

Examinations Handbook

Certificate in Pharmaceutical Medicine

Guidance and Regulations for Candidates and Supervisors: Online Remote Invigilated Exams



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Section one: Guidance Notes for Candidates and Supervisors for the Certificate in Pharmaceutical Medicine

Preface

These notes are intended to provide guidance to physicians studying for the Certificate in Pharmaceutical Medicine (candidates). It is hoped that these notes will clarify the requirements and avoid misunderstandings, thereby enabling candidates to prepare themselves adequately and efficiently. These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the Syllabus for Pharmaceutical Medicine and the Examination Specification, both of which are available on the FPM website, along with the Examination Regulations and Procedures in Section Two of this handbook.

Introduction

From 1976, the three UK Royal Colleges of Physicians awarded the Diploma in Pharmaceutical Medicine (DPM). In 1994, five years after the creation of FPM, responsibility for the Diploma examination was transferred to FPM which has continued to be responsible for it ever since.

From its inception until 2012 the Diploma was a single examination comprising several different papers, all of which had to be passed at the same time to achieve an overall pass. In 2013 the structure of the Diploma changed such that is now a two-part examination, the parts of which must be passed sequentially for a candidate to be awarded the DPM. From 2019, physicians have the option of taking first part of the Diploma as a stand-alone examination to gain a Certificate in Pharmaceutical Medicine (CPM).

The Certificate examination is comprised of a single multiple-choice paper and is intended to test knowledge and its application relating to all parts of the Syllabus, though more weight is given to those areas for which a pharmaceutical physician is likely to be responsible or which have a direct impact on the physician's decision making.

In terms of career progression, passing the Certificate indicates that the individual has reached a certain level of achievement.

The Certificate examination is held once a year, in September

Eligibility

The eligibility criteria are given in the Examination Regulations and Procedures in Section Two of this handbook and are explained below. Where there is doubt, prospective candidates, particularly those from outside the UK, are encouraged to seek advice from FPM early in their preparation for the examination, rather than at the time of submitting their application to sit the examination.

FPM admits only medical graduates to sit the Certificate examination. In this regard, it accepts undergraduate training that leads to the award of a medical qualification recognised by the General Medical Council (GMC) in the UK. All candidates must be registered as medical practitioners.

FPM also strongly recommends that a candidate completes full-time training in pharmaceutical medicine for at least two years at the time of sitting the Certificate examination. This experience is best acquired within the pharmaceutical industry, in a contract research organisation or in a drug regulatory authority. Time spent in research within an academic department of a medical school or hospital is rarely appropriate.

Educational Supervisor

Candidates who are studying for the Certificate may wish to have an educational supervisor to help them prepare for the Certificate examination and this is recommended by FPM.

Preparation for the Examination

Candidates for the Certificate examination are not required to have attended a postgraduate course covering the syllabus for pharmaceutical medicine although they may find it helpful. There are many such courses currently being run in Europe including several in the UK.

Study of a current edition of one of the published comprehensive texts is highly recommended as preparation for the examination. Textbooks on key topics in the syllabus such as clinical trials, pharmacokinetics, medical statistics, safety assessments, etc, are also essential reading. Regulatory guidelines, particularly those issued by ICH, can also be a valuable source of up-to-date information.

Past MCQ examination papers are not available to candidates as some questions may be used again.

Format of the Examination

The examination is prepared by panels of examiners and the Officers of the Board of Examiners. The CPM examination consists of a multiple-choice question (MCQ) paper of 375 questions (75 stems each with 5 completions) all to be completed in 2 hours 30 minutes.

Each MCQ has a stem followed by five completions, any number of which may be true. The candidate is required to identify which are 'true' and which are 'false'. Each correct response earns one mark (maximum of 375 marks overall), no response receives zero marks and an incorrect answer receives zero marks.

The MCQ paper is marked by computer.

Adjudication

An adjudication meeting of the Officers and Panel Convenors of the Board of Examiners is held approximately 2 weeks after the examination. Candidates will be notified of the outcome immediately afterwards.

The Board of Examiners will award the Certificate to candidates who have passed the Certificate examination. Candidates successfully passing the Certificate examination may wish to take the Part 2 Diploma exam papers and be awarded the DPM and they should refer to the Diploma Guidance and Regulations.

Section two: Examination Regulations and Procedures

Certificate Examination

- A.1 The Certificate in Pharmaceutical Medicine (CPM) is awarded by FPM on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners.
- A.2 A Certificate examination is conducted annually by the Board of Examiners at fixed times and places announced by FPM.
- A.3 The Certificate examination consists of one exam paper which also makes up the first part of the Diploma examination.

GMC Exam Guidance: Candidates are further reminded that the GMC has issued guidance on "[Expectations about the number of attempts at examinations](#)". This states that no candidate will normally be allowed more than six attempts at an examination after 6 failed attempts a candidate must provide evidence of additional educational experience to the royal college for each re-sit (including those not currently in GMC approved training programmes). Therefore, no candidate will be allowed more than 6 attempts at the Certificate examination without permission from the Officers of the Board of Examiners and, for PMST trainees, additionally from the Pharmaceutical Medicine Deanery.

- A.4 FPM will provide all the necessary information such as *Guidance and Regulations, Syllabus for Pharmaceutical Medicine and the Examination Specification*. These documents are available on the website.

Eligibility of Candidates

- A.5 Eligibility of candidates to sit the Certificate examination will be decided by the Board of Examiners.
- A.6 Candidates must possess a medical qualification recognised by the General Medical Council (GMC) in the UK or be included on an appropriate medical register in their home country.

Exam Registration

- A.7 Candidates must complete the online application form and submit payment by the announced closing date.
- A.8 When attending an examination, candidates are required to provide photographic identity (e.g., passport, driving licence, identity card) at registration.
- A.9 When submitting the application for the CPM, candidates must provide evidence of registration as a medical practitioner by provision of their GMC registration number. Candidates not registered in the United Kingdom should provide the original or a notarised (legally validated) copy and translation of their medical registration certificate. If this does not show current registration, then a certificate of good standing will also need to be produced.

Educational Supervisor

- A.10 Candidates who are enrolled with FPM and the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB) for Pharmaceutical Medicine Specialty Training must have an Educational Supervisor to assist in planning their training in pharmaceutical medicine. In addition, a Senior Specialty Adviser will be allocated to these candidates. It is recommended but not required that candidates who are not enrolling for Pharmaceutical Medicine Specialty Training also have an Educational Supervisor.
- A.11 It is recommended that a Certificate candidate should have completed, by the time of the CPM Examination, at least two years in a post that provides practical experience and training in pharmaceutical medicine

Syllabus

- A.12 The Syllabus for Pharmaceutical Medicine is presented in detail on FPM's website.
- A.13 A Certificate candidate should expect questions during the examination on all sections of the syllabus. A guide to the approximate distribution of questions is provided in the Examination Specification. The discipline of pharmaceutical medicine is ever evolving, and a Certificate candidate should be aware of important recent changes and current issues.

Examination

- A.14 The examination is held once a year in September. The place(s) and time(s) are available from FPM about 10 months before the examination and are advertised about 3 months before the closing date for registration.
- A.15 The CPM examination is comprised of a single multiple-choice question (MCQ) paper. All 375 questions (75 stems each with 5 completions) should be answered in 2 hours 30 minutes
- A.16 The final selection of questions for the examination paper is made by the Officers and Panel Convenors of the Board of Examiners.
- A.17 Exam protocols for online remote invigilated exams are provided, they include information on computer requirements, the process prior to the exam and how the exam is conducted.
- A.18 Candidates will be remotely supervised under examination conditions throughout the exam and the entire exam is recorded. The recording of the exam is destroyed 6 weeks after the date of the exam unless it is to be used as evidence in a case of misconduct. Candidates have the right to request a copy of their exam recording.
- A.19 Candidates are advised to be in their chosen exam location 20 to 30 minutes before their scheduled exam start time in order to login, enter exam and go through the system checks. Candidates will be permitted to commence the exam up to 30 minutes after the scheduled start time. The duration of their exam remains the same. If a candidate has not connected within 30 minutes, their exam will expire and they will not be able to do the exam.
- A.20 Mobile phones, calculators, smart watches and other electronic devices that can access the internet may not be used during the examination. Only ordinary 'clock face' watches will be allowed.
- A.21 When sitting an online remote invigilated exam, candidates must not record the exam, retain or share any of the exam questions or access (or try to access) another website or document during the examination.

Assessment

- A.22 The multiple-choice questions are marked by computer and pass/fail grades are then assigned according to pre-set standards. An anomaly monitoring system (AMS) may be used to detect instances of copying or collusion by looking for anomalous patterns of responses by candidates, the answers of one candidate being more similar to those of another candidate

than would be expected by chance alone.

Adjudication

- A.23 A meeting of the Officers and Panel Convenors of the Board of Examiners is held for standard setting and adjudication approximately 2 weeks after the examination.

Communication of Results

- A.24 FPM will advise all candidates of the outcome via email. Unsuccessful candidates will receive a detailed summary of their performance in the different sections of the Syllabus.
- A.25 Candidates will be informed of the outcome of the examination shortly after the adjudication meeting. A CPM certificate will be provided as appropriate after the Board of Examiner AGM in December.
- A.26 Candidates are not entitled to the return of their answer papers after the examination. A candidate's results will only be reconsidered after the adjudication at the request of the Appeals Panel in response to a well-founded appeal. The Board of Examiners cannot enter into detailed discussion with a candidate but will try to be as constructive as possible in any correspondence.
- A.27 An unsuccessful candidate may re-sit the Certificate Examination up to five times.

Membership of FPM

- A.28 The Certificate does not lead to Membership (MFPM) of the FPM.

Fees

- A.29 FPM will maintain a schedule of fees which will be available on the FPM website with the conditions that apply clearly stated.

Conduct

- A.30 FPM may refuse to register a person as a Certificate candidate and may withdraw such registration at any time if the candidate's behaviour is prejudicial before or during the examination by not complying with examination regulations or instructions.
- A.31 FPM will investigate any suspected dishonesty or misconduct by a candidate in relation to the Certificate Examination and, if appropriate, revoke the Certificate, Diploma and Membership.
- A.32 Any candidate who wishes account to be taken of exceptional circumstances or conditions present BEFORE the start of the examination that may affect his or her performance must refer to the Reasonable Adjustment Policy for Candidates with Special Requirements, details of which are available on the FPM website or from the FPM office. Such circumstances must be notified to the Chair of the Board of Examiners or the Examinations and Standards Manager BEFORE SITTING the examination; such information passed to FPM after sitting the examination cannot be taken into account. This information will be kept confidential.
- A.33 Any candidate who wishes account to be taken of exceptional conditions or circumstances arising AFTER THE START of the examination must make the invigilator aware of such circumstances AT THE TIME of the examination AND make representation in writing as described in the Appeals Procedure. Information provided after the day of the examination shall not be taken into account.
- A.34 The Appeals Procedure should also be followed for any representations by candidates on the conduct of the Certificate Examination. Details are available on the FPM website or from the FPM office.
- A.35 FPM of Pharmaceutical Medicine is committed to promoting equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination in all areas of its activity