

DIPLOMA IN IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE - THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH (DIMC RCSEd)

REGULATIONS FROM: March 2023

INTRODUCTION

The examination for the Diploma in Immediate Medical Care is designed to test the underpinning knowledge, technical skills and non-technical skills of doctors, nurses and paramedics who provide pre-hospital emergency care.

The level of performance expected is that commensurate with level 6 on in the Skills for Health Key Elements of the Career Framework (www.skillsforhealth.org.uk). Level 6 practitioners require a critical understanding of detailed theoretical and practical knowledge. They demonstrate initiative and are creative in finding solutions to problems. They have some responsibility for team performance and service development and they consistently undertake self-development. Indicative or Reference Title: Specialist/Senior Practitioner

There is a focus within this examination on timely recognition, diagnosis and management of conditions and situations in the pre-hospital environment rather than on the use of facilities for investigation and treatment that may be available predominantly within a hospital. However, the level 6 practitioner would be expected to be able to facilitate safe emergency transfers between hospitals and therefore be capable in the use of equipment and of interpretation of the range of investigations typically found in the emergency department or enhanced care setting. This examination covers pre-hospital emergency care for all patient age groups.

BLUEPRINTING

This examination is blueprinted against the capabilities and descriptors in phase 1(a) or 1(b), and the associated themes and learning outcomes, of the current edition of the UK Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine (PHEM) curriculum (available on the GMC and Intercollegiate Board for Training in Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine websites). Potential candidates are strongly advised to read and consider the content of the curriculum thoroughly before applying for the examination.

As a multi-professional examination it will test against these curriculum elements and will not be limited by national or local professional scopes of practice. Success in the examination however should not provide the sole evidence of competence to practice in every one of these elements.

Candidates should have sufficient clinical experience (*at the time of application*) in the area of pre-hospital emergency care to have covered the relevant elements of the PHEM curriculum.

1. FORMAT OF EXAMINATION

The examination will consist of two parts (A and B) as follows:

1.1 Part A – A Single Best Answer examination of underpinning knowledge:

- 1.1.1 a single best answer examination of 180 minutes duration consisting of 180 Single Best Answer (SBA) questions.

1.2 Part B – An Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)

- 1.2.1 The OSPE will normally consist of 14 OSPE testing stations. Twelve of the OSPE stations will each be of 8 minutes duration and two will be of 16 minutes duration. There may, in addition, be one or more rest stations.

- 1.3 The content of the examination will be based predominantly on accepted United Kingdom medical practice at the time of the examination. International candidates must adapt their answers or clinical problem solving to UK clinical practice, guidelines and consensus statements.
- 1.4 In order to gain a pass in the examination overall, candidates must achieve a pass in both Parts A and B. Candidates are able to take each Part of the examination in any order and are allowed to sit both parts during the same diet. Any Part that is passed in isolation is considered a 'valid pass' for a maximum of 3 subsequent **available** examination diets. If the other part is passed before or on that 3rd attempt, the candidate will have achieved a pass overall. If, however, they are unable to pass the remaining part by that 3rd attempt, they will have to also be required to re-sit the part they had previously passed.
- 1.5 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. If this is required, the College will do so in a sensitive manner.
- 1.6 All parts of the examination will be conducted in English.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Candidates must fulfil one of the following requirements:
 - 2.1.1 **Medical Practitioners** must have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after full registration with the UK General Medical Council **or** have completed 5 months whole-time equivalent training within a UK approved PHEM Training Programme by the date of the examination.
 - 2.1.2 **Nurses** must have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after registration with the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council. Candidates must provide an authenticated copy of their certificate of registration.
 - 2.1.3 **Paramedics** must have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after registration with the U K Health and Care Professions Council. Candidates must provide an authenticated copy of their certificate of registration.
- 2.2 Candidates, who do not fulfil any of the above entry requirements, may apply for special consideration. This applies for all candidates from outside the UK. Their curriculum vitae and the extent of their pre-hospital experience should be submitted in full to the Examination Section RCSEd for consideration by the Convener for Examinations in Immediate Medical Care RCSEd. The Convener may decide to refer the application for full discussion to the Pre-hospital Care Examinations Committee of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for a final decision regarding eligibility.

3. ATTEMPTS

- 3.1 Candidates are permitted five attempts at the Part A
- 3.2 Candidates are permitted five attempts at the Part B
- 3.3 Failure to pass the examination within the permitted number of attempts will debar the candidate from applying again under these regulations. Candidates wishing to sit any further attempts would need to contact the Examination Section RCSEd to arrange consideration by the Convener for Examinations in Immediate Medical Care RCSEd whether to grant permission for one final attempt at this examination. Candidates would be expected to provide evidence of additional educational experience as requested by the Convener and the FPHC Examinations Committee

4. APPLYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

- 4.1 The examination for the Diploma in Immediate Medical Care will usually be held twice a year. The availability of the examination by different routes of application together with the dates of the examination and the venue and fees payable, are set out in the online examination calendar, which can be found via the Examinations section of the College website and the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care website.
- 4.2 Application for entry to the examination must:
- 4.2.1 be made on the appropriate (paper or electronic version) application form
- 4.2.2 be accompanied by the specific examination fee payment, which must be received in full before a candidate is entered for the examination
- 4.2.3 be accompanied by an authenticated copy of the relevant certificate of registration. The name on the certificate will normally be the name by which candidates are registered. Authentication may only be undertaken by a solicitor or the awarding body. The solicitor or awarding body must stamp, sign and date a copy of the registration to confirm that it is genuine. All hospital stamps should be in English or have an official translation provided. Original certificates will not be accepted. Any certificates not correctly authenticated will be returned.
- 4.3 Candidates must submit their application to sit the examination no later than the closing date indicated in the examinations calendar. **Ideally by email** Postal applications and all documentation should be forwarded to:
- Faculty of Pre Hospital Care
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Examination Section
Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9DW
SCOTLAND
- 4.4 Late applications will not be accepted. No allowance will be made for postal or other delays. Failure to submit the documentation listed on the candidate checklist may result in an application form being rejected and/or a delay in the processing of an application.
- 4.5 Applicants who are ineligible for an examination as a result of failing to provide the required documentation by the closing date will not be enrolled into the examination. Applicants in this category will have their fees refunded less a 20% administrative charge.
- 4.6 Re-sit applicants who have previously been accepted as a candidate for the examination for which they are applying are not required to resubmit certificates. Candidates in this category may apply to re-sit the Examination online through the College website at <https://fphc.rcsed.ac.uk/examinations>

5. PROOF OF IDENTITY

- 5.1 Candidates must bring proof of identity to each examination. Proof of identity must be an official document, such as a current passport or driver's licence that includes the candidate's name, signature and photograph.
- 5.2 Proof of identity is an essential element of the examination. The Convener of the Examinations Committee reserves the right to refuse to examine any candidate whose identity is uncertain.

- 5.3 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.

6. DRESS CODE

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Part A of the examination is not 'patient-facing'. Candidates are therefore permitted to wear smart casual clothes.
- 6.3 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. Blank knee boards can be worn, if desired. Please show these to the examinations team before entering the examination.
- 6.4 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.

7. RESULTS

Results will be placed on the College website and sent out by email.

8. FEEDBACK

- 8.1 All candidates will be notified of the minimum mark required to pass each part of the examination together with their achieved mark for both parts of the examination. Individual feedback will be provided for all candidates who sit the DIMC exam via a specific 'feedback letter'.
- 8.2 For PHEM Trainees, the Examinations Section of the RCSEd will provide results to the candidate's PHEM Training Programme Director and the IBTPHEM training committee chair.

9. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EXAMINATION

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Candidates who wish to withdraw an application for admission to any part of the examination on medical, employment, compassionate or visa refusal grounds must submit a request in writing to the College. Applications for consideration of a refund on medical grounds must be accompanied by a medical certificate. Applications for consideration of a refund on employment grounds must be accompanied by a letter from the lead of the employing organisation. Applications for consideration

of a refund on compassionate grounds should be supported by the Consultant/tutor responsible for training or from another appropriate professional. Applications for consideration of a refund on the grounds of being refused a visa must be accompanied by a refusal letter from the Embassy/Consulate. Each such application must be submitted to the Examinations Section within 14 days following the start date of the candidate's programmed examination.

9.3 Examination candidacy during pregnancy

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

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

9.3.2 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.

9.3.3 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.

10. CANDIDATES WITH SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

10.1 Candidates with reasonable adjustment requests should advise the college at the time of application. Requests should be supported by medical evidence (for example: an educational psychologist's report is required for requests for extra time because of dyslexia). If appropriate, details of extra time or other allowances made by other examining bodies should be given, although the college is not bound to follow these.

10.2 Candidates should note that the College operate a 'Fit to Sit' policy; if a candidate attends and takes an examination, they are declaring themselves fit to sit the examination and they will not be able to subsequently claim that their performance was affected by mitigating circumstances. Candidates will therefore need to take responsibility for deciding in advance whether they are unwell or facing other significant mitigating circumstances.

10.3 Each individual case will be separately assessed. Each candidate will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application for special consideration and of the arrangements that will be made to meet their needs.

11. IMPROPER CONDUCT BY EXAMINATION CANDIDATES

11.1 In the case of improper conduct of an examination candidate, as defined below, the College may impose a penalty relating to the candidate's eligibility for the relevant or future examination. Improper conduct is defined as:

11.1.1 Dishonestly obtaining or attempting to obtain entry to the examination by making false claims about eligibility for the examination, or falsifying any aspects of the entry documentation.

11.1.2 Obtaining or seeking to obtain unfair advantage during an examination, or inciting other candidates to do the same. Examples of unfair advantage are:

11.1.2.1 having on the person any material that would give advantage in an examination once the examination has commenced (this includes electronic communication devices);

11.1.2.2 communicating, or attempting to communicate, with another candidate, once

the examination has commenced;

- 11.1.2.3 refusing to follow the instructions given by invigilators, examiners or examinations staff concerning the conduct of, and procedure for, the examination.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 11.1.3 Removing or attempting to remove from the examination any confidential material relating to the examination.
 - 11.1.4 Obtaining or attempting to obtain confidential information concerning the examination from an examiner or examination official.
 - 11.1.5 Passing confidential information on the content of the examination to a third party.
 - 11.1.6 This list is not exhaustive. Further information can be obtained from the guidelines on suspected malpractice available on the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk
- 11.2 If a candidate is found to have acted improperly, their name may be reported to their national authority and/or registration body. The college may also on an individual basis decide that a candidate should not be allowed to proceed further with the examination or, having passed the examination, be awarded the examination.

12. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint or appeal must do so in accordance with the College Examinations Complaints and Appeals Procedure. 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
Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9DW
SCOTLAND

Email: fphc.exams@rcsed.ac.uk

NOTE: 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: fphc.exams@rcsed.ac.uk