

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
IN IRELAND**



**REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE
TRAINING, EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION
OF CANDIDATES FOR**

**DIPLOMA OF FELLOW IN
THE FACULTY OF RADIOLOGISTS -
RADIATION ONCOLOGY
F.F.R.R.C.S. (Ireland)**

Please see our website: www.radiology.ie

Revised March 2016

1. The Fellowship of the Faculty of Radiologists may be granted to those who possess a qualification registrable in the Irish or British Medical Registers and to graduates of Universities and Medical Colleges overseas whose degrees are not registrable in the Irish or British Registers, under such conditions as may be determined by the Council of the College, on the advice of the Faculty, in each individual case.

Applications in such special cases must be addressed to the Registrar of the College (see Para. 2) and must be accompanied by certificates showing the date of qualification and particulars of relevant postgraduate experience.

2. Candidates for the Fellowship are required to pass two examinations, namely the Primary Examination and the Final Examination unless an enabling certificate accompanies their application from the Validation Committee of the Faculty. This certificate will be accepted in lieu of the Primary Examination and those candidates may proceed to the Final FFR.RCSI Examination in Radiology or Radiation Oncology.
3. All enquiries and communications with reference to the examination for the Fellowship must be addressed to the Academic Operations Manager, RCSI, Student Academic & Regulatory Affairs, 123St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.
4. Applications should be completed on line <https://postgradexams.rcsi.ie/public/openexams> by the closing date. Fees may be paid online by credit card.
5. Application for admission to the examination must be accompanied by the required certificates and the full amount of the fee payable for the examination.
6. The dates of the examination are published online at https://www.rcsi.ie/professional_exams. If insufficient candidates present for an examination the Faculty reserves the right to cancel the examination with due notice. If more candidates present for an examination than can be accommodated, first preference will be given to those in the training programme of the Faculty of Radiologists. Others will be added in sequence, arranged in order by the date of receipt of their fully completed application, required certificates and the full amount of the fee payable in the Faculty Offices.

Details of the examinations are to be made available on the RCSI website, <https://postgradexams.rcsi.ie/public/openexams>

7. A candidate who wishes to withdraw from the examination should refer to the policy available at http://www.rcsi.ie/postgraduate_exams_policies
8. A candidate who desires to make representations with regard to the conduct of his or her examination shall address them via the appeals process of the policy available at http://www.rcsi.ie/postgraduate_exams_policies
9. The Faculty may refuse to admit to an examination or to proceed with the examination of candidates who infringe any of the regulations or who are considered by the

examiners to be guilty of behavior prejudicial to the proper management and conduct of the examination.

10. The Fellowship Advisory Committee of the Faculty shall be empowered to require evidence of satisfactory training i.e. attendance at lectures and evidence of practical experience eg. log books, certification of head of department etc. before acceptance for admission to the examination.
11. Candidates on the Irish Training Programme are expected to sit the Faculty Examinations.

PRIMARY FFRCSI EXAMINATION IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY

The Primary FFRCSI examination will be held twice a year, usually in March and September unless otherwise ordered.

A candidate may attempt the examination at 4 sittings only; these do not have to be consecutive. An attempt at examination is defined as any occasion when any of the 4 subjects of the Primary FFRCSI examination is taken, not four attempts at each subject.

It is obligatory to hold a recognized training post in an accredited training Department of Radiotherapy in the Republic of Ireland to take the Primary FFRCSI examination

The Primary FFRCSI examination may not be taken until three years equivalent full time after full registration (i.e. a minimum of four years after graduation e.g. MB. B.Ch). Graduates should have at least two years equivalent full time clinical experience after full registration, and one academic year equivalent full time of approved training in an approved post in an accredited Radiation Oncology department in the Republic of Ireland.

Candidates are permitted to sit the Primary FFRCSI examination upon completion of the National Primary FFRCSI dedicated lecture and tutorial program.

The Primary FFRCSI Examination assesses knowledge of the sciences that underpin Radiation / Clinical Oncology practice. The syllabus for the examination is available on www.radiology.ie

As the knowledge assessed in the Primary FFRCSI examination is essential to radiation / clinical oncology practice, the examination must be completed before the Final FFRCSI examination.

The purpose of the examination is to assess whether the Radiation Oncology trainees have an appropriate knowledge of the sciences that underpin radiation / clinical oncology including physics as applied to radiotherapy, radiobiology, cancer biology including molecular biology, pharmacology of systemic anticancer treatment and medical statistics

Successful candidates should have demonstrated their:

- Understanding of the molecular basis of abnormalities giving rise to dysplasia, invasive cancer and metastases.

- Understanding of the therapeutic effects and toxicity of ionizing radiation at the level of cells, organs and organisms.
- Knowledge of the cellular and molecular basis for the response of cells, tissues and tumours to ionising radiation is expected. Understanding of the chemical interactions between radiation and cells, the development of malignancy and the principles and developments underpinning the therapeutic applications of radiation is expected. A knowledge of current models of radiation response is expected
- Statistics knowledge necessary to understand the design of trials, read and use a trial protocol, present and interpret data, interpret results of clinical trials, critically review and evaluate publications.
- Knowledge and understanding of physics that underpin current radiotherapy practice including the interaction of ionizing radiation with matter, how a desired dose distribution is produced, calculated and quality assured and how the dose of unintended radiation can be minimized for patients and staffs.

The Primary Examination consists of four papers (one per module) containing single best answer (BSA) questions:

- *Cancer Biology and Radiobiology*: The processes of cancer cell transformation and tumour development and the response to ionizing radiation of cells both individually and grouped as tissues
- *Clinical Pharmacology*: the structure, action, use and evaluation of drugs used in the treatment of a patient with cancer.
- *Physics*: the application of physical principals and methods in clinical radiotherapy, physical basis of the therapeutic uses of radioactive isotopes, radiation hazards and protection.
- *Medical statistics*: with special reference to clinical trials and assessment of results, and epidemiology of cancer.

For further details on examination refer to Royal College of Radiologists website www.rcr.ac.uk

Rules:

- (a) For each subject there is a single paper of single best answer questions Candidates are restricted to four attempts. Attempts do not have to be consecutive, and candidates are free to present any number of papers at each attempt.
- (b) Unsuccessful attempts at the First FRCR examination of the Royal College of Radiologists will be counted in the total four sittings.
- (c) Unsuccessful candidates will retain credit for any module passed. There is no requirement to re-sit a subject once a pass in that subject has been achieved. A candidate will be deemed to have achieved success at the Primary FFRCSI once all 4 modules have been passed
- (d) Candidates who have exhausted their 4 attempts at the Primary FFRCSI examination will not be eligible to enter on a 5th occasion, and there is no mechanism to request an additional attempt at the examination. Such candidates will, therefore, have to exit the Irish training programme.

FINAL FFRC SI EXAMINATION IN RADIATION ONCOLOGY

The two parts (Written-Part A & Oral-Part B) of the Final FFRC SI Examination will be held twice a year unless otherwise ordered.

It is obligatory to hold an approved training position in an accredited training Department of Radiotherapy in the Republic of Ireland to take the Final FFRC SI examination

From September 2016 candidates are permitted to sit the Written-Part A of the Final FFRC SI Examination once they have passed the Primary FFRC SI examination and completed a minimum of two years equivalent full time training in an approved training position in an accredited training Department of Radiotherapy in the Republic of Ireland, and achieved satisfactory trainee assessments..

The Written-Part A of the Final FFRC SI examination may be attempted from September of the 3rd year of accredited training. The Oral-Part B of the Final FFRC SI examination may be attempted from September of the 4th year of accredited training. The Written-Part A and Oral-Part B of the Final FFRC SI can be taken in September and November of chronological year 4 of training.

The Final FFRC SI examination is divided into two uncoupled parts; Written-Part A and Oral -Part B:

- (a) Written-Part A: Two single best answer (SBA) papers in radiotherapy and oncology, sat on one day
- (b) Oral-Part B: A clinical examination in radiotherapy and oncology, which may include a practical test of radiation planning ability or clinical stations, and an oral examination in radiotherapy and oncology.

Written-Part A examination consists of two 100 question single best answer (SBA) papers set by joint examination panels of the Faculty of Radiologists RCSI and the Royal College of Radiologists, London (UK FRCR) and is sat at the same time as the UK FRCR clinical oncology trainees. These dates are set by the UK College and are usually early March and early September.

Oral - Part B examination has two components; clinical cases and an oral, and are held on one day in May and November unless otherwise indicated.

Rules:

- (a) A pass in the Final FFRC SI Written-Part A examination remains valid and permits entry to the Final FFRC SI Oral Part B examination for 4 consecutive sittings, starting from the sitting at which the Part A examination is passed. A candidate who fails four consecutive attempts of the Final FFRC SI Oral-Part B exam will exit the Irish training program.
- (b) All attempts at the Final FFRC SI examination must be made within nine years equivalent full time of the date of commencing training in Radiation Oncology in an approved training scheme; any extension beyond nine years would only be considered in exceptional circumstances where ill-health has forced the candidate to interrupt their training for a considerable period of time

- (c) Candidates must pass the Written-Part A of the Final FFRCSCI examination within six non-consecutive attempts. Approval to make of the 5th and 6th attempt will depend on review of their training performance and previous examination performance by the National Training Coordinator and the Fellowship Advisory Committee (FAC). A satisfactory review will be required before such an application will be accepted.
- (d) Candidates must pass the Oral-Part B of the Final FFRCSCI examination within four consecutive attempts.
- (e) Candidates may apply for exemption from one of the consecutive sittings of Final FFRCSCI Written-Parts A or Oral-Part B to the Fellowship Advisory Committee. Additional attempts (5th and 6th attempts) to the Final FFRCSCI Written-Parts A or Oral-Part B may be obtained through Fellowship Advisory Committee.
- (f) Rules for 5th and 6th attempts (Part A) or 5th attempt (Part B) :
- A candidate wishing to make these attempts at the Written-Part A or Oral-Part B of the Final FFRCSCI examination must apply in writing to the Education Committee of the Faculty for permission to do so.
 - The application must be supported by a letter from the local training coordinator of the accredited department in which the candidate is working at the time of the application confirming the candidate's suitability for a further attempt at the exam
 - The Education Committee will then seek a recommendation from the chief examiner regarding the candidate's suitability for a further attempt; this recommendation will be based on the performances by the candidate in previous attempts, and may include appropriate comments arising from these previous attempts.
 - The Education Committee will then make a recommendation, to be ratified by the Board of the Faculty, as to whether the candidate should be allowed attempt the exam at the sitting applied for. The candidate can only apply to the examinations office to sit the exam after receiving written permission to do so from the Faculty Board.
 - In exceptional circumstances, a recommendation may be made in writing by the Chief Examiner to the Faculty Board that a candidate should be permitted a 7th and final attempt at Written-Part A, or 5th and final attempt at Oral-Part B of the Final Examination. In the case of Oral-Part B, such a recommendation may only be made arising from a direct request by the external examiners to the Chief Examiner, made during the final Examiners' meeting on the day of completion of the candidate's unsuccessful 4th attempt, based upon their assessment that the candidate was extremely close to a passing mark on the 4th attempt. The Board of the Faculty may ask the advice of the relevant National training authority before making a decision on such a recommendation. Any such 5th attempt approved by the Board must be made within the next 2 sittings of the examination following the candidate's unsuccessful 4th attempt.
 - Any candidate seeking to bypass this mechanism, or to solicit such a recommendation for additional attempt after the completion of the Examiners' meeting, will be automatically disqualified from any further attempts at the examination.

The Board of the Faculty reserves the right to alter or remove the provision in above paragraph, and other provisions in these regulations, should it be requested to do so by the relevant Accrediting authority (currently The Medical Council).