



THE INSTITUTE OF
PSYCHOSEXUAL
MEDICINE

Membership Examination GUIDELINES

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Founded 1974

Membership Examination Guidelines

This examination takes place in London and/or online via Zoom during September 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. Please do read these Guidelines and please do discuss your intention to take the examination with your Seminar Leader.

IPM examination dates are published on the IPM website and in every edition of the IPM Journal.

The Aim of the Membership examination is:

- To evaluate the evidence that the candidate is able to apply and use the IPM skills competently in practice in their own discipline.
- Candidates will be expected to show evidence of these skills through case presentations to the Examiners on the day of the examination.
- Successful candidates demonstrate sufficient IPM skills to work autonomously in their own discipline.
- Successful candidates are responsible for continuing to meet the registration requirements of their professional bodies.
- Successful candidates are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their professional work, including psychosexual work, are appropriately indemnified.

The following Competencies of the Membership Examination are assessed and provide evidence of the following skills:

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, use of and response to reflections/interpretations of the practitioner-patient relationship (PPR) that became apparent during the consultation
4. Description, use of and response to presence/absence of the patient's feelings (coming from unconscious material) recognised during the consultation
5. Recognition, use of and response to insights into the patient's defences occurring during the consultation
6. Recognition, use of and response to insights into 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 occurring 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. Description, use of and relevance of the practitioner-patient relationship (PPR) to other relationships in the patient's life or to problems presented during the consultation
9. Demonstration of flexibility in thought and consideration given to alternative interpretations
10. Toleration of not knowing
11. Making appropriate clinical management plans such as:
 - 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 this specialty

Candidates are advised:

- to have attended scientific meetings arranged by the IPM during 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 including presentation of their cases in IPM approved seminars
- 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 MIPM 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 Membership 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
- Be a Diplomate of the IPM and be up-to-date with their annual subscriptions

- 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.

Candidates, who have obtained the IPM Diploma but for various reasons have needed to take a break of 3 years or more, will need to attend a Further Training seminar for at least a year (36 hours/3 terms) before sitting the Membership examination. During this time candidates are expected to carry out reflective practice within both their seminars and their everyday work. Their Seminar Leader will help assess how much training is needed before being ready to sit the Membership examination. Candidates will need to complete the above eligibility criteria before being able to take the Membership examination.

To re-sit the Membership Examination

There is a separate Membership Re-sit Application Form available from the Administrative Secretary which will need to be signed by the Seminar Leader

- Candidates are required to have attended a minimum of 24 hours of IPM seminars, including presenting a minimum of 4 cases and an assessment with their Seminar Leader within the year prior to the examination date

Application to sit the Membership Examination

Candidates must:

- Complete the online application form (available via the IPM website) and payment no later than the advertised last date for applications. Candidates will then receive an electronic Logbook via email. Late applications will not be accepted.

Upon acceptance of the exam application, candidates will then be expected to:

- Complete the electronic Logbook with brief details of six recent cases (seen within 6-9 months if possible to demonstrate your current level of skills development) and email it to the Admin Secretary. The Logbook must be received by the IPM no later than two weeks before the examination date. This date is advertised on the IPM website and will be given in the information following application.

Cancellation Policy:

- All refunds exclude £50 non-refundable deposit. From receipt of exam timetable and up to 30 days before the exam, cancellations will be fully refunded (minus deposit); cancellations between 30 and 14 days before the exam will be entitled to a 50% refund (minus deposit); cancellations up to 14 days before the exam will not be refunded.

The Membership Examination

Format

- Candidates will present three cases from their Logbook during the course of the examination
- Each case, randomly selected at a meeting just prior to the examination, will be presented to two Examiners
- Each presentation should take approximately 15 minutes to allow time for discussion during a further 15 minutes
- The candidate will be examined mainly by one Examiner with additional input from the second Examiner. Examiners will individually mark each case presentation without discussion
- All presentations and discussions will be audio recorded for later reference if required and will be destroyed after six months
- It is essential that candidates select six recent cases from their usual clinical setting 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

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
- All case presentations and discussions will be audio recorded during the examination. The recordings will be retained securely and confidentially by the IPM administrator for reference in the event of complaint and for the purposes of exam development and examiner training

The Results

Candidates will be notified by email or post of their result (including 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 there is 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, to 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 however 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

This can be made against the decision by writing to the Chair of Examination Board at the IPM address within three months of the date of the Membership 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 so should not be disclosed. This is particularly important in a small organisation like the IPM.
- Provision of exam scripts allows an exam to be 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.

An Application/re-sit application form to sit the Membership Examination can be obtained from The Administrative Secretary: admin@ipm.org.uk

Post Examination – Recertification and the IPM subscription

IPM Member Recertification - To retain your Membership status, you will be required to recertify every five years and the criteria for this are available on the website.

IPM Member Subscription – the IPM subscription will increase from the current Diplomate rate to the Member rate – see website for current Subscription fees and Policy. Direct debit payments will automatically be increased. Standing order payments should be updated directly with your bank.