates will be informed if observers are to be present at the examination.

Structured Oral Examination

This section consists of 3 x 20-minute examinations on the following subjects:

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

Please note that the examination questions are changed regularly throughout each day to ensure confidentiality of the examination process.

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

Each candidate will be examined by two examiners in each of the three subjects. In the Neurology, Motility and General Medicine examination one of the examiners will be a physician, the other an ophthalmologist.

Each candidate will spend 20 minutes with each pair of examiners. Each examiner will question the candidate for 10 minutes; a timer will indicate the end of the first 10 minutes when the second examiner will start asking questions.

Each examiner submits an individual mark for the examination: six individual marks in total are awarded for the Structured Oral Examination.

Clinical Examination

This section consists of 4 x 12-minute examinations on four main themes:

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

Each theme is examined in a separate examination room. Each candidate will normally see two patients (or more if time allows) in each of the examination rooms.

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the candidate can:

- Demonstrate clinical findings
- Appreciate and attach due significance to clinical symptoms and signs

Candidates are invited to examine patients using standard ophthalmology equipment and clinical examination methods.

At the beginning of the clinical examination, the candidate will be shown into the first room then after 12 minutes the candidate will be shown into a second room and so on, until the candidate has examined the patients in each of the four rooms.

The candidate is expected to communicate effectively in English with both the patient and the examiner and to discuss the clinical findings and the appropriate management for each case. Where English is not the patient's first language a hospital representative will be on hand to translate when required.

Candidates should maintain aseptic techniques after examining a patient. Aqueous gel or hand-washing facilities will be available in each room and should be used by candidates before they move to the next room.

Instruments will be provided but candidates are strongly recommended to bring a torch, fixations target and Volk lens +90, direct ophthalmoscope, targets and occluders.

Dress Code

In line with current UK infection control practices, the dress code requirements for the clinical examination are as follows:

- Arms to be bare below the elbow
- No jewellery on hands or wrists with the exception of wedding rings/bands
- No tie

An acceptable form of dress would be a conventional short-sleeved shirt/blouse, open at the neck, or for a long-sleeved shirt/blouse with the sleeves rolled up throughout the examination. Tee-shirts and polo shirts are not acceptable dress. White coats are not required.

Candidates with religious or cultural reasons for not observing this code will be expected to comply with the dress code in those rooms involving the physical examination of patients.

For the purposes of visual identification and to facilitate the assessment of non-verbal communication skills and interaction with the examiner and patient, the College reserves the right to require candidates 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.

Marking Scheme

Structured Oral Examination

- Candidates are examined by three pairs of examiners. Each candidate gains a mark from each of the six examiners.
 - Candidates may compensate for no more than three fail marks by achieving additional marks elsewhere in this section to achieve the overall pass mark.
- Or

- Candidates may compensate for no more than three fail marks by achieving additional marks in the Clinical Examination.

Clinical Examination

- Candidates are examined by four pairs of examiners. Each candidate gains a mark from each of the eight examiners.
- Candidates may compensate for no more than three fail marks by achieving additional marks elsewhere in this component to achieve the overall pass mark.
- Candidates cannot compensate for poor performance in this section with a good performance in the Structured Oral Examination.

Where a candidate obtains more than one 'clear fail' mark in either section, a pass in the examination overall cannot be obtained.

In order to pass the Part 3 examination candidates must pass the clinical section and gain enough marks overall to achieve the overall pass mark. Candidates who pass one section of the examination but not the other will have to re-sit both sections at any future sitting.