

## **Certificate in Anatomical Pathology Technology**

2006

### **40 Guided Learning Hours**

#### **Description:**

The Anatomical Pathology Technician (APT) plays a vital role in assisting the pathologist and in helping to run the mortuary and the post-mortem room.

The certificate is a qualification designed for Anatomical Pathology Technicians who usually work in a mortuary.

The aim of this examination is to assess the competence of the APT to give safe and practical assistance to the pathologist in the post-mortem room and to maintain the mortuary in a clean and efficient manner.

## Summary of Outcomes

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of human anatomy and physiology.
- Apply appropriate techniques in post-mortem examinations.
- Identify potential hazards to health and take measures to minimise or eliminate these risks in the mortuary.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the laws and codes of practice relating to the mortuary and implement legal requirements in relation to the dead.
- Demonstrate appropriate administrative procedures and deal correctly with visitors to the post-mortem room

Each of these aims is expanded into objectives in the content section below. Please note that objectives indicated for **Practical Assessment** may also be assessed through the written examination

## Content

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

1. **Have a comprehensive knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, by being able to:**
  - Use and understand relevant medical terminology in the:
    - i. Musculo-skeletal system: identify and name the main parts of the skeleton, both axial and appendicular
    - ii. Central Nervous system: Identify and name the external features of the brain and it's membranes
    - iii. Cardio-vascular system: Identify and name the heart chambers, valves and coverings, aorta, venae cavae and their main branches. Explain the functions of the circulatory system
    - iv. Respiratory system: Identify, name and describe the main parts and explain the functions of the respiratory tract and muscles of respiration.
    - v. Alimentary system: Identify and name the main parts and explain the functions of the digestive tract.
    - vi. Urinary system: Identify and name the main parts and explain the functions of the urinary tract.
    - vii. Genital system: Identify, name and describe the main parts and the functions of the male genital tract and the female genital tract.
    - viii. Endocrine system: Identify and name the main parts. Explain the functions of the endocrine organs.
    - ix. Immune system: Identify and name the main parts and explain the functions of the spleen and lymphoid tissues.
    - x. Special senses: Identify, name and explain the main functions of the eye and ear.
  
2. **Have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to apply appropriate techniques in post-mortem examinations, by being able to:**

- Prepare a body for post-mortem examination according to instructions from the pathologist. **Practical Assessment**
  - Open the skull and spinal canal and remove the brain, spinal cord and pituitary gland. Expose the middle ear and strip the dura mater. **Practical Assessment**
  - Reconstruct the head, spine, thorax, abdomen and limbs after a post-mortem examination. **Practical Assessment**
  - State the measurements and weights to be recorded in adult autopsies
  - Identify the containers required for the collection of infective and other materials for diagnostic purposes. Demonstrate correct collection procedures. **Practical Assessment**
  - Explain the principles of tissue fixation and name various fluids used in preserving and storing tissues in this way.
  - Assist with performance of additional specialist techniques (e.g. photographs and X-rays). **Practical Assessment**
3. **Have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of potential hazards to health and measures to minimise or eliminate risks in the mortuary, by being able to:**
- Describe the nature of infective agents, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa and parasites and how they spread and gain access to the body.
  - State the purposes and principles of refrigeration.
  - Describe the basic principles of disinfection by autoclaving and by using chemicals. List the main disinfectants required in the post-mortem room, their uses and concentrations in the sterilisation of instruments and other equipment.
  - List the items of protective clothing needed for a post-mortem examination, including the special requirements in high-risk cases.
  - Explain how good personal hygiene contributes to the prevention of infection and apply the main principles of personal hygiene.
  - Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the main infective diseases that can be contracted in the post-mortem room. State the specific precautions taken against them, including immunisation, precautions with potentially infective bodies, special clothing and special disinfection procedures.
  - Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the how irradiation can affect health.
  - Carry out the practical procedures for the safe disposal of all types of waste including infective, toxic and radioactive. **Practical Assessment**
  - Demonstrate ability to perform First Aid, including care of wounds and artificial respiration. **Practical Assessment**
  - Demonstrate knowledge of the Health and Safety Acts and the COSHH Regulations as they apply the mortuary, including procedure in cases of spillage of harmful fluids.
4. **Have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of practice relating to the mortuary and implementing legal requirements in relation to the dead, by being able to:**
- State the requirements of the Code of Practice for safety in the mortuary.

- Explain the legal requirements and written authority necessary for a hospital and a Coroner/Procurator Fiscal post-mortem. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the types of death about which a Coroner/Procurator Fiscal should be informed.
  - State the Laws in respect of death certification.
  - State the legal requirements and documents necessary for cremation and explain the necessity for removal of cardiac pacemakers and radioactive implants.
  - State the procedure for reporting occupational illness and injury.
  - Demonstrate outline knowledge of the importance of medical confidentiality.
5. **Have the ability to carry out the appropriate administrative procedures and deal correctly with visitors to the post-mortem room, by being able to:**
- State the requirements and procedures for the identification of bodies arriving in the mortuary and for releasing bodies to funeral directors.
  - Carry out the correct procedures for registration of bodies whilst in the mortuary, including the mortuary register, autopsy register and register of property from the deceased. **Practical Assessment**
  - State the arrangements for safeguarding of valuables and other property of the deceased.
  - Carry out the correct procedure for checking stock and equipment and explain the hygienic precautions necessary for the disinfection, care, storage and maintenance of instruments. **Practical Assessment**
  - Make provisions for all visitors to the post-mortem room and ensure that they wear the correct protective clothing and follow correct procedures
  - Deal sympathetically with, and offer advice to, relatives and other bereaved persons who may visit the mortuary for identification or viewing.
  - State the situations in which access should be facilitated for ministers of religion and the procedures to be followed.
  - Describe the requirements of ethnic minorities with regard to death.

## Assessment

The assessment for the award of the Certificate is made up of two parts: A Practical Assessment Record Book (PARB) and a two hour written examination both of which test knowledge and understanding of the whole syllabus.

- The Practical Assessment Record Book prescribes the practical tasks that must be undertaken by the candidate and authorised by the Consultant Pathologist, providing a continual assessment of practical performance of the candidate.
- These tasks must be completed in order for the candidate to be eligible to take the written examination.
- The written examination consists of one paper of 2 hours' duration and comprises of a section of short questions, all of which must be attempted, and one or two sections of longer structured questions requiring an essay style answer.

The maximum number of marks attainable in the written examination is 100 marks

Candidates must gain an overall mark of 60% in order to be awarded a pass.

## Entry to Examination

All Certificate Examination candidates must:

- Have successfully completed the number of specified practical tasks as outlined in the PARB, which are recorded and signed by their supervisor. The Practical Assessment Book

must be returned to the RSPH with the candidate's examination entry form. An APT trainee will normally require up to 2 years training in order to complete the practical tasks. Candidates who do not return the completed PARB with their examination entry form will not be eligible to sit the written examination.

- Have attended an RSPH approved course of study before sitting the examination. A full list of centres offering approved courses can be found on the RSPH website - [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk)

Application forms are available from the RSPH website prior to the April examination. Each individual candidate must submit a completed **Examination Entry Form** (duly authorised by a pathologist) by 2nd February, together with a completed **Practical Assessment Record Book** and cheque **in payment** of the examination fee.

## Date of Examination

The examination is held annually in April, and the written paper must be taken on the date set by the RSPH.

A Calendar of Examination Dates is sent annually to all centres in *August of each year*. Additionally, full details of the CAPT examination can be found on the RSPH website [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk) or by contacting the RSPH Qualifications Department.

## Examination Fees

Centres are routinely informed in *August* each year about examination fees for the following year. Additionally, full details of the CAPT examination can be found on the RSPH website [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk) or by contacting the RSPH Qualifications Department.

## Approved Courses

Organisers of courses should notify the RSPH by 1<sup>st</sup> August in each year that a course is planned for preparation for the examination in April of the next year. A programme of training should be submitted and approved at that time. All courses must include systematic instruction by lectures and demonstrations to cover all parts of the syllabus. Courses are expected to allow for at least 40 hours of instruction. Lecturers may include hospital consultants, pathologists, and others who are qualified in specific areas of the syllabus. Experienced Anatomical Pathology Technicians who already hold the RSPH Diploma may also give instruction on preparing bodies for post mortem, and on reconstruction of bodies and on mortuary administration. They may also help with the demonstration of specialised techniques such as the removal of the spinal cord and parts of the skeleton, and in preparing specimens for demonstrations and photography.

A full list of approved centres offering the CAPT courses will be made available via the RSPH website [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk) in September of each year. Candidates will be required to contact centres directly to register for an approved course. Candidates are reminded that they will need to register for the examination directly with RSPH.

## Examination results and certificates

Examination results are graded as follows:

Honours - 80 to 100 marks  
Credit – 70 to 79 marks

Pass – 60 to 69 marks

Fail - 0 to 59 marks

The RSPH will forward certificates for successful candidates directly to candidates if required.

Any enquiries about this qualification should be made to:

The Qualifications Department,  
Royal Society for Public Health  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Market Towers  
1 Nine Elms Lane  
SW8 5NQ