



## Specialist Practitioner

### Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care

### Guidance & Regulations

College of Paramedics

Date for Policy review - July 2020

Author	First approved	Last reviewed	Next review
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# Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care (Dip PUC)

## Guidance and Regulations

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### 1. Introduction – The Exam

- 1.1 The examination for the Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care is designed to test the application of knowledge, skills, communication and attitudes across a broad spectrum of clinical presentations for multi-professional practitioners in primary and urgent care.
- 1.2 The level of competence expected is that commensurate with practitioner practice FHEQ level 7/SCQF level 11. Healthcare professionals who practice at this level, have the capability to make sound judgements in the absence of full information and to manage risk when there is complex, competing or ambiguous information or uncertainty. Both specialist and advanced clinical practice is characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making, with advanced practitioners holding greater responsibilities in terms of leadership, education and research articulated through various national frameworks.
- 1.3 There is a focus within this examination on communication and decision making in the context of risk stratification rather than risk avoidance, for those multi-professional practitioners who practice in clinical environments that hold high degrees of ambiguity, including primary and urgent care.

### 2. Work Place Based Assessment (WPBA)

- 2.1 Triangulated professional assessments are common in higher professional practice. Whilst the exam (OSCE and AKT) provide a valid assessment of competence the counterpoint or third arm of the diploma is an assessment of performance completed in clinical practice. On application for the diploma candidates are required to provide a statement of clinical performance signed by a clinical supervisor. This statement is usually evidenced over time through Work Place Based Assessments (Mini Clinical Exams (Mini CEX): Case Based Discussions (CBD): Multi Source Feedback (MSF): and, Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ). Etc) and states that the practitioner has demonstrated that they can perform in the work environment against key standards of practice. The College has a WPBA booklet and available is at: <https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/diploma-in-primary-and-urgent-care>. *(Please note that in order to obtain the Diploma in Primary and Urgent Care it is only necessary to provide a completed final clinical supervisors report and this must be signed off by a registered health care professional that holds responsibility for clinically supervising the applicant).*

### 3. Blueprinting

- 3.1 The content of the exam is determined by a process called blueprinting which maps the practitioner role and identifies key practice elements. This process is undertaken by a group of

peers that practice clinically in primary, urgent and emergency care and represents a carefully selected and broad sample of clinical presentations judged to represent practice at this level.

### 3.2 Format of the Examination

3.2.1 The examination consist of two elements as follows:

#### **Element A – Written Paper**

A three hour Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) paper formed of 150 single best answer (SBA) questions.

#### **Element B – Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)**

15 x 10 minute Objective Structured Clinical Examinations which assess clinical skills and communication.

3.3 The content of the examination is based on current United Kingdom primary and urgent care practice.

3.4 All parts of the examination will be conducted in English.

3.5 The exam is standard set (pass mark decided) using contemporary assessment methodology (either modified Angoff or borderline regression based on numbers taking the exam). In order to gain a pass in the examination overall, candidates must achieve a pass in both Elements A & B. Candidates who are unsuccessful at either Element A or B may re-sit the relevant component provided it is within 24 months of the first attempt. (See Section 5).

## 4. Eligibility

4.1 Candidates must fulfil the following requirements:

- 4.1.1 **Paramedic** - Must hold registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after full registration.
- 4.1.2 **Nurse** - Must hold registration with the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after full registration. Applicants must provide an authenticated copy of their certificate of registration.
- 4.1.3 **Physician Associate** - Must hold registration with the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) and have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after full registration. Applicants must provide an authenticated copy of their certificate of voluntary registration.
- 4.1.4 **Other Relevant Profession** - Must hold registration with the relevant Regulatory Body and have been engaged in the practice of their profession for not less than four years after full registration. Applicants must provide an authenticated copy of their certificate of registration.

- 4.1.5 **All Candidates** - must and in addition to the relevant registration certificate, provide evidence that they meet the eligibility criteria in Appendix A of the specialist practitioner Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care application form, available at <https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/diploma-in-primary-and-urgent-care>.

## 5. Attempts

- 5.1 Candidates are permitted four attempts in which to pass. Where one element is failed it is only that element in its entirety that needs to be retaken. Where both elements are failed both elements are required to be retaken in their entirety.
- 5.2 An attempt is defined as an occasion when a candidate commences, but not necessarily completes either element A & B, and does not include candidates that exit part way through for medical reasons.
- 5.3 Failure to pass the examination within the permitted number of attempts will debar the candidate from applying again under these regulations. (except in exceptional circumstances).

## 6. Applying for the Examination

- 6.1 The examination for the Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care will usually be held four times a year. Details of the examination dates, venue(s) and fees payable, are set out in the application form, and on the College website: <https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/diploma-in-primary-and-urgent-care>
- 6.2 Applications must:
- 6.2.1 Be made on the appropriate (paper or electronic version) application form, with supporting evidence.
  - 6.2.2 State the preferred method of exam payment fee by applicant / sponsored employer, to enable the appropriate card payment/invoice to be generated. The fee must be received in full before a candidate is entered for the examination.
- 6.3 Failure to submit the supporting evidence documentation listed on the candidate application form will result in the application being rejected and/or a delay in the processing of an application.
- 6.4 If an application for a specific exam or venue date is received and these dates are full. Then the applicant will be offered alternate date(s) or venue(s). The College holds a “reserve” list for late cancellations. Please indicate on your application if you wish to be considered for a reserve place should one become available.
- 6.5 The College reserves the right, to reject, or withdraw applications in specific circumstances. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to serious unresolved allegations of poor professional practice, fraudulent application etc. Where this happens, the applicant will be informed of those reasons and their withdrawal as soon as is possible. The withdrawal will incur a

20% administration charge from the fee paid in order to process the withdrawal in a fair and inclusive way.

- 6.6 No candidate is permitted to make either electronic or written copy of the exam or its processes other than that which is published on the College website. Any breach of this will be considered as academic misconduct and will be dealt with via either internal investigation or escalation to registrant's professional body.
- 6.7 All personal information held by the College will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

## 7. Proof of Identity

- 7.1 Candidates must bring proof of identity to each examination. Proof of identity must be an official document, such as a current driving licence or passport that includes the candidate's name, signature and photograph.
- 7.2 All candidates registered for the exam will be issued with an exam candidate number by the Examination Manager. This will be utilised in both exam elements and is required if the candidate submits a Review or Appeal.

## 8. Dress Code

- 8.1 The examination follows the principle that the same dress code should apply for a professional examination as it does for working in a primary and/or urgent care environment – Smart/Casual clothing **Should Be Worn**.
- 8.2 Clothing which demonstrates the candidate's profession or professional position (e.g. paramedic, nurse or physician associate), or, which names particular employer, practice, hospital, walk in centre, urgent care centre or ambulance service **Must Not Be Worn**.

## 9. Results

- 9.1 Results will be sent to the candidates nominated email address as soon as they are available and have been through the post exam quality assurance process. This can take up to 6 weeks post final element exam, however, in exceptional circumstances this may be longer.

## 10. Feedback

- 10.1 Candidates who undertake element A (Applied Knowledge Test - AKT) will receive a notification letter and feedback on their achieved score. This includes: Overall Mark; Candidate Mark; Pass Mark; Average and Range. Feedback is provided regarding the domains of knowledge.
- 10.2 Candidates who undertake element B (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations - OSCEs) will receive a notification letter and feedback on their achieved score. This includes: Overall Mark; Candidate Mark; Pass Mark; No of Stations Failed; Average and Range. Feedback is given for each OSCE station, and a copy of each OSCE station examiner mark sheet is provided.

10.3 Candidates who undertake elements A & B will receive a notification letter which incorporates all the combined feedback above.

## **11. Withdrawal from the Examination / Refunds / Deferment**

11.1 Candidates who wish to withdraw an application for admission to any element of the examination must submit a request in writing to the College. A refund of the fee paid may be made (less an administrative fee of 20%), provided that notice of intention to withdraw is received by the Examination Manager 30 days before the exam date.

11.2 Candidates who request deferment from the exam, must submit a written statement outlining their reasons (e.g. medical or personal) and stating their intention to proceed. The College will then review the request, and if accepted, will advise the applicant/employer sponsor of the next available exam entry.

11.3 100% exam fee will be refunded if the College cancels the exam.

## **12. Candidates Requiring Access Arrangements**

12.1 Candidates requiring exam access arrangements (including diagnosis of a learning disability) should advise the College upon receipt of exam entry confirmation from the College, of the nature of their needs and any assistance that they require. The College will then review the request, and if accepted, will advise the candidate of all reasonable access arrangements approved prior to the exam date.

## **13. Improper Conduct by Examination Candidates**

13.1 In the case of improper conduct of an examination candidate, as defined below, the College may impose a penalty relating to the candidate's eligibility for the relevant or future examinations. Improper conduct is defined as:

13.1.1 Dishonestly obtaining or attempting to obtain entry to the examination by making false claims about eligibility for the examination, or, falsifying any aspects of the application documentation.

13.1.2 Obtaining or seeking to obtain unfair advantage during an examination, or, inciting other candidates to do the same. Examples of unfair advantage are:

13.1.2.1 having on their person any material that would give advantage in an examination once the examination has commenced (this includes electronic communication devices).

13.1.2.2 communicating, or attempting to communicate, with another candidate, once the examination has commenced.

13.1.2.3 refusing to follow the instructions given by invigilators, examiners or examinations staff concerning the conduct of, and procedure for, the examination.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 13.1.3 Removing or attempting to remove from the examination any confidential material relating to the examination.
- 13.1.4 Obtaining or attempting to obtain confidential information concerning the examination from an examiner or examination official.
- 13.1.5 Passing confidential information on the content of the examination to a third party.
- 13.1.6 Seeking to gain prior knowledge from, or provide knowledge to, other examination candidates on content of the examination.

This list is not exhaustive.

13.2 If a candidate is found to have acted improperly, his/her name may be reported to his/her regulatory body. The College may also on an individual basis decide that a candidate should not be allowed to proceed further with the examination or having passed the examination, not awarded the Diploma in Primary & Urgent Care.

13.3 Obtaining the award Diploma in Primary and Urgent Care will result in the candidate's name being placed on an electronic register. This register will be used to validate professional status for those successful applicants and will be accessible by the public.

13.4 The College recognises that it cannot withdraw the original Diploma award once achieved, however, it retains the right to withdraw the successful applicant from the electronic register where there are serious and proven allegations of poor or unprofessional practice. This may for example be if the diploma holder has been struck off from their professional body. The College will make every attempt to contact that individual in such cases with the information provided but recognises that this may not always be possible.

## 14. Eligibility for Diploma Certificate

14.1 Candidates who pass both elements of the examination and satisfies the guidance and regulations shall be entitled to the designation of Diplomate in Primary & Urgent Care of the College of Paramedics (Dip PUC) and shall receive a diploma certificate. Inclusion on the electronic register is automatic at this point and this register is accessible to the general public. Should the candidate not wish to be included on the register they must state this on application.

**NOTE:** *This Guidance and Regulations document is under continual review. It is recommended that candidates keep in regular contact with the College to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information. Any changes will be announced on the College of Paramedics website:*

<https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/diploma-in-primary-and-urgent-care>