



College statement regarding the Histopathology FRCPath Part 1 examination

On Wednesday 30 September, the College held its first virtual FRCPath Part 1 examination in Histopathology. While the majority of candidates were able to complete their examination, we became aware on the day that a small number of candidates were experiencing difficulties. This meant they were unable to complete the examination. We also recognise that other candidates experienced some connectivity issues during the examination but, nonetheless, managed to complete it.

Having now received a report from TestReach, we know that 18 candidates in total were unable to complete their examination. An additional nine experienced significant issues with connectivity during the examination although they did manage to complete it. We understand that the issue was caused by a number of rich media images which were embedded in the questions incorrectly. This affected the loading speed for some candidates, and resulted in the exam failing to start or load or to freeze while progressing through the exam. The severity of the problem depended on the processing power of the candidate's own machine and their internet speeds. Therefore, the majority of candidates successfully completed the exam, but others could not progress through to completion. Of those, some were only able to attempt a few questions while others were very close to completing the examination. One candidate was unable to attempt the examination at all. TestReach have confirmed to us that they have acted swiftly to implement a review of their exam set-up quality procedures. This means that, in future, images will be uploaded correctly to ensure the rapid delivery of media to a candidate during the exam, reducing the individual loading time.

We are contacting all affected candidates separately to offer the opportunity of a different examination later this month. The additional attempt will be provided at no further cost to the candidates and the examination will have all images uploaded correctly.

We would like to apologise to all candidates affected for the additional distress and anxiety these issues caused. We would also like to thank those candidates who have taken the time to share their experiences with us. This is very useful feedback that will help us to work with TestReach to develop a better candidate experience.

