

Royal College of Pathologists

Examination regulations – 2025

CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY

These regulations must be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Guidelines – College examinations for Fellowship and Diplomas*.

Please note that changes have been made to the FRCPATH Part 2 Clinical Biochemistry examination, and you can find out more on the [Examination News and Dates](#) page.

ENTRY & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

There is no specific timing for entry to the examination although it is expected that medical trainees will normally have passed the FRCPATH Part 1 examination by the end of ST3(5). Trainees who have not passed the FRCPATH Part 1 examination by the end of ST3(5) will be prevented from progressing to Stage C of training. This may result in an extension to training through the ARCP process.

Medical trainees must pass the FRCPATH Part 2 examination by the end of ST4(6). Trainees who have not passed the FRCPATH Part 2 examination by the end of ST4(6) will be prevented from progressing to Stage D of training.

Candidates should obtain guidance from their educational supervisor as to when to sit the examination. Planning should take into account the duration of fixed-term training contracts and planned CCT date (where applicable), but candidates should apply only when they are ready and some general guidance is given below.

Part 1

Candidates will usually sit the Part 1 written examination when they have gained about two years of laboratory experience at specialty registrar trainee level or equivalent.

Part 2

Candidates may sit the Part 2 examination at an appropriate time after they have passed the Part 1 examination, although it is advised that candidates leave at least twelve months between passing the Part 1 and applying for the Part 2. The time of entry should be as advised by their Educational Supervisor, who must support the application. It is anticipated that most candidates will attempt the Part 2 examination in the fourth year of Specialist Training.

Candidates may apply to sit modules individually. Candidates should apply to sit either module 1, module 2 or both modules. A module pass will be carried forward and this module will not need to be taken again when the other modules are attempted.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Part 1

The Part 1 examination is a single three-hour paper comprising of 125 single best answer questions (SBAs).

Part 2

The Part 2 examination is a modular examination consisting of:

Module 1 Practical skills module

Module 2 Clinical, scientific and management skills module

Candidates may take the modules in any order however. In order to pass the entire examination and receive the award of FRCPATH candidates must both modules.

Module 1 - Practical skills module

Paper 1 is a three-hour 19 station objective structured practical examination (OSPE). Candidates will be provided with laboratory material such as:

- analytical outputs (e.g., electrophoretic strips, chromatography scans)
- clinical scenarios (e.g., sample requirements, investigation protocol questions)
- quality control and/or external quality assurance data
- analytical, physiological or pharmacological calculations

One station will test communication skills in a written format.

Paper 2 is a three-hour dry practical which tests the candidate's ability to plan an experiment, execute simple bench practical work, record results, analyse raw data and draw appropriate conclusions. Candidates will be provided with raw experimental data and will be required to perform simple laboratory bench practical work.

Candidates are not permitted to take books or other reference material into the examination. Appropriate equipment such as pipettes and scientific calculators will continue to be permitted; further information about this will be available prior to each session of the examination.

Module 2 - Clinical, scientific and management skills module

Paper 3 is a three-hour written paper in which candidates are required to interpret clinical cases and critically appraise journal articles. In the clinical cases section candidates are given six questions comprising a brief history and laboratory results and are asked to describe and interpret them. In the journal article evaluation section candidates are required to answer questions that test their critical reading and appraisal skills and their understanding of experimental methods and statistical techniques based on two journal articles.

The Oral examination has two parts. The first oral covers clinical patient management (medical candidates), laboratory problem solving (scientist candidates) and laboratory management (all candidates). The second oral comprises general clinical biochemistry issues (including patient and laboratory safety). Candidates will be given 30-minutes to prepare their answers to the scenarios used in the first oral.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The Part 1 and Part 2 examinations will be offered twice a year in Spring and Autumn.