



THE INSTITUTE OF  
**PSYCHOSEXUAL  
MEDICINE**

## **Diploma Examination GUIDELINES**

Building 3, Chiswick Park  
566 Chiswick High Road  
Chiswick  
London  
W4 5YA

Tel: 020 7580 0631  
Email: [admin@ipm.org.uk](mailto:admin@ipm.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ipm.org.uk](http://www.ipm.org.uk)

**Founded 1974**

## Diploma Examination Guidelines

**This examination is held in London or online using Zoom during June and/or October each year. Please read these Guidelines in conjunction with the Principles of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine (IPM) which are set out in the current Prospectus, a copy of which is available on the IPM website.**

IPM examination dates are published on the IPM website ([www.ipm.org.uk](http://www.ipm.org.uk)) and in every edition of the IPM Journal.

**The Aim of the Diploma Examination** is to assess basic skills in psychosexual medicine. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate these skills through case presentation and discussion with the Examiners on the day of the examination.

**The Objectives of the Diploma Examination** are to assess skills in the:

1. Recognition and presentation of patients suitable for brief psychosexual therapy
2. Presentation of cases consistent with safe practice in their discipline with respect to safeguarding, ethics, attitudes and clinical safety
3. Recognition of the practitioner-patient relationship that became apparent during the consultation
4. Description of presence/absence of patient's feelings (coming from unconscious material) recognised during the consultation
5. Recognition of the patient's defences occurring during the consultation
6. Recognition of the practitioner's own defences occurring during the consultation
7. Description of the psychotherapeutic use of a physical examination (or patient's refusal) and response to practitioner's insights given during the consultation OR explanation of why a physical examination was not done OR why a physical examination was not thought of during the consultation
8. Demonstration of excellence in all aspects of undertaking a consultation including:
  - Listening
  - Observing non-verbal communications
  - Checking understanding of the patient's problem
  - Identification of overt and covert problems
9. Demonstration of flexibility in thought and consideration given to alternative interpretations both during the consultation and/or in discussion with the Examiners
10. Toleration of not knowing
11. Making of appropriate clinical management plans including:
  - further appointments for brief therapy
  - investigations
  - length of treatment
  - sensitive disengagement
  - referral elsewhere when patients are not suitable for brief psychosexual therapy or lie outside the practitioner's level of competency in this specialty

**Candidates are advised:**

- to have attended scientific meetings arranged by the IPM whenever possible while in training
- to have read widely on this topic to supplement their practical training including the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine Journal
- to carry out various forms of reflective practice during training
- to have attended training seminars in a recognised training group for two years – it is very unusual for candidates to gain the skills in less than this time

**Selection of cases for your Logbook**

During the seminar work, you will have become aware of the skills that you are learning. These competencies are laid out clearly in the Guidelines for DIPM and the Examiners will be marking your case presentations on these criteria. Some aspects of the training are more heavily weighted, and these include the practitioner-patient relationship, the feelings in the room and the psychosomatic genital examination. It is strongly advised that the cases in your logbook demonstrate those aspects of your work. The other competencies are also important and contribute to a well-rounded clinical consultation. Some cases may not allow you to be clear about your competency. A highly complicated case or a presentation involving too many consultations, whilst being interesting, may not allow you clearly to demonstrate those skills.

**Eligibility to sit the Diploma Examination****Candidates will be required to:**

- Be either a medical practitioner holding full registration with the GMC, nurses registered with and licensed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council, or physiotherapists who are qualified members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists
- Be in current good standing with their professional regulatory body
- Be working in a post bringing them into contact with patients with psychosexual problems
- Have attended a minimum of 48 hours in an IPM Regular Seminar over a minimum of 6 terms (2 years) before the examination date and that a minimum of 24 of these hours (2 terms) will have taken place within one year prior to the examination date. It is rare for sufficient IPM skills to have been attained before this minimum time recommendation. Exceptional circumstances may be considered after discussion with the relevant Seminar Leader
- From the June 2025 Diploma Examination at least 20 hours of the total counted will need to come from Face to Face (F2F) meetings. These 20 F2F hours will normally be from attendance at a Regular Seminar. F2F hours can also be counted from attendance at seminars within a F2F IPM conference or meeting.
- Have presented at least two cases per term which have been recorded by the Seminar Leader (minimum of 6 cases)
- To attend at least one day of a clinical or scientific meeting arranged by the IPM before applying for the examination.

## **Eligibility to re-sit the Diploma Examination**

Candidates are required to attend a minimum of 24 hours of seminars and present a minimum of 4 cases, in the year preceding the examination. It is highly recommended that candidates discuss their intentions to re-sit with their Seminar Leader.

## **Application to sit the Diploma Examination**

### **Candidates must:**

- Email a letter of intent to sit the Diploma Examination to the IPM Administrative Secretary. An online Application Form, Diploma Guidelines and electronic logbook will be emailed with a letter confirming details and date of the next examination
- Submit the Application Form and examination fee to arrive at the IPM office no later than 12 noon on the advertised last date for Applications. Late applications will not be accepted
- Complete the electronic logbook with brief details of six cases that have been seen recently and email it to the IPM. The logbook must be received by the IPM no later than 12 noon on the Tuesday two weeks before the examination date. This date is advertised in the IPM Journal and will be given in the letter following application

Candidates who withdraw from an examination within 8 weeks of the date of the examination without credible mitigating circumstances will be liable to an administrative charge of £50 (amount will be increased as/when fees are raised).

## **The Diploma Examination**

### **Format:**

- Candidates will present two cases from their logbook during the course of the Examination
- Each case selected randomly from the logbook by the Examiners will be presented to two Examiners
- Each presentation should take approximately 15 minutes to allow time for discussion for a further 15 minutes
- The candidate will be examined mainly by one Examiner with additional input from the second Examiner. Examiners will independently mark each case presentation without discussion
- All presentations and discussions will be audio recorded for later reference if required
- It is essential that candidates select six recent cases from their usual clinical setting(s) to demonstrate their ability to use brief psychosexual therapy
- Candidates may find it easier to demonstrate their skills by only including fresh cases in their logbook rather than ones already discussed in a seminar

## Confidentiality

- Candidates must ensure that their patients are sufficiently anonymised as to not be identifiable from the logbook, or during the exam presentation and discussion
- Audio recordings of the examination presentations are retained securely by the IPM and in compliance with guidance from the GMC and the Information Commissioners Office
- All recordings are retained for a minimum period of 3 months. Those required for examiner training purposes may be retained for up to 7 years
- Any recording in which a patient is or may be identifiable to Examiners will be marked for deletion after 3 months

## The Examination Method

- The examination is a summative, criterion referenced, assessment based on the objectives listed above
- Candidates will be marked on their ability to demonstrate their skills through case presentation and discussion of their own cases with the Examiners on the day of the examination
- The Examiners maintain standardisation using a marking sheet and a robust marking system
- A report from the candidate's Seminar Leader will be requested on receiving an examination Application Form. It will be taken into account as supportive evidence
- The IPM examinations are constantly under review and development. Only the most recent Examination Guidelines apply

## The Results

Candidates will be notified by email and post of their result (including a certificate when appropriate) as soon as possible after the examination and within 14 days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The results will state whether you have passed or failed and will include an analysis of your marks for each case presented. The marks are anonymised so that you will not see which Examiner awarded you which marks. This is to protect the integrity of the process and, particularly important in a small organisation like the IPM, allow the Examiners to be impartial and independent. Your marks are tabulated with the pass mark for each competency.

**Professional examinations are stressful**, and it is difficult to submit the professional self to scrutiny. We hope that you will pass the examination but if you fail, you will not be alone in this. The IPM wishes to support you and you will be offered a one-to-one meeting with your Seminar Leader.

**An Appeal** against the decision can be made in writing by email to the Chair of Examination Board at the IPM administration address within three months of the date of the Diploma Examination. The grounds for the appeal should be stated clearly in the letter.

## **A note on obtaining further information about your exams**

The IPM holds personal data about you and under the terms of ICO you have a right to see most of this subject to written request. However, examination scripts are exempt. The recording of the exam represents the exam script. The recording will be held for 6 months and then, with your consent only, may be retained for Examiner training.

The justifications for non-disclosure include:

- The recording of the examination is the property of the IPM and, in the absence of a written examination script, is the nearest the IPM has to a script. The Examiners are anonymised in all the material disclosed, to protect the ability of Examiners to be impartial and independent, and to prevent distortion of the exam process. The recordings simply cannot be anonymised therefore will not be disclosed. This is particularly important in a small organisation like the IPM.
- Provision of exam scripts allows an exam to being scrutinised by anyone the candidate chooses to allow to look at it. Away from the time pressures of the exam situation people with possibly little or no expertise in the subject may draw erroneous conclusions. It risks bringing the exam into disrepute and distorting the independence and rigour of the process.
- It would release a recording of a highly sensitive discussion about a patient between identifiable clinicians without the IPM having any ability to ensure it is kept privately and securely.

Notes made by the Examiners at the time of marking act as an aide memoir and are destroyed once the numerical marking has been completed.

## **Post Exam – the IPM Subscription Policy and Diplomat Recertification**

*IPM Diplomat Subscription* – The IPM is a subscription-based organisation and Diplomates are required to pay an annual subscription by direct debit – see website for current subscription fees and Policy. The first subscription payment will be due on 1st September following the Examination date. IPM Accounts will contact you to arrange this.

*Diplomat Recertification* – To retain your Diplomat status, you will be required to recertify every five years and the criteria for this are available on the website.

**Application forms will be made available on the IPM website, [www.ipm.org.uk](http://www.ipm.org.uk)  
Contact the Administrative Secretary for details: [admin@ipm.org.uk](mailto:admin@ipm.org.uk)**