

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2025

VIROLOGY

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Fellowship and Diplomas.

ENTRY & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific timing for entry to the examination. Candidates should obtain guidance from their educational supervisor as to when to sit the examination. Planning should take into account planned CCT date (where applicable) but candidates should apply only when they are ready. Some general guidance is given below, but apart from the sequence in which the examinations can be sat is not intended to be prescriptive.

Part 1

Medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised Regional Specialist Training Programme in microbiology or virology for a period of normally not less than 12 months.

Non-medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised training programme in microbiology for a period of normally not less than 12 months. In addition, they must be state registered, or the equivalent of state registered in another country.

Part 2

Medically qualified candidates are required to have trained in a recognised Regional Higher Specialist Training Programme in virology for a period of normally not less than three years.

Non-medically qualified candidates must be state-registered and normally have at least four years' experience in a clinical virology laboratory recognised for higher specialist training.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

For medically qualified candidates in a UK training programme, information regarding the Infection Part 1 examination is available in the Infection Regulations and Guidelines.

For overseas based and scientifically qualified candidates, the Part 1 examination consists of 125 multiple-choice questions (MCQ). The three-hour examination is designed to test both knowledge and understanding.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination consists of a written OSPE, a Complex Clinical Scenarios paper and an oral examination. All components will be held together, and candidates must apply for and attempt both components in the same session.

The examination will take place over one day.

OSPE (135 mins): 15 stations on data interpretation, correct use of statistics, research methodology, statistics, evaluation of new diagnostic virology tests, and one station on a business case scenario.

Complex Clinical Scenarios (90 minutes): 3 long cases which will assess the candidate's ability to understand complex clinical and laboratory scenarios in virology and infection prevention.

Oral (60 minutes): Four stations which will have the objectives to assess within a clinical virology situation, clinical leadership, laboratory support and Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) skills combined with business 'sense'.

Clinical virology cases in the oral stations will have questions on laboratory safety, clinical management and prevention, working within a multi-disciplinary team and problem solving.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 and Part 2 examinations will be offered twice a year in Spring and Autumn.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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