Regulations for the Specialist Fellowship Diploma of the Faculty of Dentistry

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in Dental Public Health

FFDRCSI (DPH)

June 2014
INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains the regulations relating to the
Specialist Fellowship Diploma of the Faculty of Dentistry
of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
in Dental Public Health.

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GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. The Specialist Fellowship Diploma of the Faculty of Dentistry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in Dental Public Health - FFDRCSI (DPH) - may be granted to those who possess a dental qualification registrable in the Register of Dentists for Ireland and to graduates or diplomats in Dental Science of those universities and other licensing bodies recognised for the purpose (i.e. those that admit candidates to Temporary Registration in Ireland and UK) and who comply with the Regulations.

2. The requirements to present for the examination in the Specialist Fellowship, FFDRCSI (Dental Public Health) are:
   a. FDS, MFD/MFDS or equivalent.
   b. Evidence of satisfactory completion of three years’ full-time (or part-time equivalent not normally exceeding six years) recognised specialty training in an institution or post recognised by the Faculty. Training would normally be expected to be undertaken within one approved programme. Candidates are required to submit certified, documented evidence of their training, including their training number if applicable.

3. Before admission to the examination, candidates must provide evidence:
   3.1 Of having practised dentistry for a minimum of six years subsequent to obtaining registrable dental qualification.
   3.2 Of possessing an academic qualification in Dental Public Health, at Masters level or higher from a generally recognised University or College.
   3.3 Of having completed a minimum of two years’ full time specialty training in Dental Public Health where the above mentioned academic qualification was obtained prior to entry to the formal higher training programme, or of having completed a minimum of three years full time specialty training where that period included the obtaining of an academic qualification.
   3.4 Candidates from Ireland must be enrolled with the Irish Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry.
   3.5 Candidates from the UK must be enrolled with the SAC in Dental Public Health.

   [To allow for flexibility in the timing of the academic element of training, candidates will not be eligible for the specialty examination until they have entered the final year of their training].

4. For FFD exam eligibility queries, candidates are advised to do the following:
   • Email a current CV to Faculty office
• Send a formal copy of qualifications held to date, and letters confirming any training undertaken, to the Faculty office at facdentistry@rcsi.ie

• Candidates will also need to send the Faculty a note from their Consultant confirming their clinical competence.

N.B. Prior approval must be received from the Faculty office before sitting an FFD examination. Consequently, candidates who are not certain of their eligibility are responsible for ensuring that initial approval is sought in sufficient time to be considered by Faculty Office so that an application can be made (after approval) within the required timescale.

If considered eligible to sit an FFD examination, and approved, candidates must log on to the Postgraduate Examinations System to formally apply for the examination. However, candidates cannot formally apply online for an FFD examination without prior approval from the Faculty office.

Prior to formally applying for the FFD examination, candidates must ensure that they carefully read the following information that can be found on our Faculty website (http://dentistry.rcsi.ie)

- Exam regulations
- Exam Rules of Conduct (Appendix II)

Due to the large number of candidates applying to take these examinations, it is essential that the following points are read and adhered to:

a. If the Faculty considers that a candidate is eligible to sit an FFD examination, the candidate must log on to the Postgraduate Examinations system to formally apply for the chosen examination.

b. The full fee must then be paid online by credit/debit card.

c. The candidate will be asked to scan and upload a passport photograph.

d. The candidate will be asked to scan your official letter of prior approval from the Faculty office.

e. This formal online application must be received by the SARA Department (Student Academic and Regulatory Affairs) on or before the closing date of the examination.

f. Once the online application has been processed the candidate will receive official confirmation, along with his/her examination number.

g. The SARA Department will contact the candidate prior to the examination regarding further details of venues, timetables, etc.

Candidates are welcome to make enquiries by telephone or email Faculty office with regard to any examination applications to this Faculty.
5. Candidates withdrawing from an examination must do so in writing. The entrance fee will be returned less a 20% administrative charge. Candidates who withdraw from the examination after the closing date or who fail to attend the examination for which they have been accepted will not normally be entitled to any refund of the fee. Refusal of the employing authority to allow leave to attend the examination will not be accepted as qualifying for any refund after the closing date. A refund on medical grounds, even if there is a medical certificate, is not normally allowed. Applications for consideration on medical or compassionate grounds must be supported by the Consultant or Dean responsible for training and must be submitted to the College with any accompanying evidence within 28 days of commencement of the examination.

6. The College or Board of the Faculty reserves absolute discretion to refuse to admit to the examination, or to proceed with the examination of, any candidate who (a) infringes any of the Regulations or (b) who is considered by the Examiners to be acting in a manner prejudicial to the proper management and conduct of the examination (see Appendix 2) or (c) whose conduct has rendered them in the College’s or Board’s opinion, unsuitable for conferral with the Diploma of Fellow of the Faculty of Dentistry of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

7. Candidates who desire to make representation with regard to the conduct of the examination must address them to the Examinations Office of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland within 1 month of the examination and not in any circumstances to an examiner. Representation will then be dealt with according to the policy agreed by the College.

8. The Specialist Fellowship Diploma in Dental Public Health of the Faculty of Dentistry, RCSI is registrable in the Register of Dentists for Ireland as an additional qualification provided that the name of the holder already appears in that Register. Details regarding the registration of the diploma may be obtained from the Registrar, Irish Dental Council, 57 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, Ireland.

9. Candidates who consider that their experience is equivalent to the training set out above, but who do not comply exactly with these rules, may apply for special consideration by submitting full details in writing at least three months before the closing date of the examination to the Education Committee, Faculty of Dentistry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. A final decision will rest with the Board of the Faculty of Dentistry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

10. The examination will normally be held once yearly in November with a further sitting in May at the discretion of the Education Committee.
11. The FFDRCSI (DPH) Specialist Fellowship Diploma will test the candidate's understanding of and competency in all aspects of Dental Public Health.

The examination consists of the following components:

11.1 **Written Paper** *(3 hours’ duration)*

This will comprise two compulsory questions and 10 MSA questions relating to any part of the syllabus.

11.2 **Simulated Clinical Examination – OSCE format (1 hour)**

The OSCE examination is composed of individual, 5, 10 or 20 minute ‘stations’ to a maximum time of 1 hour. The candidate may be examined in any aspect of Dental Public Health including:

- Oral health need and demand assessment
- Provision and evaluation of oral health services
- Oral health promotion
- Research and development
- Information technology
- Teaching, medical education/training and effective communication.
- Management of health care delivery

11.3 **Log/Portfolio with oral examination (1 hour)**

The candidate will present a log/portfolio which will comprise annotated reports of service-related projects undertaken during training in Dental Public Health. These accounts will be presented in chronological order. The overall length of the portfolio should not exceed 20,000 words. The four projects selected by the candidate should reflect and demonstrate their experience during training in dental public health and should therefore cover a diverse spectrum of dental public health practice. Guidance on the preparation and submission of the Dental Public Health Log/Portfolio please refer to Appendix I. The log/portfolio will be seen in advance by a panel of examiners and will be the basis for this part of the oral examination.
In addition, prior to the examination date, candidates are required to send electronic copies of the Log/Portfolio any Relevant Information etc., on a USB key to the Faculty Offices;

Address: c/o Ms. F. Allen.
Faculty Secretary,
Faculty of Dentistry,
123 St. Stephen’s Green,
Dublin 2,
IRELAND.

The above must arrive at least 28 days prior to the examination date thus allowing the Examiners sufficient time to review all relevant documentation prior to commencement of the examination.

Total duration: 5 hours
Written Paper 3 hours
Log/Portfolio 1 hour
OSCE 1 hour
COMPETENCY OBJECTIVES FOR THE DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH FFD OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND

AREA ONE – HEALTH POLICY

Overall goal

The candidates will have:

• An understanding of and be able to apply concepts involved in the planning, implementation, operation and evaluation of Dental Public Health programmes.

Competency objectives

The candidate will be able to:

• Assess strengths and weaknesses in Dental Public Health programmes.
• Identify and define oral health problems by assembling, summarising, analysing and interpreting relevant data.
• Define criteria both internal and external to the organisation by which programme performances and results will be evaluated.
• Identify and define different types of programme evaluation methods and techniques tailored to each aspect or the oral health programme.
• Describe strengths and weaknesses of current organisation and management structures for delivering Dental Public Health and dental services.
• Describe how legislative and regulatory process results in the development of health policy at a national and local level “with examples mainly drawn from Ireland, UK and the EU.”

AREA TWO – RESEARCH METHODS IN DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Overall goal

The candidates will:

• Have an understanding of the basic concepts of planning, implementing and conducting observational studies, systematic reviews, health service research and policy analysis.
• Have knowledge of skills in research and design, bio-statistics and in both general and oral facial epidemiology.
• Be able to perform critical evaluations of scientific literature, prepare scientific reports, and have an understanding of the content of research protocols for the conduct of scientific studies in Dental Public Health.

• Have an understanding of the ethical issues and the design and conduct of research in Dental Public Health.

**Competency objectives**

The candidate will be able to:

• Describe the characteristics and study designs of observational studies, experimental studies, systematic reviews, and health service research and policy analysis.

• Describe the epidemiology of oral disease and conditions.

• Formulate appropriate statements of research objectives and hypothesis.

• Identify study populations and develop appropriate sampling methods.

• Identify appropriate, valid and reliable measures of oral health disease and associated factors.

• Identify and understand procedures for training, standardisation and calibration of examiners.

• Identify possible sources of bias in research.

• Understand the principles of hypothesis development and testing.

• Identify appropriate statistical procedures for measuring examiner reliability.

• Contrast the concepts of ‘population’ and ‘sample’ and describe what sampling variation means.

• Demonstrate an understanding of statistical concepts including: scales (nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio); adjusted and unadjusted rates, ratios and proportions; distributional properties of data; measures of central tendency; measures of association, confidence intervals; parametric and non-parametric analysis; t-statistic, f-ratio and chi-square statistic; analysis of variance; regression analysis; type I and type II errors; power; p-value; and sensitivity and specificity.

• Compare and contrast case-control, cross sectional and cohort studies.

• Define and differentiate between incidence and prevalence.

• Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different types of observational study designs.

• Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different types of experimental study designs.
• Allocate subjects to treatment and control groups using appropriate principles of randomisation.
• Discuss the importance of blindness in the experimental studies.
• Discuss the potential effects of subject attrition and level of compliance on interpretation of study results.
• Distinguish between internal and external validity of study results.
• Distinguish between clinical and statistical significance.
• Distinguish between concepts of efficacy and effectiveness in clinical trials.
• Understand methods used in clinical decision analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and cost-effective analysis.
• Describe in classic economic terms the relationships among need, supply, demand and costs of services.
• Use appropriate methods for evaluating scientific literature.
• Understanding the principles underlying systematic reviews of the scientific literature.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of evidence based practice.
• Prepare a review article based on evaluation of a scientific literature.
• Prepare a critique of research proposal, a project report and scientific manuscript.
• Prepare an article or report suitable for publication in a peer review journal.
• Identify the basic ethical principles underlying the conduct of biomedical behavioural research involving human subjects.

AREA THREE – ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION/HEALTH IMPROVEMENT & DISEASE PREVENTION

Overall goal

The candidate will:

• Have an understanding of the general concepts on which health promotion and disease prevention are based;
• Be familiar with approaches to promote oral health and prevent oral diseases and related conditions;
• Be able to demonstrate knowledge of planning, implementation, and evaluation of oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes.
• Be able to critically evaluate preventive technologies for adoption and use in oral health programmes and be familiar with current research activities in oral health promotion and disease prevention.

**Competency objectives**

The candidate will be able to:

• Define primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

• Define and distinguish between health promotion and health education.

• Distinguish between those preventive services that provide specific protection and those that promote health.

• Discuss those factors that enhance or impede the implementation of health promotion and disease and prevention programmes.

• Identify the theoretical approaches to achieving behaviour change in compliance among the public and health professionals.

• Define and discuss direct and indirect costs of community programmes for the prevention of oral disease and conditions.

• Describe the efficacy, effectiveness and methods for implementation of strategies promoting oral health and preventing oral disease.

• Describe the metabolism and methods of action of the various fluoride modalities.

• Describe and compare local, national and international initiatives and policies for oral health promotion and disease prevention.

• Discuss the role of public policy in oral health promotion and disease prevention.

• Discuss factors that can enhance or impede the implementation of fluoridation.

• Provide the scientific basis for oral health promotion and disease prevention strategies based on the aetiology and natural history of oral disease and conditions.

• Discuss the appropriateness and effectiveness of screening programmes for oral cancer and other diseases and conditions.

• Identify social demographic, biological, behavioural, cultural, political, and legal factors considered in determining the need for community oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes.

• Discuss assessment methods for oral disease activity and health status used in planning and evaluating community oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes.
• Discuss methods used to identify individuals and populations at risk for oral diseases.

• Select appropriate oral health promotion and disease prevention measures and intervention strategies based on characteristics of the population.

• Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of targeting populations for oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes.

• Develop a programme plan for the provision or oral health promotion and disease prevention services.

• Develop protocols for implementation and monitoring for oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes that ensure effectiveness, safety and efficiency.

• Evaluate the impact of oral health promotion and disease prevention programmes using appropriate structure, process and outcome measures.

• Identify and describe clinical and community trials and projects that have had a major impact on the development of a programme of the provision of oral health promotion and disease prevention services.

• Identify occupational hazards associated with the practice of dentistry.

• Discuss health risks associated with the exposure to occupational hazards in dentistry, and recommendations and requirements for ensuring protection against these risks.

• Describe infection control recommendations and requirements for the prevention of disease transmission in an oral health care setting.

AREA FOUR – ORAL HEALTH SERVICES DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Overall goal

A candidate will:

• Be able to demonstrate knowledge for each of the elements of the oral health service delivery system, including consumers of oral health services, the practitioners who provide these services, the actual services resulted from the interaction of consumers and practitioners, both public and private, methods through which these services are financed and reimbursed, purchase of services, organisational configurations through which services are delivered, and the facilities in which they are delivered.

• Have an understanding of the history and tradition of dentistry, dental public health and public health;
• Have an understanding of and be able to apply professional and ethical standards in the planning delivery and promotion of oral health services.

**Competency objectives**

The candidate will be able to:

• Differentiate between the concepts of need, perceived need, potential demand and effective demand for oral health services.

• Describe the current status and trends in the need and demand for oral health services.

• Discuss factors influencing the need and demand for oral health services.

• Design an oral health service delivery programme that reflects the need and characteristics of the community to be served.

• Explain methods for assessing and projecting the need for supply of oral health personnel and the assumptions on which they are based.

• Discuss current oral health personnel supply.

• Discuss legislation regulation and other factors that affect the need, supply, and distribution of oral health personnel.

• Describe current and proposed methods of extending the availability of oral health services.

• Describe the current status, trends and influencing factors in the recruitment of dental undergraduates.

• Describe the current status and trends in oral health service provision.

• Describe the effects the provision of oral health service has on oral health status.

• Establish priorities for the provision of oral health services for population groups.

• Discuss legislation affecting delivery of oral health services.

• Identify and describe health service research studies that are important to the delivery of oral health services.

• Discuss the history and current status of principal methods of financing oral health services.

• Compare different methods of reimbursement for oral health services.

• Describe current expenditure for health services and trends in these expenditures.

• Discuss the usefulness and limitations of various facilities, fixed, mobile and portable equipment and supplies for providing oral health services in a variety of settings.
APPENDIX I

DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH LOG/PORTFOLIO: GUIDANCE ON PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

Candidates are required to submit a log/portfolio of four dental public health projects of no more than 20,000 words in total.

The log/portfolio tests the skills of report-writing and presenting information in a concise and clear format, while also demonstrating the knowledge, attitudes and competencies of a trained dental public health practitioner.

Subject matter and selection of project reports

The subject matter and expertise demonstrated should clearly link to the Competency Objectives set out in the regulations. It is appreciated that four projects cannot comprehensively encompass the entire spectrum of Competency Objectives.

Ultimately it will be for the candidate to decide what to include in the portfolio but the aim is to present a breadth and depth of training and practice expected of a practitioner attaining the end of specialist training, consistent with Irish statutes, institutions, standards and guidance.

A candidate should include in the portfolio projects that illustrate the learning process and competency development, and that allow the examiners to appreciate how carrying out each project has helped achieve a number of competencies. It is desirable that the author’s description should expressly articulate the competencies reflected by the project.

Projects may, if desired, be presented from the early or intermediate stages of training since this may be a good demonstration of acquiring essential competencies. The word “log” (associated with the portfolio) indicates that the projects will be arranged within a chronology, and may show development progressing over a period of training.

Projects presented should substantially include original effort and work undertaken by the individual candidate. Excessive background information (‘scene setting’) may prevent the candidate from including sufficient information on actual work undertaken and competencies gained.

Illustration of the candidate’s input to the projects objectives, and learning outcomes achieved, is valuable.

Projects need not always have had a positive outcome; this may give an opportunity to exhibit reflective learning and to demonstrate lessons drawn from subsequent review of the project. Reflective learning and evaluation is desirable where it relates to the candidate’s own efforts or role within a collective effort. Reports confined to observational evaluation of the work of others are discouraged.
Practical considerations related to format and submission

The aggregate word count is 20,000. Projects need not be equal length and there is no maximum or minimum length of project.

References should be listed as end-notes and are themselves exempt from the word count, but original actual documents – if incorporated into the portfolio projects – will add to the word count. If used, such documents may need to be edited; whole reports cannot be added as supplements or appendices.

Projects should be submitted in PDF format. Each project should be a separate file and should carry a clear indication of the chronological sequence in which the projects stand – preferably a numbered title on the first page of the project, and a matching number in the electronic filename.

Generally speaking, documents should be “word searchable” — that is, predominantly made up of ‘true’ text, as opposed to a scanned image of text. This does not prevent the inclusion of non-searchable text inside (for example) illustrations, images or diagrams; unless very extensive, such words need not be included in the word count.

Word count should be stated at the end of the project before the references.

An electronic copy of the log/portfolio in pdf format must be sent to the Faculty Office not less than 28 days before the examination.

Viva

Examiners will have had read the projects in detail.

The viva on this section will last 1 hour. In the viva, the candidate can expect to have to satisfy the examiners that he or she can

- demonstrate an understanding of why the projects were carried out (justification and significance)
- be able to defend the projects (procedural rigour and methodological robustness)
- comment on outcomes (evaluation) with constructive criticism as to whether, subsequently, things might have been done differently (reflective learning).

The mark for this section of the exam will be based on a combination of the examiners’ evaluation of the submitted material and their assessment of the candidate’s performance in the viva.
APPENDIX II – Exam rules of conduct and candidate’s declaration

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND
Coláiste Rioga na Máinlea in Éirinn
FACULTY OF DENTISTRY, RCSi

Exam Title
Date
Examination Number

Before the Examination
• Place your ID card face-up and clearly visible on your assigned desk.
• Electronic devices are not permitted in the examination. All devices should be handed in to the College representative.
• All other personal belongings should be placed in the area designed by the College representative.
• Please do not communicate with any other candidates following entry into the examination venue. If you have any queries seek the advice of an invigilator by raising your hand.
• You may read the front cover of the examination paper

During the Examination
• All answers to questions must be written clearly.
• If you have any queries seek the advice of an invigilator by raising your hand.
• Please do not communicate to any other candidates during the examination.

At the End of the Examination
• Make sure that your exam number is clearly marked on each answer sheet/booklet(s).
• Exam papers to be returned along with your answer sheet/booklets.
• Remain at your desk at the end of the exam until your script has been collected by the invigilator.
• As soon as your script has been collected you may leave the examination venue making sure to take your personal belongings with you.

Examples of Examination Offences
• Opening the exam paper before the exam has commenced.
• Having unauthorised items either on your person, in the vicinity of your desk or in the examination venue including the toilets.
• Communicating in any manner with other candidates in the examination venue.
• Having an electronic device on your person at any time when in the examination venue including the toilets.
• Continuing to write after the end of the exam has been announced.
• Removing any used or unused answer books, exam papers or any other examination stationary from the examination venue, even temporarily.
• Ignoring or disobeying any other instructions given by an invigilator or member of the Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs office.

Penalties for Examination Offences

**Examination offences are taken extremely seriously.** Anyone either suspected of or caught committing an examination offence will be reported immediately to the Faculty and College Authorities. Further action may be taken.

The penalties for examination offences include (but are not restricted to) the following:

- Expulsion or suspension from the examination.
- Failure to be credited with any marks obtained in the examination prior to the detection of the examination offence.
- Deferral of further attempts to sit the examination.

The above applies to all parts of the examination. By signing below, I confirm that I have read and fully understand the contents of this document.

Signature:                      Date: