



Royal College of Physicians

Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene

(DTMH Examination)

Regulations and Syllabus for 2018

This document provides full details of the Syllabus and Regulations for the Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene (DTMH) Examination. This replaces all previous Regulations relating to the DTMH Examination.

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1. Introduction

The Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (DTMH Examination) offers doctors the opportunity to review and consider all aspects of the care of patients in the tropics and in those returning from travels in the tropics, and to be recognised as having this knowledge. The syllabus also covers public health, women's health, child health, parasitology, disease vectors, preventive medicine, disaster and refugee medicine, and epidemiology of disease in the tropics, and is designed to give recognition of competence in these areas.

The diploma is likely to be appropriate for those who wish to work in the tropics or are looking after patients who have been to the tropics. It may also be a suitable grounding for doctors who wish to go onto more extensive training in specific areas of tropical medicine. Please note that the holding of the DTMH diploma is not itself sufficient to meet the requirements to become a certified specialist in tropical medicine (GMC CCT in tropical medicine) in the UK.

2. Eligibility

Candidates for the Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene must hold a primary medical qualification recognised by the Royal College of Physicians of London (RCP).

The RCP will accept applications from candidates who are in the process of completing, or have completed within the last 5 years, the approved Tropical Medicine courses in the following locations, which are recognised as appropriate training centres for the examination:

- i. Glasgow Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene course
- ii. Sheffield Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene course
- iii. Oxford University MSc course in International Health and Tropical Medicine
- iv. Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine: DTMH course, MSc in Tropical and Infectious Diseases, or MSc in Tropical Paediatrics
- v. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: DTMH course or MSc in Tropical Medicine and International Health
- vi. Médecins Sans Frontières Course in Global Health and Humanitarian Medicine (GHHM)
- vii. ASTMH-approved Diploma Courses satisfying the requirements for CTropMed (see <http://www.astmh.org/education-resources/approved-diploma-course>)

Candidates attending other courses who wish to be considered for approval should contact the Chair of the Examining Board via the RCP.

Written evidence of attendance on one of the appropriate Tropical Medicine course (as above), and confirmation of proficiency in microscopy (requiring a minimum of 12 hours of microscopy/practical parasitology teaching) within the last 5 years will be required for each candidate before taking the examination.

Number of attempts

Candidates will be permitted a maximum of six attempts at the DTMH examination within 5 years of passing an approved Tropical Medicine course. After six attempts, a candidate will be required to undertake additional educational experience for each re-sit and submit evidence of this. In determining whether a candidate has satisfied the requirements sufficiently to enable them to undertake a further attempt, the decision of the RCP will be final.

3. Syllabus

The following outlines the range of topics that may be covered in the DTMH examination and are felt to be important for a doctor with good knowledge of tropical medicine. Questions will not necessarily be restricted to the topics below, which are listed as examples of important topics. The levels of knowledge and skill required are those expected from someone who has had approximately 250 hours of teaching time on a good quality tropical medicine course, or has achieved the same level through a mixture of teaching and directed learning. Emphasis is placed on the candidate's ability to form an understanding of the prevention, epidemiology, diagnosis, manifestations, clinical course and management of disease in the tropics, with knowledge of wider public health issues including disease control measures. Although microscopy technique is not examined directly, it is expected that each candidate will have achieved a level of proficiency through teaching on the approved courses.

Infectious diseases (approximately 60% of the examination)

Infection in the tropics and the returned traveller forms a substantial part of the examination. It is expected that the prevention, epidemiology (including any vectors and other forms of transmission), manifestations, clinical course, diagnosis and management of the following infections/infection syndromes should be known:

Viral infections: HIV/AIDS, Dengue fever and other arboviruses, Lassa/Ebola and other causes of viral haemorrhagic fever, Rabies, viral gastrointestinal infections, SARS, MERS-CoV, Japanese encephalitis and other viral encephalitides, Polio, Measles, Hepatitis viruses

Bacterial infections: Anthrax, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis, Leprosy, Melioidosis, Plague, Relapsing fever, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, Typhoid, Typhus/Rickettsial infections

Protozoal infections: Gut protozoa, Leishmania, Malaria, Trypanosomiasis

Parasitic infections: Cestodes, Geohelminths and other Nematodes, Filariasis, Schistosomiasis, other Trematodes

Fungal infections: Deep mycoses, Histoplasmosis, Cryptococcal disease, other fungal infections

Arthropods: Myiasis, other Arthropod infections/infestations, Vectors of clinical importance (lice, ticks, mites)

Infection syndromes: Diarrhoeal diseases, Hepatitis, Meningitis, Respiratory infections, PUO/Fever, Sexually Transmitted Infections

In relation to the above infections, knowledge of vaccine-preventable diseases and arthropod vectors (biology, life cycle and control measures) is also expected. Particular emphasis is given to infections that are very important in the tropics, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Public health (approximately 25% of the examination)

Public health aspects of the following, with reference to the tropics, are an important part of the knowledge expected for the examination, as knowledge of these may be called upon when working in the tropics:

Water and sanitation, Disaster and refugee medicine, Needs assessment, Maternal health, Reproductive health, Child health, Nutrition, Epidemiology, Health economics, Essential drugs, Immunisation, Primary health care, Clinical trials, Health education, Health policy, Evidence-based medicine and Study design/statistics.

Non-communicable diseases (approximately 15% of the examination)

Non-communicable diseases often form a substantial part of the workload of the tropical doctor. Such diseases are also important as part of the differential diagnosis of a patient's symptoms, and as contributing

factors for infections. It is expected that the prevention, epidemiology, manifestations, clinical course, diagnosis and management of the following non-communicable diseases should be known. An emphasis is given to the impact and management of these problems in the tropics:

Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular disease, Asthma, Epilepsy, Stroke, Mental health, Rheumatic fever, Travel medicine, Bites and stings, Skin disease, Anaesthesia, Ophthalmology, Malignancies, Surgery/trauma, Drugs/alcohol, Vitamin deficiencies, Malnutrition.

Candidates are also advised to acquaint themselves fully with the advice and guidelines published by the various statutory and advisory bodies in operation for people working in the tropics (such as the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS).

4. The DTMH Examination

The examination is held once a year. Candidates are advised to refer to the RCP website for examination dates and details of fees: <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/diploma-tropical-medicine-and-hygiene>

There are three papers in the examination, held over one day as follows:

<i>Examination Paper</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Number of marks per question</i>	<i>Total marks per paper</i>
'Best of Five'	Morning: 3 h	100	2.5	250
Preventive Medicine	Afternoon: 1 h	5 (from a choice of 10)	20	100
Parasitology/Entomology	Afternoon: 1.5 h	50	3	150

(i) The best-of-five (single best answer) paper contains 100 questions, 16 of which are based on clinical images. Images are usually of patients with abnormal physical signs; occasionally laboratory slides, X-rays, or epidemiological data may be shown. The remaining 84 best-of-five questions are designed to test the candidate's knowledge of tropical medicine and hygiene over a wide area. This includes clinical scenarios, data interpretation, epidemiology and public health.

Candidates indicate their answers to the questions by completing an answer sheet that is machine-read by an optical mark reader. Each correct answer is awarded 2.5 marks and there is no negative marking. Three hours are allowed for this paper.

(ii) The Preventive Medicine paper will contain 10 short-answer questions, of which candidates must choose to answer any five. Each question may have several parts, covering all aspects of preventive medicine and international community health in a tropical context. Each short-answer question will be worth 20 marks. Answers should be in succinct bullet point format. One hour is allowed for this paper.

(iii) The Parasitology/Entomology paper will be based on 50 images of parasites and arthropods. The answers will be the names of organisms or consist of short phrases. Each question is worth 3 marks. One and a half hours are allowed for this paper.

Marks will only be awarded for the second part of the question if the identification in the first part of the question is correct.

Sample questions are available on the [website](#).

5. Application procedure

(a) Forms

Application forms for entry to the examination are available to download from the examination website:
<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/diploma-tropical-medicine-and-hygiene>

For any queries regarding application, please contact the RCP Examinations department by email:
dtmh@mrcpuk.org

The fully completed application form, accompanied by the appropriate fee and any other relevant documents (see below), must reach the RCP by 17.00 h (GMT) on the published closing date. No allowances can be made for postal or other delays, and late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Candidates are not permitted to apply for the examination using a third party organisation, such as a travel agent.

When submitting their application, candidates are asked to submit their GMC number or an attested copy of their Primary Medical Qualification*, prepared and authenticated by one of the following bodies:

- the issuing university or medical school
- a British Consulate or British Council outside the UK
- the British Embassy
- the British High Commission
- the candidate's own Embassy or High Commission in the UK
- a member of the Gardai in the Republic of Ireland
- government Ministries of Health
- a notary public/Justice of the Peace; other legal professionals will only be accepted if they are also a notary public or Justice of the Peace
- a Fellow of the College, or Chair of the Examining Board of the awarding body (verification of the Fellow or Member will be sought to ensure that they are of good standing, and affiliated with the issuing University/Medical School; the authenticated copy should be submitted with the authenticator's full name, their RCP code and an accompanying official stamp or letter from that Fellow, Member or Chair)
- the medical school attended for the DTMH course

**Candidates must submit an authenticated translation if their primary medical degree certificate is not in English. A fresh ink stamp must be used to authenticate the copy or translation of the primary medical qualification.*

The RCP advises candidates to submit an attested copy of their certificate rather than the original as it cannot accept responsibility for any items lost in transit.

The RCP reserves the right to request to see the original documents if there is any doubt as to the authenticity of the submitted copies of documents.

(b) Fees

The fee payable for entry to the examination is published annually on the DTMH website:

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/diploma-tropical-medicine-and-hygiene>

Once the application form has been submitted and accepted, candidates will be contacted to advise that they can now make payment. Candidates paying by credit or debit card must do so by telephone to MRCP(UK) Central Office. Details of how to do so will be included in the communication sent following acceptance of the application. Card details received in emails or as attachments will be immediately deleted and payments will not be actioned.

In case of payment by cheque or banker's draft, the application form should be sent by post (we would strongly advise using a trackable method, such as a courier or recorded delivery service), and be accompanied by the appropriate fee and any other documents required, to: DTMH Examination, Examinations Department, Royal College of Physicians of London, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London NW1 4LE. Cheques should be made payable to **'The Royal College of Physicians of London'**. Candidates are advised not to send cash by post.

In all cases, applications must reach the Examinations department by 17.00 h (GMT) on the published closing date (see website).

Once your application has been accepted, you will be sent an email of confirmation. Approximately two weeks before the examination, you will receive an examination number, and a timetable giving details of the examination venue and times.

(c) Reasonable adjustments

Any candidate who has a physical disability, specific learning difficulty, or any other condition that they believe would disadvantage them compared with other candidates in an examination, may be entitled to reasonable adjustments.

It is the candidate's responsibility to notify the RCP of any reasonable adjustment request in writing at the time of application. Applications for reasonable adjustments on medical or compassionate grounds must be supported (e.g. with a medical certificate).

Candidates should not assume that previously agreed reasonable adjustments will be carried forward to a future examination and the RCP should be notified of any request at each examination attempt. Details of any agreed reasonable adjustments will be recorded electronically against the candidate's record and used for monitoring the effectiveness of the RCP's processes.

Special arrangements purely for candidate convenience cannot always be made; candidate convenience includes provision for night shifts, courses, seminars and any other clinical commitments. If reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented, the candidate may either:

- (i) withdraw from the examination; or
- (ii) proceed without special arrangements.

(d) Withdrawals

Notice of withdrawal from any part of the examination must be given in writing (by letter or email) to the RCP of London Examinations Department. Candidates are asked to quote their RCP Code number, full

name and date of birth in their withdrawal notice to allow College staff to identify candidates easily.

Only written requests to withdraw will be accepted as official withdrawal requests.

*Under **no** circumstances can examination applications and/or fees be transferred from one Examination to another.*

Candidates submitting withdrawal requests on or before the application period closing date will be eligible for a 90% refund of the examination fee paid (10% of the fee is retained as an administrative charge). Where possible this refund will be paid by the same method as was used for the original payment. Refunds will not be made where candidates submit their withdrawal request after the closing date unless there are circumstances deemed exceptional which can be substantiated (with the inclusion of scanned documentary evidence).

Withdrawal requests submitted after the application period closing date will normally only be considered under the following circumstances:

- illness;
- involvement in an accident;
- death of a close relative (parent, sibling, spouse, child – the candidate must prove their relationship to the relative if they do not share the same surname).

Other cases may be considered on their own merit and at the discretion of the Deputy Head of Service Operations, RCP; documentary evidence is required in all cases. When submitting documentary evidence please ensure that it is printed on letter-headed paper and stamped or signed appropriately. The RCP will accept evidence that is scanned and emailed. However, they reserve the right to request to see the original documents if there is any doubt as to the authenticity of the submitted copies of documents.

Decisions on these cases will be made by the Deputy Head of Service Operations, whose decision is final.

Any request (accompanied by supporting evidence) must be submitted not later than four weeks after the Examination date in order to be considered. No fees will be refunded, irrespective of circumstances, thereafter.

Non-attendance

Candidates who do not attend the examination without notifying the RCP will be recorded as absent. Absence will count as an attempt at the examination.

Except as provided for above, examination fees are non-refundable. Should a candidate fail to attend an examination or withdraw after the closing date, the examination fee will be forfeited.

(e) Candidates with constraints on their practice

Candidates who have been erased from the UK GMC register (or that of the equivalent international body) for reasons related to fitness to practise are not permitted entry to the DTMH examination.

Candidates who are suspended from practice by the UK GMC (or equivalent international body) are not permitted entry to DTMH examination until the suspension has been lifted.

Candidates who are subject to any warnings, interim orders, undertakings or conditions on their practice from the UK GMC (or equivalent international body) must declare this information to the RCP, and may be permitted to enter the examination at the discretion of the Chair of the DTMH Examining Board only.

Additionally, if candidates are or have been registered with the UK GMC (or equivalent international body), they must include their GMC number (or equivalent registration number).

Candidates should note that failure to declare conditions, warnings or suspension as required:

- at the time of application,
- prior to the examination date for which they have entered,

will result in penalties being applied as defined in the Misconduct Regulations.

Candidates are also required to disclose information as to why the condition or undertaking has been imposed.

The decision on whether a candidate is permitted to take the examination will normally be communicated to candidates within two weeks of the date the information was received.

6. Examination rules and regulations

(a) Regulations

- 1 Candidates will **not** be admitted to any written paper if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the examination has started, unless in exceptional circumstances with the express permission of the chief invigilator.
- 2 Candidates must not start reading or answering the examination questions until the start of the examination is announced by the chief invigilator.
- 3 While in the examination hall, a candidate must not attempt to read the work of any other candidate or communicate in any way with any other candidate or any other person without the express permission of the chief invigilator.
- 4 Any invigilator or examiner present is empowered to refuse to allow a candidate to continue with the examination on grounds of misconduct.
- 5 Once admitted to each part of the examination, candidates must stay for the full duration of each paper. Candidates may **not** leave the examination hall as a result of finishing the examination paper early. Those who do so will have their examination attempt annulled, and may be investigated under Misconduct Regulations.
- 6 Candidates may not temporarily leave the examination hall during the first 30 minutes of the 'Best of Five' paper or during the first 15 minutes of the Preventive Medicine or Parasitology/Entomology papers, or in the 10 minutes before the scheduled end of each paper.
- 7 Candidates should immediately stop working when instructed to do so and remain in their seats in silence while papers, empty answer books, continuation sheets or other papers are collected.
- 8 Candidates should **not** remove from the examination hall any papers or examination materials. Question papers or any part of them, or any individual questions, must not be copied or removed from the examination hall.
- 9 Calculators, mobile phones, pagers, personal stereos, 'smart' watches (or any electronic audio or communication device), textbooks or other documents are strictly forbidden on or around candidates' desks. Electronic devices must be switched off (where applicable) and stored with candidate's belongings in the designated area at the examination venue. Any unauthorised material will be confiscated and a report detailing the incident and identifying the candidate will be submitted to the RCP.

(b) No ID, no entry

Candidates will **not** be admitted to the examination unless they produce suitable identification (ID) in addition to the admission document. This will normally be a valid passport. Where candidates do not possess a passport, they should provide another form of primary ID from the list below. Alternatively, two forms of secondary ID, one with a photograph and the other with a signature, will be accepted.

Primary acceptable ID:

- current valid passport (containing photograph and signature)
- full or provisional photocard driving licence
- EEA Member State identity photocard
- national identity photocard for non-EEA foreign nationals
- identity card issued by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

Secondary acceptable ID (Please note two forms of secondary ID will need to be shown together e.g. National Health Service (NHS) card with a debit card. At least one of these **must contain** a photograph):

- certified/attested copy of passport or driving licence*
- valid credit or debit card
- NHS/Hospital Identity card
- paper driving licence
- valid student card with picture

* These documents must be accompanied by an official stamp or letter from the issuing organisation in order to qualify as an acceptable form of ID. Self-made photocopies will not be accepted alone.

The name on the identification document must exactly match the name the candidate provided when registering for the examination. If a candidate has changed their name (e.g. through marriage) or there are any discrepancies, the candidate must contact the RCP at least five working days in advance of the examination. Candidates whose name on their ID does not match the name they provided when registering will be denied access to the examination.

Additional forms of ID will be considered providing candidates contact us well in advance of an examination. If you have any queries surrounding the validity of your ID please email us at dtmh@mrCPuk.org

Admission to the examination will be at the discretion of the invigilator(s), and invigilators have the right to question a candidate further if they are not satisfied with ID that has been provided (including if the candidate does not look sufficiently similar to their photograph). The RCP observes sensitivity in the visual identification of candidates, but candidates should give advance of any anticipated difficulties.

(c) Results

The DTMH Examining Board has overall responsibility for the delivery, assessment and conferment processes relating to the DTMH examination. This authority is delegated by the Education Board of the RCP.

Results are released when the Board is satisfied that the examination has been conducted appropriately and in accordance with the procedures of the RCP. Result letters will be emailed only. Letters will not be sent by post. Results are *not* available over the telephone or by fax.

Candidates who are successful in the DTMH examination are eligible for the award of '**Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene of the Royal College of Physicians of London**'.

Diplomas will be sent using the address details provided at the time of application. If a change of address is required, please email: dtmh@mrcpuk.org

Examination results may be shared with the approved course that the candidate has completed.

In the event of significantly poor performance in the examination, the RCP reserve the right to prevent candidates from resitting without further training.

(d) Academic procedures: appeals, misconduct and complaints

Details of all academic procedures relating to appeals against DTMH Board decisions, investigations into allegations of academic misconduct, and complaints are available from the MRCP(UK) website (<http://www.mrcpuk.org/mrcpuk-examinations/regulations>) in the following documents:

- Examination Appeals Regulations
- Examination Complaint Procedures
- Candidate Code of Conduct
- Misconduct Regulations

7. Language requirements

All parts of the Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene are conducted in English.

As all assessments are conducted in English, the RCP advises candidates that in order to be sufficiently prepared to sit the Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene, their English language ability should be equivalent to International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7.5. However, candidates do not need to have taken IELTS, or any other language examination, to sit the DTMH.

The DTMH cannot be used to demonstrate competence in the English language.

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