



THE FACULTY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY

**TO: TRAINING PROGRAMME DIRECTORS
REGIONAL POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION ADVISERS
COLLEGE TUTORS
EXAMINATION CANDIDATES**

FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY SPRING 2014

The Examining Board has prepared the following report on the Spring 2014 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology. It is the intention of the Specialty Training Board that the information contained in this report should benefit candidates at future sittings of the examinations and help those who train them. This information should be made available as widely as possible.

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Medical Director, Education and Training

FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY EXAMINERS' REPORT – SPRING 2014

The pass rates achieved at the Spring 2014 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology are summarised below.

	All Candidates		UK-trained Candidates		UK First Attempt Candidates	
Overall	59/96	61.5%	34/49	69.4%	5/14	35.7%
Cancer Biology & Radiobiology	37/60	61.7%	18/27	66.7%	12/18	66.7%
Clinical Pharmacology	62/87	71.3%	30/39	76.9%	12/21	57.1%
Medical Statistics	67/87	77.0%	36/41	87.8%	15/17	88.2%
Physics	27/53	50.9%	11/22	50.0%	8/18	44.4%

This examiners' report does not provide an in depth breakdown of performance on individual questions but is intended to guide trainers and candidates by highlighting particular areas of concern. The Examining Board noted that few candidates attempted all modules of the examination. Candidates are reminded that it is recommended that all modules are attempted at the first sitting, to maximise chances of success over the total of four permitted consecutive attempts.

CANCER BIOLOGY

The examiners noted that the overall pass rate was consistent with previous examinations. Most questions showed very good discrimination. Overall the examiners were pleased with how the candidates performed.

RADIOBIOLOGY

The examiners were encouraged with the candidates' clear knowledge in core areas including cell kinetics and overall treatment responses. Some improvement is needed in understanding types of cellular damage, in addition to single and double-strand breaks. Improved knowledge is also required in quantifying unplanned treatment gaps and sub-lethal damage repair. Improvements are also required in areas of normal tissue responses and whole body exposures.

CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY

Generally the paper was well answered. The examiners would like to point out the following areas for candidates to consider:

- Candidates should be familiar with the reporting rules around clinical trials as covered in GCP guidelines. In particular, rules for reporting events and the associated time limits.
- Candidates should be familiar with the principles of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.
- Questions relating to supportive therapies such as anti-emetics and analgesics were not answered well. Candidates are reminded that there are questions related to these drugs.

MEDICAL STATISTICS

Candidate performance was generally good. Most questions showed good discrimination. Areas of weakness were identified as follows:

- Governance of clinical trials
- Design of epidemiological studies
- Interpretation of screening tests

PHYSICS

The examiners noted that overall performance in this module was satisfactory, however candidates showed a lack of knowledge in the following areas:

- Factors influencing depth dose including the effect of scatter.
Interpretation of dose volume histograms
- The principles of IMRT and advanced radiotherapy techniques.
- Basic ICRU recommendations.
- Unsealed sources for therapy
- Radiation protection designated areas
- Electron depth dose dosimetry