

Improving global health: the RCP's newest educational

The Diploma in Global Health (DGH) is the newest addition to the RCP's established set of qualifications. It is awarded in collaboration with the international humanitarian organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) who have, since 1971, been treating people who may be caught in complex crises, natural disasters and chronic healthcare emergencies.

We developed this diploma as we believe that the RCP, as an internationally renowned clinical organisation, should have a clear focus on offering opportunities for doctors to demonstrate innovative and evidence-based healthcare.

With over 26% of our members, and 30% of our fellows, based outside of the UK, we hope that the DGH will bring an international focus to our suite of examinations. The RCP wants to allow doctors working in areas of low resource and humanitarian settings to demonstrate their specialist knowledge – under the banner of two prestigious organisations committed to improvements in healthcare across the globe.

The first iteration of the exam is set to take place in July 2025, with over 300 candidates taking the exam from more than 70 countries across the world; showcasing the truly international reach of the DGH exam.

It will assess a candidate's clinical knowledge from a huge variety of areas that includes child health, clinical infectious diseases, global public health, humanitarian medicine, mental health, non-communicable disease and women's health.

Dr Chiara Morrison, medical lead, Global Health and Humanitarian Medicine (MSF) and DGH senior examiner said:

'MSF UK and the Global Health and Humanitarian Medicine team are incredibly proud to have developed this unique qualification, in collaboration with the RCP. Together we have worked hard to create an affordable, accessible and relevant qualification for doctors working in global health. We hope that those gaining the DGH find that it not only adds value to their career but that the knowledge gained ultimately improves the care of patients around the world.'

Tom Baker, RCP interim chief executive:

'The RCP is delighted to establish this new qualification that aims to enhance patient care

and improve the organisation of health services in resource-limited and humanitarian settings. The DGH exam is a testament to the collaborative efforts of MSF UK and the RCP, designed to provide an affordable and accessible qualification that equips doctors with essential knowledge to enhance patient care globally.'

Developing a new diploma

Following the closing of the Diploma in Tropical Medicine in 2023, we were keen to collaborate with a global healthcare partner to develop a new examination that focused on health services in resource-limited and humanitarian settings – in a simplified and more accessible manner than before. MSF was a natural partner for this diploma's development.

Developing the exam was a lengthy and complex process, but with the support of the team from MSF we have produced a fit-for-purpose and up-to-date knowledge-based assessment. It is delivered in a single best answer format that meets the needs of the workforce. A team of specialist doctors and clinical experts from MSF have been working with the RCP since 2024 to establish the processes and plans for the exam, including syllabus generation and question production.

The RCP Assessment Unit has built collaborative relationships with clinical volunteers in 18 countries through our open recruitment. These governance groups oversee question selection, clinical review and examination results sign-off. The exam is managed by the RCP Assessment Unit, in line with our existing governance frameworks with oversight from the RCP educating board, senior clinical examiners and of course our standards / development and psychometrics / analysis teams who specialise in content development, results processing and quality assurance.

Open to all doctors

It is not mandatory for doctors working in global health to have the diploma – however, it is offered to enhance a doctor's personal development and allow them to demonstrate their unique clinical skillset in this hugely important field of medicine. The aim is to enhance the careers of doctors and wherever possible, to improve outcomes for patient care in all areas of medicine across the world.

While the new DGH examination is based on the

MSF Global Health and Humanitarian Medicine course curriculum, it also recognises the expertise of doctors who may choose to study independently. They can undertake the examination when they feel prepared to do so. As a standalone examination the DGH does not have any taught modules.

It is recommended that those taking the exam have at least 3 years post-qualification experience with experience working in global-health and/or humanitarian intervention settings. However, this does not prevent doctors from applying for and taking the exam if they wish to grow their experience and knowledge in this important field.

The DGH is awarded upon successfully passing a 200-question knowledge-based assessment taken over two question papers. We use our online examination delivery platform, which allows candidates to take the exam anywhere in the world with a working internet connection.

Each paper is 3 hours long with a 60-minute break in-between and wherever possible we aim to allow

candidates to sit the exam at an appropriate time in their own country should that not be the UK or similar time-zones. While this requires operational flexibility from the Assessment Unit, we recognise the international importance of this examination and feel it is an essential accommodation that supports an internationally diverse cohort of candidates.

Should anyone be interested in either taking the exam or supporting its development more information can be found on the RCP website or by emailing the team on dgh@rcp.ac.uk.

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