



Royal College
of Surgeons
of England

ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE

Diploma in Dental Public Health Syllabus

July 2017
Updated November 2020

Introduction to the Diploma in Dental Public Health Examination of the Faculty of Dental Surgery

The following syllabus is intended to help candidates prepare for the examination. It should be read in conjunction with the regulations for the examination and the guidelines for candidates.

The Syllabus

The DDPH examination is designed to assess knowledge, application of the principles of dental public health, the ability to organise ideas and validate thinking and the ability to interpret and communicate dental public health information, whilst challenging a candidate's attitudes, values and opinions. This syllabus provides guidance for candidates on the main topics that may be examined. The examination is not specific to the United Kingdom.

The examination consists of two written papers and an oral element. The written papers are designed primarily to test knowledge and application of that knowledge. The oral element is designed to test knowledge, understanding and the ability to organise and communicate ideas and validate thinking. The level of knowledge and understanding required is that which could reasonably be expected of someone completing a taught master's degree course in dental public health.

1. Principles of Public Health

- Definitions of health and public health
- Determinants of health
- Defining a public health problem
- Concepts of health needs
- Health inequalities
- Inequalities in access to healthcare and the inverse care law
- Oral disease aetiology
- Determining causality
- Principles of screening
- Planning cycle
- Influencing and developing policy

2. Public health aspects of dental services

- Models of health services e.g. primary healthcare approach
- Organisation of dental services in the United Kingdom and other countries
- Dental access and service utilisation
- Barriers to dental services
- Quality in healthcare e.g. dimensions of quality, quality assurance, clinical governance
- Dental remuneration systems
- Dental workforce and skill mix
- Workforce planning
- The principles of health economics

3. Epidemiology of dental and oral diseases

- Trends in oral diseases
- Survey methods
- Dental indices and their uses
- Oral health related quality of life measures
- Measures of deprivation
- Sampling methods
- Basic statistics
- Measures of incidence, prevalence, central tendency, variability
- Normal distribution
- Association and causation
- Measures of agreement
- Interpretation, presentation and application of results
- Sources of error
- Measures of effect including odds ratios and risk ratios
- Concepts of bias and confounding
- Confidence intervals
- Statistical aspects of screening tests including sensitivity, specificity and predictive values
- Principles of qualitative research

4. Oral health improvement

- Social and behavioural science in oral and general health
- The influence of health behaviours on oral and general health
- The principles and models of health promotion
- Common risk factor approach
- Life course approach
- Oral health promotion settings
- Oral health education
- Approaches to prevention ie risk and population based
- Fluoride modes of action
- Fluoride vehicles
- Ethics of water fluoridation
- Health promotion evaluation models

5. Evidence based dentistry

- Study types and designs including their application and strengths and weaknesses
- Hierarchy of evidence
- Concepts of evidence based practice
- Systematic reviews and meta-analysis
- Evidence-based dentistry and policy
- Relative effectiveness of different preventive interventions
- Critical appraisal of sources of evidence
- Grey literature
- Publication bias

- Research and development

6. Health and public protection

- Communicable diseases
- Occupational and radiation hazards
- Infection prevention and control

Structure of the Examination

The examination has written and oral elements and will cover all parts of the syllabus.

Written element

Paper 1 (two hours)

Paper 1 consists of four short answer questions and may cover any aspects of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer all questions.

Paper 2 (two hours)

Paper 2 consists of four short answer questions and may cover any aspects of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer all questions.

Oral element (80 minutes)

The oral element is a structured clinical reasoning assessment consisting of four stations. Candidates will be allowed 10 minutes to prepare for each station and this will be followed by 10 minutes of questioning by a single examiner. The structured clinical reasoning assessment may cover any aspects of the syllabus.

Marking

Papers are anonymised and marked by a pair of examiners working individually. Each paper will be marked by a separate pair of examiners. Each structured clinical reasoning assessment will be marked by a different examiner.

There will be no compensation between the written and oral elements and candidates will be expected to pass both elements to pass the examination.

More detailed guidance on the examination structure is given in the Guidelines for Candidates.

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