

CURRICULUM FOR SPECIALIST TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN ORAL MICROBIOLOGY

DEFINITION

The discipline of Oral Microbiology is a clinical specialty, undertaken by laboratory-based personnel, which is concerned with the diagnosis and assessment of diseases of the oral and maxillofacial region. It is a branch of Medical Microbiology and in common with Medical Microbiologists, Oral Microbiologists provide reports and advice based on interpretation of microbiological samples.

This document indicates the breadth and depth of the specialty of Oral Microbiology. The majority of specialists are senior academics with honorary consultant status based in Dental Schools and the majority of trainees will be competing for such posts. As such, trainees will be required, for their academic advancement, to obtain higher academic degrees related to proficiency in research, as well as specialist training in Oral Microbiology.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF ORAL MICROBIOLOGY

The recognised higher specialist qualification in Oral Microbiology is the Membership of the Royal College of Pathologists obtained by examination. Dentally qualified candidates can opt to sit the MRCPATH in Medical Microbiology or in Oral Microbiology. Candidates who sit the examination in Medical Microbiology will require to obtain adequate experience in a specialist Oral Microbiology facility before a CCST in Oral Microbiology can be awarded. Holders of the MRCPATH who have held the diploma for eight years are offered the Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists.

Oral Microbiology is a dental specialty. Formal recognition of the status of specialist Oral Microbiologists is the responsibility of the General Dental Council (GDC) and this allows inclusion of individuals on the Oral Microbiology Specialist List. The GDC delegates responsibility for specialist training to the Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry (JCSTD). This responsibility is exercised through Specialty Advisory Committees (SACs) for the individual dental specialties and these report to the JCSTD. The SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties* is constituted to take responsibility for the four Additional Dental Specialties; these being Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology, Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology, and Oral Microbiology.

The continued award of the MRCPATH in Medical Microbiology or in Oral Microbiology to dentally qualified candidates is critical in maintaining the training and standards of Oral Microbiology as the equivalent of all other branches of Pathology. The conduct of examinations for Membership of the Royal College of Pathologists in Medical Microbiology and in Oral Microbiology is the responsibility of the Medical Microbiology Examiner's Panel within the Royal College of Pathologists.

The responsibility for educational approval of Oral Microbiology training programmes and posts is exercised jointly by the Royal College of Pathologists and the SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties. The major contribution to this joint approval will come from the Royal College of Pathologists in order to ensure that approved programmes meet the requirements for entry to membership examinations.

** It is anticipated that the present Joint Advisory Committee for the Additional Dental Specialties will be re-constituted to become the Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC).*

The appointment of Educational Supervisors for individual trainees will be the joint responsibility of the Royal College of Pathologists and the SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties, taking advice as necessary from the relevant Dental Postgraduate Deanery.

The Dental Postgraduate Deanery, which is responsible for the appointment of trainees to training programmes, is responsible for the annual assessment of trainees through the RITA process.

ENROLMENT

All candidates for recognised specialist training leading to the award of a CCST in Oral Microbiology in the UK and Ireland must hold a registerable dental qualification and hold current registration with the GDC or registration with the Irish Dental Council, as appropriate. Candidates must have completed a minimum of two years general professional training in dentistry and have obtained the FDS, MFDS or equivalent.

Enrolment for specialist training leading to the award of a CCST in Oral Microbiology requires:

- 1 approval of a training programme by the Royal College of Pathologists and the SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties.
- 2 approval of the post and allocation of a Training Number (NTN/FTN/VTN) by the Lead Dean for the Additional Dental Specialties in England and Wales, the Dental Director of the Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education or the Postgraduate Dental Dean in Northern Ireland as appropriate.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of training the trainee must be capable of:

- 1 providing an independent diagnostic Oral Microbiology service at the level required for the award of a CCST in the specialty. This includes providing specialist advice to clinicians with direct responsibility for the treatment of individual patients and advising on infectious diseases and infection control in relation to dentistry.
- 2 running a diagnostic Oral Microbiology laboratory, with appropriate knowledge of the spectrum of staffing issues, laboratory procedures and safety issues.

THE CURRICULUM

The requirements for the award of a CCST in Oral Microbiology are to complete an SAC approved training programme and obtain the MRCPATH by examination.

The detailed specification of training for the MRCPATH is published by the Royal College of Pathologists in the Core Training Programme in Medical Microbiology and Virology. In essence this consists of a five year period of training. After a minimum of three years training in Medical Microbiology, candidates can become eligible to sit the Part 1 examination. The Part 1 MRCPATH examination is a wide-ranging test in Medical Microbiology. It comprises a written component, which if passed, leads to practical and oral examinations. On completion of Part 1 MRCPATH, candidates are required to undertake a further period of training in Medical Microbiology or Oral Microbiology before

becoming eligible to sit the Part 2 examination. This requires submission of documentary evidence of further training and participation, including research, in the specialty as well as an oral examination.

Over the minimum five year training period the trainee should acquire or develop:

- 1 specialised factual knowledge of the natural history of those diseases upon which Medical Microbiology and Oral Microbiology are based.
- 2 interpretative skills so that a clinically useful opinion can be derived from laboratory data.
- 3 technical knowledge gained from close acquaintance with laboratory technology, so that methodology appropriate to a clinical problem can be chosen, and so that quality control and quality assurance procedures can be implemented.
- 4 research and development experience. Original thought and critical assessment of published work are important to allow the trainee to contribute in a team, and individually, to the development of the service.
- 5 the life-long habits of reading, literature searches, consultation with colleagues, attendance at scientific meetings and the presentation of scientific work as part of continuing professional development (CPD).
- 6 data management skills to evaluate information derived from the population served and from the technical procedures applied in the laboratory. These skills should include familiarity with IT and the use of spreadsheets, databases and statistical packages.
- 7 management and communication skills. The trainee must gain experience, under supervision, in planning departmental policies and develop the leadership skills necessary to implement them.
- 8 familiarity with all aspects of Health and Safety requirements for laboratories, including COSHH.

On successful completion of the MRCPPath by examination the Examiner's Sub-Committee will normally recommend to the Royal College of Pathologists that the academic requirements for award of a CCST in Oral Microbiology have been met. The Royal College of Pathologists will appraise the SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties of this examination success. It will then be the responsibility of the SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties, in liaison with the relevant Dental Postgraduate Deanery, through the RITA process, to confirm that all required training has been completed.

AWARD OF CCST

The SAC for the Additional Dental Specialties will notify the JCSTD of the successful completion of training of candidates in Oral Microbiology and will recommend to the JCSTD that the GDC be invited to award a CCST in Oral Microbiology.