



# The Society of Apothecaries of London

## Guide to The Diploma in the Philosophy of Medicine (DPMSA) Incorporating the Regulations and Syllabus

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### **Notice of future amendments to the Guide (incorporating the Regulations and Syllabus) and revisions following publication of this version.**

The DPMSA Examination will continue to change to reflect developments in medicine. While every attempt has been made to ensure that this version of the DPMSA Examination Regulations and Syllabus is accurate, further changes to the DPMSA examination, the Regulations and closing dates may be implemented during this time. Candidates should refer to the Society of Apothecaries website ([www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)) for the most up-to-date information, and where any such changes will be detailed. In order that candidates are fully briefed about the status of any proposed changes, they are advised to regularly check the Society website

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## INTRODUCTION

The Diploma in the Philosophy of Medicine was instituted by the Society of Apothecaries of London in 1978, as a natural development of the activities of the Society's Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy which was established in 1959. The Diploma was revised extensively in 1993, and the name of the course was changed to 'Ethics and Philosophy of Healthcare' in 2002.

The Diploma is designed as a postgraduate qualification primarily for members of the health care professions, although it is open to a number of other graduates.

The Diploma is intended to indicate familiarity with contemporary philosophy of medicine and in particular with the philosophical aspects of problems within the theory and practice of medicine and healthcare; and with selected aspects of the history of philosophy related to those problems.

## COURSE CONTACT DETAILS

For further details on the course please contact:

Course Administrator  
Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy  
Society of Apothecaries  
Apothecaries' Hall  
Black Friars Lane  
London  
EC4V 6EJ

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## DATE AND PLACE OF THE EXAMINATION

The Diploma Examination is held annually at Apothecaries' Hall (for address refer to front cover).

## EXAMINATION TIMETABLE AND FEES

Please refer to the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** (available online at [www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)).

## REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE EXAMINATION

1. Only candidates who have completed the Ethics and Philosophy of Healthcare course run by the Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy will be admitted to the examination. Attendance at a **minimum of 70%** of the course lectures will usually constitute completion of the course.
2. Form A (for those applying for the first time) or Form R (for re-entrants) and the fee must be received by the closing date published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** (available online at [www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)). Application forms may be submitted in anticipation of completing the course, but the required attendance level must be achieved before the candidate can be admitted to the examination.
3. With effect from 1 September 2007, entry and re-entry to the examination must be made within 3 years of completing the course.

## THE EXAMINATION

4. The examination will consist of:
  - a. **The essay** from a given list of titles (available from the Course Director) is to be submitted to the Registrar no later than the deadline published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** ([www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)).
  - b. **The written examination:** a 3-hour, undivided, unseen written examination paper
  - c. **The dissertation** will be on a topic chosen by the candidate and approved by the Course Director. Please refer to the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** for related deadlines.
5. 20% of the marks will be awarded for the essay and 40% each for the written paper and the dissertation.
6. A candidate who fails to satisfy the Examiners in any part of the examination will be able to re-enter for the part(s) failed.
7. Successful candidates are entitled to use the letters DPMSA after their names.
8. The examination fee will be determined from time to time by the Court of Assistants. Candidates who withdraw from the examination after the closing date will forfeit a proportion of the fee. For further details refer to the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** ([www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)).
9. Candidates will be issued with an admission document once a place for the examination has been confirmed. This must be produced on the day of examination, along with some form of photographic identification.
10. On the day of the written examination, candidates are forbidden to bring books, papers, mobile telephones calculators or any other electronic aid into the examination rooms. It is strictly forbidden for candidates to talk to, or to attempt in any other way to communicate with each other whilst a written examination is in progress.
11. Candidates' completed examination scripts become the property of, and will be retained by, the Society. Under no circumstances will they be available for study.
12. Candidates who present themselves for written examinations after the start time stated in the admission document will be admitted if they arrive within 30 minutes of this time, but may not be admitted if they arrive thereafter. In any case, candidates will forfeit the time lost. In exceptional circumstances, where all candidates are affected by delays, the examination timings may be amended.
13. The Court of Assistants reserves the right to refuse admit to the examination, or to proceed with the examination of, any candidate who infringes a regulation or who refuses to comply with the reasonable request of an officer of the Society.

## REVIEW AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

14. The stages of the review and appeal procedures are as follows:
  - a. Feedback – first, compulsory stage;
  - b. Re-mark – second, optional stage;
  - c. Appeal – third, optional stage.
15. **Feedback (compulsory)** - Feedback on examination performance will be available to unsuccessful candidates at their request. Requests must be made in writing and be received by the Registrar within 28 days of the receipt of results.
16. **Re-mark (optional)** - A request by a candidate for a re-mark of a paper must be received in writing within 28 days of the receipt of feedback. A request for a re-mark cannot be made without first going through the feedback stage. There is a fee of £150 for a re-mark.
17. **Appeal (optional)** - An appeal to the Society's Examinations Board is open to a candidate who is not satisfied with the decision of the Examination Panel, feedback or the Re-mark Panel. In accordance with the Society's Examination Review and Appeal Procedures, the detailed grounds on which the appeal is made must be stated (and see paragraph 19 below). The appeal must be received in writing within 28 days of the candidate being notified of the feedback or re-marking report. It is not necessary to seek a re-mark before appealing. There is a fee of £150 for an appeal.
18. If the appellant is dissatisfied with the report of the Examinations Board Appeal Tribunal and wishes to make an appeal to the Court of Assistants, this should be communicated to the Registrar within 28 days of the receipt of the decision of the Appeal Tribunal.
19. The processes outlined in paragraphs 14-18 will be dealt with according to the Review and Appeal Procedures agreed by the Court of Assistants, which is available to candidates on request. In no circumstances should a candidate make representations directly to an examiner.

MRS J M E MACLEAN  
Registrar

## ANONYMITY FOR MARKING

20. To ensure that examiners do not know which candidate's work they are marking, it is important that candidates' names are not written on either the essay or the dissertation. Instead, candidates should use their Roll Number, which is allocated on joining the course and can be obtained from the Course Administrator.

## THE ESSAY

21. A selection of essay titles will be given during the autumn term of the course. Alternative titles may be approved by the Course Director.
22. The length of essay required is 1,500-2,000 words. **Three** typed and double-spaced copies of the essay must be submitted to the Registrar no later than the date published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates**.
23. For information on referencing or sources refer to Regulations 32-39 (below).
24. Candidates who do not produce an essay of sufficient standard may be required to submit a second essay.

## THE WRITTEN PAPER

25. A three-hour unseen written paper takes place in early to mid-July. Three questions will be chosen from the paper, which will not be divided into sections. Answers will be in essay form.
26. Scripts must be legible. If two examiners cannot decipher the handwriting, the script will be dismissed.

## THE DISSERTATION

### The abstract

27. Before any detailed research or writing is undertaken it is recommended that the candidate submit the proposed title and an abstract of 100-200 words to the Course Director for formative comment.
28. This process is optional but it does allow the examiners to monitor the relevance of proposed work and to point out any pitfalls.
29. Candidates wishing to take advantage of this must submit their proposed title and abstract to the Course Director no later than the deadline published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** ([www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)).

### Advice on selecting an appropriate title

30. The topic, to be chosen by the candidate, is to be in a field of special personal and/or professional interest. This work must be well documented with references and bibliography. It is not to be a paraphrase of standard works but should argue for a particular position, taking counter-arguments into account.
31. The Society is unable to offer candidates formal tutorial assistance but course tutors are usually willing to provide guidance.
32. It is emphasised that although the dissertation allows the candidate to demonstrate specialist knowledge it should be written with the non-specialist in mind.

## References

33. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were the writer's own. If another person's work is quoted, it must be acknowledged fully by means of a reference in the text (source to be given in the reference list) and putting the quotation in quotation marks, i.e. "...".
34. This also applies to verbatim short sections from a source. Paraphrasing statements/text of factual knowledge or ideas from published works, lectures or web sources is not plagiarism if the original source is referenced and the paraphrasing is not extensive.
35. Any diagrams, tables, graphs etc which have been taken directly from a source or modified from a source must include appropriate details of the author and source, as well as being acknowledged e.g. from Bloggs et al 1998 or adapted from Bloggs et al 1998. **Any candidate who is found to have plagiarised material in the dissertation will be referred to the Examinations Board**
36. The text of the dissertation should be supported by references taken from the relevant published literature.
37. References to Internet sources should include all the information required for a full and complete reference plus full details of the website (the URL of the site) and the date on which it was accessed, as the content of sites may change with time.
38. References should be numbered consecutively in the order that they are first mentioned in the text and placed in superscript each time the author is cited. The full list of references should be arranged at the end of the dissertation in numerical order.
39. The format of references should follow either the Harvard or Vancouver styles and should be consistent throughout. Full details of the styles of referencing, which should be followed meticulously, can be found at:

[http://www.bma.org.uk/library\\_medline/electronic\\_resources/factsheets/LIBReferenceStyles.jsp](http://www.bma.org.uk/library_medline/electronic_resources/factsheets/LIBReferenceStyles.jsp)

40. **Legal references** should be cited in the form used in reports issued by the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting:

e.g. DPP v Smith [1990] 2 AC 783

Guidance on legal references can be found in Raistrick, D. Index to Legal Citations and abbreviations. London. Sweet & Maxwell. 2008.

## Further requirements

41. Diploma books should be between 6,000-10,000 words in length (including footnotes and references), appendices may be added to inform the reader regarding sources mentioned in the text.
42. Three hard copies and an electronic copy must be submitted no later than the deadline published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates** ([www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org)).
43. Candidates are advised to be thorough when proof-reading for typing errors.
44. Any evidence of plagiarism at the time of the examination or subsequently will result in rejection of the candidate.

Cont.

45. The dissertation should include a title page with the following:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diploma in the Philosophy of Medicine</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dissertation title</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Candidate name</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date (e.g. 26 June 2009)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Word Count: (e.g. 6,789)</p>
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46. Candidates should make and sign a declaration such as the one given below. It should be submitted at the same time as the dissertation but **NOT** incorporated into the work.

<p><b>Declaration of Originality</b></p> <p><b>Name</b> .....</p> <p>I certify that this dissertation is entirely my own work and I allocate joint copyright to the Society of Apothecaries.</p> <p>Signed ..... Date .....</p>
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47. Dissertations should be produced in accordance with the guidelines set out in this guide and it is important that they are strictly adhered to. Dissertations not in this format may be rejected by the Examinations Board.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PRINTED VERSION**

- 48. **Printing** - Dissertations should be printed in 12 point black type, double-spaced on single sides of A4 paper. The left hand margin should be wide enough to accommodate the binding without obscuring text.
- 49. **Binding** - Dissertations must be bound in an efficient, but not necessarily formal, manner. Inexpensive binding techniques include comb binding, perfect binding, velobinding and wire-O binding. Two copies must be supplied.
- 50. **Headers and footers** – Your name and the dissertation title should appear in the document header from page 2 onwards. The page and total number of pages, given as “Page x of y”, should appear in the footer.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ELECTRONIC VERSION**

- 51. A machine-readable, electronic version of your dissertation must be submitted via e-mail to [examoffice@apothecaries.org](mailto:examoffice@apothecaries.org), no later than the deadline published in the **Administrative Guidance for Candidates**.
- 52. **File name** – Each dissertation should be presented as a single file. Files names must be created as: Your name DPMSA Dissertation title Date (YYMMDD). For example:

**Bob Smith DPMSA The Meaning of Life 090626.doc**

## SYLLABUS

53. The following topics constitute the syllabus:

- a. Philosophy as a reflective discipline which offers and evaluates arguments in areas, such as ethics, where concepts, methods and criteria of success are contended. Similarities and differences between philosophy and the natural sciences. Health care in relation to philosophy, science and society.
- b. Informal reasoning (*the logic of real arguments*): identifying and evaluating arguments in ordinary discourse; truth and falsehood of statements; validity and invalidity of arguments; clarity and coherence; ambiguity, assumptions, irrelevance and rhetoric; common fallacies. Examples from discussions of issues in health care.
- c. The conditions of knowledge; reason and experience as sources of knowledge; rationalist and empiricist traditions in philosophy. Links with treatments of issues in health care.
- d. Ethics: morals and law; moral feeling and moral thinking; description and evaluation; types of normal ethical theory (eg utilitarianism, deontology and rights-based theories); principles and dilemmas; casuistry; virtue theory.
- e. Some normative ethical theorists in the history of Western philosophy: eg Plato, Aristotle, Kant, the English Utilitarians. Links with some aspects of medical ethics since Hippocrates.
- f. Moral principles in health care ethics: respect for autonomy; non-maleficence (doing no harm); beneficence (doing good); justice, including distributive justice, legal and moral justice. Scope of the principles. Characteristic applications, e.g. of the principle of autonomy to informed consent. Ethical dilemmas arising from conflict between the principles in particular cases. weighing of the principles: judgement. Reasons for and against arguing from principles.
- g. The meaning, sanctity and quality of life. QALYs.
- h. Ethical issues in health care, e.g. at the beginning and end of life, e.g. in abortion, reproductive technology, advance directives, resuscitation, euthanasia, definitions of death, criteria of a good death.
- i. The concept of health. Health care, the individual and society; distributive justice and resource allocation; political philosophy and health care provision; responsibility for health and ill-health; health promotion.
- j. Aspects of the ethics of medical research and of the medical model of health care.

54. The syllabus will be covered by lectures, discussions, some student-led seminars, reading and written work. The professional experience of members of the course will be drawn on throughout.