



Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations

Regulations

Approval date: 10 November 2025

1. Introduction

This document outlines the regulations for the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow have developed the examinations together. These regulations cover 10 specialties, listed below, supporting trainees to demonstrate the specialist knowledge, skills and capabilities required for progression.

The specialties included within these examination arrangements are:

- Dental Public Health
- Endodontics
- Oral Medicine
- Oral Surgery
- Orthodontics
- Paediatric Dentistry
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Restorative Dentistry
- Special Care Dentistry

The new examinations will start in 2026. Regulations will be published and/or amended with sufficient notice (expected to be one year) before the change takes effect. All candidates must adhere to these regulations throughout the examination process. The regulations are subject to periodic review, and candidates should check for updates.

Further information can be obtained from <https://dsfe.org.uk>. All candidates will be required to apply for their examinations through this Secretariat at the above website. International candidates sitting exams outside the UK will be required to apply for examinations through their College of choice.

All parts of the examination are conducted in English. The examination will be held in the UK and international locations according to demand.

2. Purpose and Aim of the Examination

- 2.1 The examinations assess core knowledge and clinical competence across the dental specialties listed above, as defined by the [Learning Outcomes](#) approved by the General Dental Council. Candidates must demonstrate the required level of skill and theoretical understanding appropriate for an advanced practitioner at the level of a “day one” specialist.
- 2.2 The purpose of the examination is to allow the candidate to demonstrate core knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of the specialty, and to allow the candidate to demonstrate a level of competence in the planning and delivery within that specialty.
- 2.3 Successful candidates will be eligible to be admitted to Fellowship of the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the relevant College. Candidates should be aware that the attaining the award in the Dental Specialty subject does not in itself grant eligibility for entry to the UK Specialist list in that subject.

3. Structure of the Examinations (excluding Dental Public Health)

- 3.1 The examination for each specialty consists of two parts:
 - **Part 1:** Single Best Answer (SBA) Questions
SBAs are a selected response format with one single best answer, usually with 4 plausible distractors. Single Best Answer questions will be used to assess basic and clinical sciences pertinent to clinical decision making in the relevant specialty, particularly those that are not directly observable in the workplace. The questions may also assess peripheral knowledge, that whilst not strictly clinical, is relevant to clinical decision making and treatment planning.
 - **Part 2:** Clinical Structured Oral (cSO)
A cSO is a discussion between the candidate and one or more examiners. The cSO will be used to assess candidates’ clinical judgement and decision-making skills. This will include the assessment and interpretation of clinical information to reach appropriate diagnoses (including differential diagnoses) in line with relevant clinical guidelines, prognoses, patient management, treatment planning, and dealing with complications within the overall context of healthcare delivery relevant to the specialty. Clinical decision making may also include the recognition of medical emergencies and situations requiring urgent referral.
- 3.2 Candidates will be required to pass Part 1 before sitting Part 2.
- 3.3 Part 1 will consist of 180 questions examined over four hours, with a short break after two hours. The examination will be facilitated online in an exam centre.
- 3.4 Part 2 will consist of up to 10 stations with up to 25 minutes per station including reading and examining time.
- 3.5 Part 2 will take place face-to-face at an exam centre.

4. Structure of the Dental Public Health Examinations

- 4.1 The examination is made up of two Parts, the second of which has two components:
 - **Part 1** Short Answer Questions (SAQ)
Short Answer questions will be used to assess skills in critical appraisal. SAQs are each based on stimulus materials, with a series of related questions attached. The questions require



candidates to construct a concise and focussed response. The stimulus material accompanying the questions will be a set of published articles or reports, which may be redacted.

4.2 **Part 2 Oral Examination**

This part of the examination will have two component parts:

- Component 1 - Project based Structured Orals (pSO) and Unseen case Structured Orals (uSO)

The pSO will require candidates to submit a range of project reports that will form the basis of the structured oral discussions. This approach will be used to assess candidates' ability to design and deliver a project, identify suitable sources of information, synthesise information and communicate findings in addition to decision making, critical appraisal and problem solving.

The uSO will be based on simulated scenarios and will focus on the assessment of data interpretation skills, information synthesis, decision making and problem-solving skills.

- Component 2 - Management Structured Orals (mSO)

The mSO will be based on simulated scenarios and will focus on assessment of clinical judgement and decision-making skills relating to the management of healthcare service delivery and will include application of knowledge of legislative and ethical frameworks, national and local healthcare systems and service planning.

- 4.3 Part 1 will consist of questions on three articles, examined over three hours. The exam will be facilitated online in an exam centre.
- 4.4 Part 2 will take place face-to-face at an exam centre.
- 4.5 Part 2 Component 1 – The pSO will consist of up to four stations, with up to 15 minutes per station including reading and examining time. The uSO will consist of up to six stations, with up to 25 minutes per station including reading and examining time.
- 4.6 Part 2 Component 2 - mSO will consist of up to six stations, with up to 20 minutes per station including reading and examining time.
- 4.7 Candidates will be required to pass Part 1 before progressing to Part 2.
- 4.8 At their first sitting of Part 2, candidates must attempt both components of the examination. Both must be passed to pass Part 2 overall. A component that is passed will not require to be retaken. At any subsequent sitting, the candidate will only be required to attempt the component not previously passed.

For further information on the examination assessment strategy, candidates should refer to the [website](#).

5. Entrance Requirements

Candidates must review and comply with the [relevant eligibility criteria](#) for their examination.



6. Eligibility for the Award of the Diploma of Fellowship

- 6.1 To be eligible for award of the Diploma candidates must have complied with all parts of the Regulations and Eligibility Criteria and passed all parts of the examination.

7. Application for Admission to the Examination

- 7.1 Applications for admission to the examination must be fully completed and accompanied by the required certified evidence. Once the application has been received and logged, you will then receive a request for payment. Each UK diet of the examination will be advertised by all three Colleges, for international candidates please refer to information issued by your College of affiliation.
- 7.2 Applications must be made using the appropriate application process and must reach the administering Secretariat by the specified closing date. Those received after the closing date will not be processed.

8. Results

- 8.1 Results will be published through the Secretariat and the College of affiliation selected by the candidate.

9. Feedback

- 9.1 Unsuccessful candidates will be provided with written feedback on their performance within one month of the publication of the results. Feedback is also available for successful candidates.

10. Examination Attempt Limit

- 10.1 Candidates are allowed **four attempts** for Part 1 and **four attempts** for Part 2. All parts must be passed within **4 years** of the first attempt.

11. Infringement of the Regulations

- 11.1 The Colleges may refuse to admit to the examination, or may not allow to proceed 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 infringements can be found in the Guide to Candidates.

- 11.2 The list of examples in the Guide to Candidates is not exhaustive. Further information can be obtained from the guidelines on suspected malpractice, which are available on the [website](#).

12. Appeals and Complaints

- 12.1 Candidates who wish to make an appeal about the conduct of their examination must address this to the Secretariat within **28 calendar days** of results publication. Appeals are only permitted for procedural defects or irregularities or marking process error which had an



impact on the outcome of the examination. Appeals disputing academic judgment will not be allowed. The appeals policy and complaints policy is available on the [website](#).

13. Withdrawal from the Examination

- 13.1 Any candidate who wishes to withdraw an application for admission to the examination must notify the Secretariat in writing. A refund of the fee paid may be made (less an administrative fee of 20%), provided that notice of an intention to withdraw is received by the Secretariat before the closing date by which applications are due, as shown in the examinations calendar. Refunds are not normally made to any candidate who withdraws after the closing date.
- 13.2 Any candidate who wishes to withdraw an application for admission to the examination on medical grounds and requests a refund of fee must submit a request in writing to the administering Secretariat, accompanied by a medical certificate. An application for consideration of a refund of fee on compassionate grounds should be supported by full details, including a supporting letter from an appropriate professional. Each such application must be submitted to the administering Secretariat within 28 days following the date of the commencement date of the examination.
- 13.3 The Secretariat reserves the right to review admission to the examination on an individual basis in exceptional circumstances.
- 13.4 A candidate who becomes ill or has an accident during the examination must inform the Lead Examiner for that diet as soon as possible. On the advice of the Lead Examiner, the candidate may withdraw from the examination or the Lead Examiner may agree with the candidate how the candidate should proceed to complete the examination

14. Candidates with Special Circumstances

- 14.1 Tailored examination and other assessment arrangements will be made for individual candidates with additional needs due to learning differences (such as dyslexia) or due to permanent or temporary disability, through reasonable adjustments. These arrangements are intended to ensure that candidates are able to perform to the best of their ability and that they are not discriminated against because of learning differences or because of permanent or temporary disability.
- 14.2 Whilst it is the responsibility of the Secretariat to ask candidates if they have any additional needs, it is the responsibility of the candidate to notify the Secretariat when they submit their application of any additional needs they have, the reason for them, and any reasonable adjustments that have been helpful in the past.
- 14.3 Applications for reasonable adjustments to meet additional needs are required to be supported by written evidence. For example, in the form of a medical report from their general medical practitioner for medical conditions, or an educational psychologist's report for a learning difference such as dyslexia. Application for an adjustment does not guarantee that this will be granted.

15. Proof of Identity at the Examination

- 15.1 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 e.g. current photographic driving license.

- 15.2 For the purpose of visual identification, any candidate sitting any examination may be required to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, the candidate's face. The Secretariat will observe sensitivity in the visual identification of candidates.
- 15.3 To facilitate the assessment of non-verbal communication skills and interaction with the examiner, the Secretariat reserves the right to require candidates to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, the candidate's face.

16. Award of Diploma of Fellowship

- 16.1 Candidates who pass the Examination held jointly by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow who have met the eligibility criteria, shall be entitled to the designation of Fellowship in Dental Specialty subject of their chosen Faculty and shall receive a Diploma of Fellowship bearing the seal of that College.
- 16.2 Successful candidates will be granted Fellowship of the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the relevant College on payment of such election fee and annual subscription as may be determined from time to time by the Council of the relevant College. Members of the Faculty of Dental Surgery may participate in Faculty and College educational, professional and social activities.

17. Curriculum and Learning Outcomes

- 17.1 The curriculum is determined by the Learning Outcomes with the competencies outlined for each specialty. The relevant specialty exam syllabus is provided to guide candidates in their preparation.
- 17.2 Learning Outcomes are available on the General Dental Council website, [Specialty curricula](#).

