

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations - 2025

TOXICOLOGY

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 training supervisor as to when to sit the examination. 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

Part 1 examination will normally be taken only after a minimum of three years study. The College may accept six months of training in other appropriate specialties as a contribution to the period of training for the Part 1 examination (e.g. relevant MSc courses at recognised Universities).

Part 2

Part 2 examination will usually be taken at least two years after successfully completing the Part 1 Examination.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

Part 1 Toxicology examination is offered in 4 different subspecialty areas:

1. Analytical and Forensic Toxicology
2. Safety Evaluation Toxicology
3. Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology
4. Toxicological Pathology

It is a written examination consisting of two 3-hour papers.

- Paper 1: three-hour paper consisting of twenty compulsory short answer questions (each worth twenty marks) covering general toxicology knowledge
- Paper 2: three-hour paper consisting of four extended essay-type answers from a choice of six questions based on chosen subspecialty

Candidates will have to pass both papers for success although a marginal failure in one paper may be compensated for by a good pass in the other paper.

Part 2

The Part 2 examination will comprise a written component and a practical and oral examination, which may be taken in any order. However, the proposal for the written component must be approved before candidates may register for the Part 2 Practical and Oral examination and it is recommended that candidates complete the full project before sitting the examination.

Written component

The written component of Part 2 will be one of the following options:

- A thesis resulting from study for a higher degree such as MD or PhD.
- A dissertation on a subject to be agreed beforehand by the College Specialty
- A detailed case book
- A series of peer-reviewed published papers on an experimental theme with a critical commentary.

Prior to embarking on the chosen written option, the candidate should seek the College's approval of their choice by submitting a proposal. The proposal must be approved before candidates may register for the Part 2 Practical and Oral examination and it is recommended that candidates complete the full project before sitting the examination.

In addition, candidates in toxicological pathology will also need to submit a necropsy casebook at least four weeks before the practical examination for appraisal and for a viva at the practical examination. For guidance about the necropsy casebook, please refer to the [specialty section](#) of the website.

For further guidance, please see the section on 'Guidance for candidates undertaking written options for the Part 2 examination' in the ***Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Fellowship and Diplomas***.

The Practical and Oral Examination

The practical and oral examination takes place over two days. It consists of an interpretative exercise based upon the examination of case reports, raw data, photographs, gross pathology specimens and/or glass slides of histopathological lesions of toxicological relevance, depending on the specialty studied.

The oral examination will be based upon the areas chosen by the candidate at the time of application.

During the conduct of the examination candidates will be required to furnish evidence of competency to a level such that the candidate is able to (i) provide guidance to junior staff as regards all of the topics listed in this section AND (ii) to provide consultant level opinion and leadership on all topics immediately relevant to their practice in their chosen subspecialty.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 examination will be offered once a year in Spring.

The Part 2 Practical and Oral examination will be offered once a year in Spring.

Examinations Department
The Royal College of Pathologists
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