

**The Faculty of Clinical Oncology**

**TO: TRAINING PROGRAMME DIRECTORS  
REGIONAL POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION ADVISERS  
COLLEGE TUTORS  
EXAMINATION CANDIDATES**

**FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY  
SPRING 2024**

The Examining Board has prepared the following report on the SPRING 2024 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology. It is the intention of the Specialty Training Board that the information contained in this report should benefit candidates at future sittings of the examinations and help those who train them. This information should be made available as widely as possible.

**Dr Louise Hanna**  
Medical Director, Education and Training

**FIRST EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL ONCOLOGY  
EXAMINERS' REPORT – SPRING 2024**

The pass rates achieved at the SPRING 2024 sitting of the First Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology are summarised below.

	<b>All Candidates</b>		<b>UK-trained Candidates</b>		<b>UK 1<sup>st</sup> attempt Candidates</b>	
<b>Cancer Biology &amp; Radiobiology</b>	56%	88/156	66%	33/50	71%	17/24
<b>Clinical Pharmacology</b>	54%	83/154	79%	30/38	71%	17/24
<b>Medical Statistics</b>	59%	98/166	71%	27/38	85%	17/20
<b>Physics</b>	61%	114/188	61%	35/37	76%	19/25

This examiners' report does not provide an in-depth breakdown of performance on individual questions but is intended to guide trainers and candidates by highlighting particular areas of concern. Candidates are reminded that it is recommended that all modules are attempted at the first sitting, to maximise chances of success over the total of six permitted attempts.

## **Cancer Biology and Radiobiology**

The examiners felt that some questions could have been better answered with more targeted revisions. Attention should be paid to the following topics: carcinogenesis, radiation safety and mechanism of growth factor action and targeting inhibitors.

Candidates should pay due attention to the stems before rushing in to give their answer. For questions where there may be more than one correct answer at first glance, they need to carefully consider which one would most accurately reflect the topic being tested. This reflects the judgement required in clinical practice where decisions can be nuanced.

## **Clinical Pharmacology**

Overall, candidates performed well in clinical pharmacology. Candidates generally performed strongly in questions relating to drug mechanisms of action and toxicity.

Candidates should be aware of the supportive therapies and the clinical use of opiate analgesics in renal impairment.

## **Medical Statistics**

The examiners were pleased that candidates displayed a good understanding of the curriculum. Candidates performed well in interpreting forest plots and survival analysis interpretation. Examiners would like to draw candidates' attention to understanding of Analysis of Variance, Sampling Data and the difference between intention to treat analysis and per protocol analysis. It is useful to ensure knowledge of heterogeneity and composite outcomes.

## **Physics**

Candidates demonstrated good performance across curriculum domains, particularly on interaction of subatomic particles with matter noted. Trainees should deepen their understanding of beam characteristics such as symmetry and flatness. Candidates should have knowledge of relevant ICRU recommendations with regards to prescribing and reporting. Calculation questions were done well but trainees should work with medical physics colleagues to work on underpinning knowledge of the concepts behind them. Clinically relevant IRR and IRMER regulations should be appreciated and understood.

