

Autumn 2020 Online Examinations

The Royal College of Pathologists is pleased to announce that – pending regulatory approval from the GMC* – from Autumn 2020, the following examinations will be offered using online delivery to candidates**:

- All specialties at Part 1
- Certificate in Medical Genetics
- Certificate of Higher Autopsy Training
- Combined Infection Certificate Examination
- Diploma in Dermatopathology written examination
- Part 2 examinations in: Clinical Biochemistry (Module 2 only), Genetics, H&I, Immunology, Medical Microbiology, Molecular Pathology, Reproductive Science, Toxicology, Transfusion Science, Virology.

The College will deliver the written components of these examinations through a company called TestReach. After reviewing the online examination systems of several different companies through a formal tender process, we felt that TestReach offered the best in terms of user friendliness, customer service, features, and security. Oral components (including oral OSPE stations) will be delivered using Microsoft Teams. Candidates will be able to take their examination either at home or in the workplace. For this session, the option of sitting in a test centre will not be available.

For written examinations, candidates will be given the opportunity to trial the TestReach system to familiarise themselves with it ahead of the examination. It is a fully live-proctored system and candidates will be required to complete both an IT system check and environment check before sitting the examination. The system check establishes that the candidate's device is suitable for use for the examination. The environment check establishes that candidates are sitting in a suitable area where they do not have access to text books, notes and other revision material. The TestReach system is able to function with fluctuating internet connectivity, and the system is secure with safeguards in place to prevent cheating (please see the FAQ for more information).

Microsoft Teams links for oral examinations will be sent ahead of time – candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with using Teams before the examination. Candidates will not need a Microsoft account for the examination and may log in as a guest user.

There will be some changes to the examination dates to accommodate the new delivery methods and these will be reflected on the dates page. Primarily these will affect the Part 1 examinations, which will now run on Tuesday 22, Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 September, with a possibility that some MCQ/EMQ specialties will run on either Tuesday 29 or Wednesday 30 September due to server capacity. A timetable of Part 1 examinations will be published by the end of Thursday 30 July.

The College recognises that this will be a very different examination experience for all involved in the process and the candidate survey undertaken in May has been invaluable in guiding decisions going forwards. We have prepared a Frequently Asked Questions document, containing information specific to the examination formats and delivery methods, which candidates are strongly recommended to read. We hope it will alleviate any concerns candidates may have. These questions will be constantly under review and will be added to with any further questions candidates may have that are not already addressed.

This is an exciting new development for the College with the opportunity to modernise the way in which we run examinations now and in the future.

*For specialties not regulated by the GMC, these are the confirmed arrangements.

**The following examinations will be run in person with social distancing and not online:

- Diploma in Dermatopathology practical examination
- Part 2 examinations in: Clinical Biochemistry (Module 1 only), Forensic Pathology, Haematology, Haematology Clinical Science, Histopathology, Neuropathology, Oral Pathology, Paediatric Pathology, Veterinary Clinical Pathology.