

(MFDS) Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery Examinations Guide to Candidates

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1. General Information

1.1 This guide refers to the Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS) examinations due to commence from October 2026. This guide will be updated periodically and provides a practical overview of information for candidates sitting the MFDS examination. It should be read in conjunction with MFDS Regulations, MFDS Examination Eligibility Criteria, and other policies, procedures and guidance documents including the Dental Examinations Executive Appeals Policy and Procedure, and Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

1.2 The MFDS examinations are delivered by the Dental Examinations Executive (“the Executive”) and have been developed by the partnership of Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Royal College of Surgeons of England and Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow.

1.3 The purpose of the examination is to assess whether candidates have the knowledge, skills and professional judgement expected of a Dental Core Trainee in the second or third year of training. The examination is designed to provide a fair and inclusive opportunity for all eligible candidates to demonstrate their capability, regardless of their training route. 1.4 The MFDS Examination comprises two parts as follows:

1.4.1 Part 1 – Single Best Answer consisting of 180 questions assessed over four hours with a short rest break after two hours.

1.4.2 Part 2 – Observed Structured Clinical Examination consisting of 14 stations each lasting approximately 10 minutes.

2. Applying for the Examination

2.1 The Executive will update this information as required; the most current information can be found on the website.

3. Eligibility

3.1 The requirements are detailed in full in the MFDS Examination [Eligibility Criteria](#). Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria in full by the closing date of the application window for the exam diet they intend to sit in order to be considered eligible.

3.2 No other qualifications will be accepted for the purpose of eligibility.

4. Number of Attempts

4.1 Candidates must have passed Part 1 of the examination to be eligible to sit Part 2.

4.2 Candidates are allowed four attempts at Part 1 and four attempts at Part 2. Part 2 must be passed within four years of passing Part 1.

5. Exam Dates, Fees and Locations

5.1 Up to date information, including closing dates for application windows, can be found on the website.

5.2 Exam dates and locations are set by the Executive and the MFDS Board.

5.3 Exam Fees are set by the Dental Assessment Planning and Review Group and are reviewed on an annual basis.

5.4 Part 1 Exams are conducted online in an assessment centre. Part 2 exams are conducted face-to-face.

5.5 Exam centres will be indicated by city; detailed venue information will be shared with candidates after the closing date of the application window when final candidate numbers are known. All queries should be directed to the Executive and not to the venue.

6. Application Process

6.1 Candidates will apply via the risr/apply platform, first creating a user account and then selecting the exam diet for which they wish to apply. An application form must be completed in full, including the upload of any necessary documents. Candidates are required to self-certify that they meet the requirements of eligibility to sit the exam. Candidates will then pay the exam fee. The application is only submitted once the fee has been paid in full.

6.2 Candidates may create a user account at any time. An application for an exam can only be made during the application window. Submission of an application does not guarantee a place in the examination diet.

6.3 Successful applicants will be notified of their place on the exam no later than one week after the closing date of the application window.

6.4 It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that their application is completed in full, that all information in the form is accurate and genuine, and that the application is submitted before the closing date.

6.5 Candidates cannot apply for any part of the exam if they are waiting for relevant exam results affecting eligibility.

7. Candidate Prioritisation

7.1 In order to ensure that UK trainees are not disadvantaged by increased demand for spaces on the examinations held in the UK, a clear process for prioritising candidates is necessary. The groups are as follows:

7.1.1 Group 1 – Candidates with a current active UK General Dental Council or Dental Council of Ireland registration

7.1.2 Group 2 – All other candidates.

7.2 Applications will open in staggered windows. These windows will be made available on the Dental Examinations Executive website when examination dates are published.

Phase	Groups that can apply
Phase 1	Group 1
Phase 2	Groups 1 & 2

7.3 Dates for each phase will be published on the website and communicated in advance to the relevant body, e.g. COPDEND, Dental Schools Association, etc.

7.4 This will be managed using the exam application platform provided by risr/.

8. Withdrawals

8.1 Candidates may withdraw before the closing date of the application window and will receive a refund of the fee paid, less a 20% administrative charge.

8.2 More information on candidate fee refunds is available in the MFDS and Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations Terms and Conditions for Admissions and the MFDS Examination Regulations.

8.3 Candidates who wish to withdraw after the closing date of the application window should refer to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. Candidates will not be permitted to transfer to a future diet, but will be required to reapply for any future diet at which they wish to sit.

9. Visas

9.1 It is the responsibility of each candidate to obtain any relevant visa to attend the examination centre. Prior to applying for the examination, candidates should check the visa application process with their local embassy, including the likelihood of a visa being obtained. Candidates may request a visa support letter from the Executive by email. This will be issued for the purpose of supporting a candidate's visa application and does not guarantee that a visa will be granted.

10. Preparing for the Exam

10.1 Candidates will be provided with all information relevant to their exam in advance by the Executive. This may include guidance and information on what to expect on an exam day, signposting to resources and travel/accommodation advice for exam centre locations. Candidates may access preparation materials including sample questions via the Executive website.

11. After the Exam

11.1 Results

The release date of results will be communicated to candidates in advance via electronic communications and during the brief and debrief on the exam day. Results will be published on the risr/advance platform and candidates will be able to access these using the login details they used to apply for the exam.

11.2 Feedback

Candidates will receive feedback of their performance regardless of their overall grading. Feedback reports will be published on the risr/ platform and candidates will be able to access these in the same way they access their result.

11.3 Appeals

Candidates may appeal their result and should review the contents of the MFDS and Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations Appeals Policy and Procedure before doing so. A fee of £100 GBP is payable when submitting an appeal for investigation. This fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld. All appeals are investigated and outcomes determined by the Quality Assurance team within the Executive which sits separately from the Delivery team.

11.4 Joining a Royal College

Any candidate who passes all components of the exam will be eligible to join any of the UK Royal Surgical Colleges as a Member. A candidate may join more than one College if they wish. Pass lists will be created by the Executive and shared with membership teams from each Royal College. Any queries regarding joining a Royal College should be directed to the relevant Royal College(s).