

## THE PART II PROCESS

After successful completion of Part I training and the award of the Diploma [DipIPEM(S)], the trainee generally commences a programme of supervised practice extending over a minimum of 2 years while employed as an advanced trainee. No maximum is defined. At the end of this training, the advanced trainee would be expected to be able to apply for both the Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS) Certificate of Attainment and for Corporate Membership of the Institute (MIPEM).

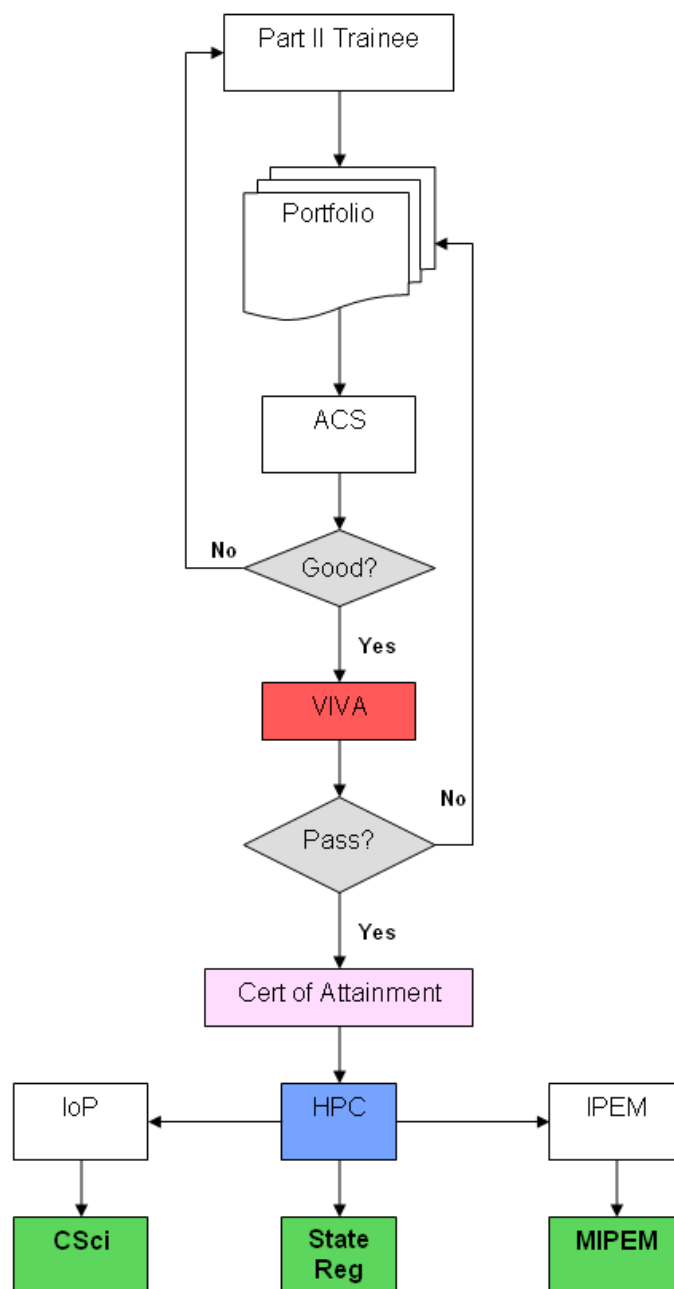
Registration is within the overall regulation of the Health Professions' Council (HPC) and the HPC has delegated to the ACS the determination of competencies to be acquired during this training and their assessment. Assessment for the Certificate of Attainment is within the control of the ACS using competent assessors from the IPEM. The award by the ACS of its Certificate of Attainment allows the advanced trainee to seek State Registration through the HPC as a Clinical Scientist (protected title). This award of the Certificate of Attainment would also normally allow the advanced trainee to fulfil the requirements for Corporate Membership of the Institute.

An overview of this process is given in the flowchart below.

### Notes from the trenches

1. Keep detailed notes of all the work you did during your Part II training. This makes it easier when it comes to writing up the portfolio. Most candidates do not start to compile their portfolio until probably a few months before submission and it is difficult to remember those very first projects you did more than a year previously.
2. Even better, write-up projects as you go along. By doing this, you will in effect be writing your portfolio. Remember, the Part II portfolio is a collection of excerpts of work you have done yourself or been involved in. So, having written your projects already, it is simply a matter of extracting the pages you wish to include as "evidence".
3. It is compulsory to adhere to the **80 page** limit imposed by the ACS. This may seem like a lot but bear in mind that by the time you include your CV, certificates, confirmation of employment, job description, organisational chart, covering report and competency document, you could already have used about 25 pages. So, in effect you have 55 pages to impress the examiners with your work.
4. The ACS Application Form **must** be filled out completely and correctly. They are very exacting in their assessment of the form itself. So, if you have gained experience in more than one centre, you need the signatures of all of your previous training supervisors.
5. Make sure your CV is chronologically precise. Leave no doubt that you have indeed completed 2 years of Part II training.

6. There are a lot of competencies to cover (43 to be exact) and while there is some overlap where several competencies could be reasonably covered by a single piece of work, try not to be overly repetitive by mentioning the same project too many times.
7. Do not underestimate the Management competencies – Clinical Governance and CPD are important, as is safe practice.
8. The ACS is very detailed about what they find acceptable in the portfolio. Read their guidance document and do NOT do anything they specifically forbid. For example, resist the temptation to insert images of two certificates on the same page. Page count may become an issue as you near the end of compiling your portfolio, but resist the temptation to “cram” as much in as possible by reducing font size, image size etc...



**Figure 1: The Path to State Registration (for those who completed Part I)**

9. While the ACS or rather the IPEM expect you to have a broad range of experience, you are of course limited by what experience your training centre had to offer. For example, not every centre offers brachytherapy or IMRT or have implemented IGRT. So, even if you cannot include your own work in a particular field, be aware of that gap and be able to talk about the topic if asked.

## The VIVA Itself

1. Once you hear back from the ACS that your Portfolio was acceptable, you will be given a date for your Part II Viva. It will be held either in London or York and you will be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the date.
2. You do not know who the two IPEM examiners are going to be until the day of the Viva itself. Don't be alarmed by this but you can be sure it won't be one of your previous supervisors or current colleagues! The ACS give very detailed instructions on how to get to their premises (in London) but it is still easy to overlook. So give yourself plenty of time to arrive and calm yourself.
3. So, after you've drank lots of water, used the bathroom and paced up and down the waiting room for at least half an hour, one of your examiners comes to greet you and escort you to the examination room.
4. Treat it like an interview, shake hands, smile and establish eye contact. Most examiners will try their best to put you at ease and help you relax. There will be water available if you need to drink even if it is just to give you a few seconds to ponder over a question.
5. ***Now for the interesting part. The questions should be based on the contents of your portfolio and you can refer to your own copy if you take one along. You could be asked about anything in your portfolio and the questions might be framed along the lines of how you did it, why did you do it that way, any better way to do it etc...***
6. Some questions will be simple; others will make you pause to think. But rest assured, the questions will be based on the work YOU have done. The examiners will probably have sticky notes placed in your portfolio to guide them to the pages their questions refer to.
7. Remember, the examiners are trying to gauge whether you have understood the work you did and whether you are a "safe pair of hands". They also need to establish whether you know your limitations. So expect a question along the lines of: *"You're the only physicist on duty and a linac output is out by 5%. There are patients waiting, including emergency cases. What do you do?"*
8. The questions go on for an hour, sometimes it might be longer. At the end of it you will feel utter relief regardless of how you think you performed. The official line is that you will be notified of the result within 2 weeks but in practice you will receive an email within a few days from the ACS saying that you have passed. Congratulations.