

**DIPLOMA IN RETRIEVAL AND TRANSFER MEDICINE
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
OF EDINBURGH (DipRTM RCSEd)**

REGULATIONS from August 2019

INTRODUCTION

The examination for the Diploma in Retrieval and Transfer Medicine is designed to test the skills, knowledge, attitudes and experience of critical care practitioners in caring for seriously ill or injured patients who require resuscitation, stabilisation and safe transfer to definitive care.

The examination focuses mainly on the retrieval of patients from one healthcare facility to another. Candidates will be expected to be competent in the assessment, management, triage and transfer of adult patients with a range of illnesses and injuries. A knowledge and understanding of retrieval co-ordination and a variety of land and air transport platforms will also be expected. An extensive syllabus covers all domains of this examination against which individual examination diets are blueprinted, ensuring that the whole breadth of the subject matter is represented in the diploma.

Candidates are also expected to understand the principles and challenges of undertaking primary (pre-hospital care) and quaternary (international repatriation) retrievals. Previous operational experience of these types of retrieval will be helpful in this regard. Previous operational experience of secondary or tertiary retrieval is advised. Gaps in requisite experience may to a degree be compensated for by adequate study and other preparation according to the background of particular candidates, but the College and examination board will not be able to advise individuals in this regard. Please see the examination syllabus and candidate guide for more information.

The examination will focus predominantly on the retrieval of adult patients. Questions regarding the retrieval of paediatric patients will however be included. The examination will not deal with the retrieval of neonatal patients.

1 ELIGIBILITY

Registration

- 1.1 Candidates must be fully registered doctors, nurses, paramedics, or other practitioners. In the United Kingdom registration must be with the General Medical Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council or the Health and Care Professions Council. For candidates based outside the UK, evidence of registration with the relevant regulatory professional body is required.

Experience

- 1.2 Candidates must have worked in their registered profession for at least 24 months full time (or part time equivalent) at the time of application to sit the examination.
- 1.3 Candidates must have experience in prehospital and/or retrieval medicine including the transport of critically ill patients:
 - 1.3.1 Experience gained must be 6 months full time or 12 months part time. Part time experience must demonstrate regular commitment.
 - 1.3.2 Candidates who are within a relevant programme of training may apply at an earlier stage, in order to sit the exam in the diet that is most appropriate to their overall training needs. However, it is expected that this experience will be a minimum of 3 months full time at the time of sitting the exam.
 - 1.3.3 Experience must have been gained within the past 5 years.
 - 1.3.4 Candidates must provide a letter of support from their clinical supervisor or equivalent, attesting to their experience.
- 1.4 Candidates who do not fulfil the above entry requirements, but who feel that their training and experience is suitable, are asked to apply for special consideration to the Examinations Section RCSEd. Such candidates should provide evidence of their suitability including a Curriculum Vitae, and a letter of support from an appropriate individual.
- 1.5 The DipRTM examiners panel reserve the right to decide on candidate eligibility based on the evidence provided by prospective candidates. In cases of doubt, the panel may decide to refer the application for full discussion to the Pre-hospital Care Examinations Board of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for a final decision.
- 1.6 A detailed syllabus for the diploma is available on the college website <http://www.rcsed.ac.uk>. Potential candidates are strongly advised to read and consider the content of the syllabus thoroughly before applying for the examination.

2 FORMAT OF EXAMINATION

- 2.1 The examination will consist of two parts (A and B) as follows:
 - 2.1.1 Part A: A written paper of 180 minutes duration consisting of up to 180 Single Best Answer (SBA) questions. One or more of the questions may be ‘development questions’ that are being used to develop the exam, and scores gained in these questions will not count towards the overall exam mark.

Neither examiners nor candidates will know which question(s) are under development.

2.1.2 Part B: Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) consisting of up to 16 testing stations. A 'standard' OSPE station will be of 8 minutes duration, but there is the possibility that a small number of stations will be 'double stations', lasting 16 minutes. Rest stations may be included in addition to testing stations. One or more of the stations may be 'development stations' that are being used to develop the exam, and scores gained in these stations will not count towards the overall exam mark. Neither examiners nor candidates will know which station(s) are under development.

- 2.2 The content of the examination will be based on current United Kingdom medical practice.
- 2.3 In order to gain a pass in the examination candidates must achieve a pass in both Parts A and B. A pass in one component can be carried forward: see below under 'attempts'.
- 2.4 To facilitate the assessment of non-verbal communication skills and interaction with the examiner and patient (or actor in the role of the 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.

3 APPLYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

- 3.1 The examination for the Diploma in Retrieval and Transfer Medicine will usually be held once a year. The date of the examination and the venue and fees payable, are set out in the online examination calendar which can be found on the College website: <http://www.rcsed.ac.uk>.
- 3.2 Applications must be made by post. Any application must be accompanied by documentation showing the date and place of obtaining the primary qualification, evidence of current registration, and a CV detailing relevant experience. The name on the primary certificate will normally be the name by which the candidates are registered.
- 3.3 Candidates must submit their application to sit the examination no later than the closing date indicated in the examinations calendar. Postal applications and all documentation should be forwarded to:

Examination Section
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
The Adamson Centre
3 Hill Place
Edinburgh
EH8 9DS

4 PROOF OF IDENTITY

- 4.1 Candidates must bring their passport to each part of the examination.
Exceptionally, candidates who are not in a position to provide a passport must produce an official document that includes their name, signature and a current photograph.
- 4.2 For the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting any part of the examination may be required 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.

5 DRESS CODE

- 5.1 The examination follows the principle that the same dress code should apply for a professional examination as it does for day-to-day clinical practice and contact with patients. This means that forms of dress should not, in any way, impede or constrain the candidate's ability to demonstrate relevant technical and non-technical skills or communicate with examiners, simulated patients, simulated carers and other examination staff.
- 5.2 Part A of the examination is not 'patient-facing'. Candidates are therefore permitted to wear smart casual clothes.
- 5.3 Part B of the examination is 'patient-facing'. Candidates may wear clothing commensurate with working in a simulated pre-hospital clinical environment. This may include one-piece and two-piece protective overalls at the discretion of the candidate. Helmets and high visibility jackets are not required.
- 5.4 If a candidate chooses to wear protective overalls, all markings that demonstrate the candidate's profession or professional position must be covered or removed. Similarly, clothing should not have badges or labels that name or illustrate commercial sponsors and/or particular hospitals or pre-hospital services, including NHS services. These badges or labels should either be removed or covered.

6 ATTEMPTS

- 6.1 Candidates are limited to four attempts at the examination. Failure to pass the examination within the permitted number of attempts will debar the candidate from applying again under these regulations.
- 6.2 A pass in an individual component (ie Part A or Part B) can be carried forward for up to two subsequent exam diets, or two years, whichever is the longer.
- 6.3 With the exception of candidates carrying forward a pass as described above, both components of the examination must be undertaken at one sitting.

- 6.4 For the purpose of these regulations, an ‘attempt’ is defined as any sitting of the exam where a pass is not secured in at least one component.
- 6.5 The number of attempts available to each candidate for completion cannot be increased.

7 WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EXAMINATION

- 7.1 Candidates who wish to withdraw an application for admission to any part of the examination must submit a request in writing to the College. A refund of the fee paid may be made (less an administrative fee of 20%), provided that notice of intention to withdraw is received by the Examinations Section before the closing date by which applications are due, as shown in the examinations calendar. Refunds are not normally made to candidates who withdraw after the closing date.
- 7.2 Candidates who wish to withdraw an application for admission to any part of the examination on medical grounds and request a refund must submit a request in writing to the College, accompanied by a medical certificate. An application for consideration of a refund on compassionate grounds should be supported by full details, plus a supporting letter from an appropriate professional. Each such application must be submitted to the Examinations Section within 28 days following the date of the candidate’s programmed examination date.
- 7.3 Examination candidacy during pregnancy – **see Annex A.**

8 CANDIDATES WITH SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 8.1 Special examination and other assessment arrangements may be made for candidates with permanent or temporary disability. These arrangements are intended to allow candidates to perform to the best of their ability. It is the responsibility of the candidate to notify the Examinations Section when they submit their application of any special circumstances.
- 8.2 An application for special consideration must be supported by written evidence in the form of a medical report from a General Practitioner or appropriate specialist for medical conditions (an educational psychologist’s report is required for requests for extra time due to dyslexia).

9 BEHAVIOUR DURING THE EXAMINATION

- 9.1 Candidates are required to obey the instructions of the senior invigilator. It is the duty of the senior invigilator to prevent any behaviour likely to cause disturbance to other candidates. Both entry and exit to an examination shall be at the absolute discretion of the senior invigilator.

- 9.2 Candidates who are late for the written papers may be allowed entry at the discretion of the senior invigilator but will not be given extra time to compensate for their late arrival.
- 9.3 No candidate may leave the examination hall until their answer sheet and question booklet has been collected from their desk and advised by the invigilator.
- 9.4 Candidates should assemble outside the Examination Hall as instructed in the letter sent from the Examinations Section before the start of the examination and should not enter until instructed to do so by the senior invigilator. Coats, bags or any books and papers brought into the examination hall should be deposited away from the candidate's desk as directed by the senior invigilator. All stationery required for the Examination will be provided.
- 9.5 Any candidate found to have a mobile phone, pager, calculator or other hand-held electronic device on their person in the examination may be suspended from the examination, and will have their results withheld pending investigation.

ALL MOBILE PHONES BROUGHT INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL MUST BE SWITCHED OFF.

MOBILE PHONES OR OTHER HAND-HELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE NOT PERMITTED EITHER ON YOUR PERSON OR AT YOUR DESK DURING THE EXAMINATION.

- 9.6 Each desk in the examination hall will be numbered and candidates must sit at the desk that corresponds to their candidate number for each paper.
- 9.7 Candidates should write their candidate number on each question booklet and on each mark sheet using the pencil provided.
- 9.8 Candidates shall not give or receive any assistance or communicate by any means with one another or any person, other than the invigilator, at any time during the examination period. Any candidate acting in breach of this regulation or misbehaving in any other way that may disrupt the examination, may, at the discretion of the senior invigilator, be suspended from the examination, or have their results withheld pending investigation.
- 9.9 Candidates may not begin reading the paper or marking answers on the mark sheet before the senior invigilator announces the start of the examination.
- 9.10 Candidates must cease writing when the senior invigilator announces the end of the examination period. If they fail to do so they will be disqualified.
- 9.11 ALL answers must be transferred to each answer sheet BEFORE the end of each examination. No extra time will be allowed for the transfer of answers.
- 9.12 No part of a question book shall be torn out or removed from the examination hall.

- 9.13 Any candidate who wishes to leave their desk to go to the toilet must ask the permission of the invigilator who will escort them to the toilet.
- 9.14 Candidates who finish early in each paper must remain in their seats until ALL the question booklets and answer sheets have been collected.
- 9.15 Candidates who have any questions about the content of the examination should report these to the invigilator. All such questions will be noted.
- 9.16 Refreshments are not always available at the examination hall. Candidates may bring a small plastic bottle or carton of drink with them to the examination.
- 9.17 Any candidate who contravenes any of these instructions will be liable to penalties that may include expulsion from the examination, annulment of results, and referral to the appropriate registration body. The Malpractice Regulations that the College adheres to are available on the website at www.rcsed.ac.uk. It is the candidate's responsibility to be familiar with these before they attend the examination.
- 9.18 Candidates should note that the copyright on the content of the papers is held by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and that unauthorised use of any of the questions is prohibited. In the event of contravention of this copyright, legal action may be taken. Any candidate found making notes on the content of questions will be disqualified.

10 EXPULSION OR EXCLUSION FROM THE EXAMINATION

- 10.1 The College may refuse admission to the examination, or may prevent from proceeding with the examination, any candidate who infringes any of the regulations or who is considered by the examiners to be guilty of behaviour prejudicial to the proper management and conduct of the examination. Examples of such infringement are as follows:
- 10.1.1 Entry to the examination being attempted by making false claims about eligibility or falsifying entry documentation. The College reserves the right to make checks to validate any information or documents supplied by the candidate;
- 10.1.2 Unfair advantage being sought or obtained; by possession of material or devices during an examination that might give advantage; by plagiarism of any description; by communicating or attempting to communicate with another candidate once the examination has commenced; or by refusing to follow instructions given by examiners or examinations staff regarding the conduct and procedure of the examination;
- 10.1.3 Removal of, or an attempt to remove from the examination room, any confidential examination material;

- 10.1.4 Any attempt to obtain confidential information relating to the examination from an examiner or examination officials;
- 10.1.5 Passing confidential information on the content of the examination to a third party.
- 10.2 This list of not exhaustive. Further information can be obtained from the guidelines on suspected malpractice available on the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk.

11 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

- 11.1 Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint or appeal must do so in accordance with the College Examinations Complaints and Appeals Procedures. The full procedural document can be downloaded from the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk or obtained from:

Examination Section
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
The Adamson Centre
3 Hill Place
Edinburgh
EH8 9DS
SCOTLAND

Email: RTM.exams@rcsed.ac.uk

12 DIPLOMA CERTIFICATE

- 12.1 Candidates who pass the examination shall be entitled to the designation of Diplomate in Retrieval and Transfer Medicine of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (Dip RTM RCSEd) and shall receive a Diploma bearing the Seal of the College signed by the President and the Secretary to the College. The form of the Diploma shall be as follows:

“The President and Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh hereby grant the Diploma in Retrieval and Transfer Medicine to who has completed the required form of study and passed the necessary examination.”

13 Review of Regulations

- 13.1 These Regulations are under continual review therefore it is recommended that candidates keep in regular contact with the College to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information. The Examination Section will be able to advise you:

Tel: +44 (0) 131 527 1600
Email: RTM.exams@rcsed.ac.uk

ANNEX A

NOTIFICATION OF PREGNANCY AND DEFFERAL

Deferral of examination due to pregnancy-related complications

A deferral may be permitted to candidates supplying an appropriate medical report which satisfies the College indicating:

- the candidate has any pregnancy related problems or illness and/or;
- the candidate's confinement is due shortly before or around the date of the examination and/or;
- the candidate has sufficient discomfort for her to consider that it will have a detrimental effect on her performance.

In such circumstances, should any such candidate be unable to sit for the examination, a deferral will be permitted and no further fee will be required.

Any candidate who does not inform the College of their pregnancy and is consequently unable to sit for the examination will not normally be allowed to defer this examination without submission of another fee.