

Diploma in Hospital Infection Control – important changes to the APL and update.

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Summary

The Diploma in Hospital Infection Control (DipHIC) was established by the Hospital Infection Society, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Public Health Laboratory Service (now the Health Protection Agency) in 1997. We outline important changes to the assessment of eligibility for the diploma by accreditation of prior experiential learning (APL), provide web link to examples of reflections and list all those who have been awarded the diploma by the various routes.

Key Words

Hospital Infection, Training, Education

Introduction

The Diploma in Hospital Infection was established in 1997¹. Since that time the regulations have been changed to remove the provision for the Honorary award and to introduce the award by Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning ((APL)². This route, and in fact the Diploma, were a "first" for the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). The award of the Diploma by APL has proved popular and the rigor of the examination process has been remarked upon.

However, it has since become apparent that the criteria used to determine eligibility for the entry to the examination by APL favour those involved in academic medicine and national organisations. There are skilled and competent infection control doctors and other infection control professionals of many years standing who have been excluded from consideration on the basis of these criteria. This is contrary to the intention of the examination committee, who consider it important that a wide spectrum of candidates should have the opportunity to submit themselves' for examination.

The committee has reviewed the system and APL CV submissions are thus now invited based on these new criteria outlined below. The main change is that the examination committee recommended that the final section of the submission should now include a list of ten probable titles covering the breadth of the syllabus², which applicants would wish to work up as reflections to be submitted for examination as their reflective portfolio.

DipHIC by APL assessment of Eligibility

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to enable senior members of the infection control community to demonstrate their eligibility for the Diploma. Persons having established their eligibility will demonstrate their competence by submission of a reflective portfolio to the Board of Examiners in conformity with the regulations

Guidelines for Eligibility

These revised guidelines provide general guidance with relevant examples, the Examination Committee may modify these from time to time as is deemed necessary as determined by change in our knowledge of hospital infection and the institutional structures implemented for its control.

The guidelines are based on criteria related to experience, skill and knowledge. Candidates should submit a CV, which is designed to address the criteria. This should be structured following four sections set out below.

1) Knowledge (Maximum 10 credit points)

Evidence based on qualifications, peer-reviewed publications, and presentations at scientific and clinical meetings mainly devoted to infection control or infection:

- Degree, Diploma or Certificate obtained from a substantive course devoted to infection control or infection e.g. in UK: BSc (Hons) Infection Control, Diploma – 120 credits at level 2
- Overseas qualifications in infection control.
- Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals on infection control and related research
- Teaching and education to professional healthcare workers
- Presentations at national and international level
- Evidence of an existing relevant qualification obtained by examination, dissertation or similar work e.g. MPhil, MSc, PhD, MRCPATH relevant to infection control
- Adviser to a Department of Health
- Regional, national or international organisations, government, select committees e.g. Working Parties related to infection control such as MRSA, Isolation or representation on Committees and Working Groups (e.g. BSI, CEN, ISO)
- Teacher or mentor on the DipHIC or other infection control courses and modules
- Examiner in relevant subject e.g. PhD, MD or equivalent knowledge as judged by the Examination Committee.

Or equivalent knowledge as judged by the Examination Committee e.g. development of a Distance Learning Programme, self-directed learning modules.

2) Skill (Maximum 5 credit points)

- Professional involvement in Hospital infection control in the laboratory and/or on the ward
- Systematic review experience in infection control related subjects
- Active membership of a Society or Association whose activities substantially include or are primarily in the field of infection control or infection (e.g. HIS, ICNA, CSC)
- A membership of local working parties devoted to infection control including for example a Hospital, Trust or Community Infection Control Committee
- Responsibility for the formulation and implementation of infection control policies.

3) Posts held and Experience (Maximum 5 credit points)

Practical experience in the field of infection control as:

- a full-time or part-time appointment as a Control of Infection Officer for 5 years at Consultant level
- a full-time or part-time appointment as a Control of Infection Nurse for 5 years at minimum of Diploma level

- a full-time or part-time appointment as a Consultant in Communicable Disease or Consultant Nurse equivalent
- and equivalent experience as judged by the Examination Committee e.g. experience in infectious diseases, genito-urinary medicine, HIV clinical units, national surveillance scheme activities, major outbreak co-ordinator, Communicable Disease Consultant or Nurse
- Lead involvement in national surveillance scheme activities eg: Infection Control Surveillance Co-ordinator; Major Outbreak Co-ordinator.
- **4) Personal factors (Maximum 5 credit points)**

Favourable consideration will be given to those who list ten reflection subjects that cover the breadth of the syllabus as outlined in the *J Hosp Infect* 2001; 48: 146-151 (also available as a pdf at <http://www.his.org.uk/db/documents/diploma2001.pdf> (link checked 9th May, 2005).

- Other contributory factors which the Examination Committee or its assessors decide are relevant

A minimum of 16 credit points would normally be sufficient for the individual's name to be invited to submit a reflective portfolio. The final decision is left to the Examination Committee who may take account of other relevant activities. Candidates are now allowed to seek advice from a DipHIC mentor when preparing reflections for the APL.

Examples of reflections can be found at:

<http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/prospectus/short/shic.html> (link checked 9th May 2005).

The London School offers an MSc in Infectious Diseases as part of the distance learning programme. A study unit in Hospital Infection is available as part of this programme and taken separately. Candidates may wish to take this unit before embarking on the Diploma to ensure that their knowledge base is fully developed. Information on the programme can be found on:

<http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/postgraduate/lshtm/id/syllabus.shtml#id205> ((link checked 9th May 2005).

Awards of the Diploma in Hospital Infection Control (to May 2005)

Award of an Honorary DipHIC

The following made major contributions to the establishment of the DipHIC and had their CVs evaluated against the above criteria by Professors Graham Ayliffe and David Speller, Dr Mary Cook and Sir Joseph Smith. These evaluators were subsequently also awarded Honorary DipHICs by the Board of Management of the LSHTM.

Professor Barry Cookson

Professor Bohumil Drasar

Professor Michael Emmerson

Dr Adam Fraise

Dr. Helen Glenister

Mr. Peter Hoffman

Dr. Elizabeth Jenner

Dr. Geoffrey Ridgway

Professor Colin Roberts

Professor Tom Rogers

Dr. Richard Slack

Dr. Robert Spencer

Award of the DipHIC by examination:

Dr.	Susan J.	Dawson	2000
Dr.	Fatima	El-Bakri	2003
Dr.	Dina M.T.	El-Zimaity	2003
Dr.	Satoshi	Hori	2001
Dr.	Silke	Schelenz	2003
Dr.	Nandini	Shetty	1999

There are currently 43 candidates (March 2005) studying for the examination. Almost all applicants are medical microbiologists or clinical scientists, although some nurses are also applying. We estimate that it will take between two and five years to write the portfolio, the project and pass the examination. Several others have notified the Course Committee that they are not able to take the examination within six years and may be re-applying in the future when they have been able to complete their reflections and project. They will not be charged another entrance fee. Applications for the DipHIC have increased in the last few months. Discussions at our annual Foundation Course would also suggest that the qualification is being looked upon as a necessity to demonstrate competency in infection control.

Award of the DipHIC by APL:

Dr.	Michael A.	Borg	2004
Dr.	John E.	Coia	2003
Dr.	Richard P.D.	Cooke	2002
Dr.	William L.	Dibb	2003
Dr.	Kamal Mustafa	Elhag	2003
Prof.	Gary	French	2005
Dr.	Alan	Gibb	2005
Dr.	Richard Edward	Holliman	2003

Prof. Hilary	Humphreys	2003
Dr. Gamini	Kumarasinghe	2002
Dr. Ann	Lewis	2005
Mr. Craig Alan	MacIntosh	2004
Dr. Peter Bo	Nielsen	2004
Dr. Marie Gabrielle Anne	Phillips	2002
Dr. Judith	Richards	2003
Dr. Erica Louise	Teare	2002

There are nine others who are at various stages of preparing, submitting or having their portfolios examined.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all who have contributed so much to the establishment of this diploma. These include the members of the original advisory and the course and examination DipHIC committees, examiners, mentor, course lecturers and others who have continued to make us aware of infection control distance learning developments. We also would like to thank those candidates who gave permission for their anonymised reflections to be made available to others on the www.

Applicants for the DipHIC by APL should submit their CV to:

Diploma & Short Course Secretary

ITD Teaching Office

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Keppel Street

London WC1E 7HT

tel. 020 7636 8636 ext. 2175 or 020 7927 2175 (direct)

fax. 020 7636 8739

e-mail: margit.wimmer@lshtm.ac.uk

It should be accompanied by a cheque for £50 made payable to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

This article is also available on the www at <http://www.his.org.uk>

References

1. Emmerson AM, Spencer RC, Cookson BD, Roberts C, Drasar BS. Diploma in hospital infection control (DipHIC). *J Hosp Infect* 1997; 37:175-180.
2. Cookson BD, Jenner EA, Roberts C, Drasar B, Ridgway G. Diploma in Hospital Infection Control: a progress report. *J Hosp Infect* 2001; 48: 146-151.