

STUDY GUIDE

DIPLOMA OF THE ROYAL MICROSCOPICAL SOCIETY

An introduction to the Diploma of the Royal Microscopical Society.



Administered by the Education and Outreach Committee of the Royal Microscopical Society on behalf of the Trustees of the Society.

Correspondence on all matters relating to the Diploma should be addressed to –

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I INTRODUCTION

I.1 HISTORY

The Royal Microscopical Society was founded in 1839 as the Microscopical Society of London. In 1866 it was granted its Royal Charter and became the Royal Microscopical Society. Since then it has been at the forefront of microscopy, and it draws members from all over the world. It is the only truly international society for individuals.

The Society has charitable objectives which are –

to promote the advancement of microscopical science by such means as the discussion and publication of research into improvements in the construction and mode of application of microscopes and into those branches of science where microscopy is important.

Within this is the commitment to encourage members to improve and develop their skills. Qualifications play an important part in this.

I.2 OVERVIEW OF THE DIPLOMA

The Diploma from the Royal Microscopical Society is attained via a flexible portfolio-based course of study. You will design this course of study with the assistance of your line-manager, and with input from existing Fellows of the Society. As a result, it will be a challenging and rewarding experience, and at the same time it should fit with, and complement, your existing employment.

All applicants must be employed in a role where microscopy is a significant component. In addition, they should have a degree AND/OR a minimum of 3 years of experience in that or a similar role.

The candidate should currently undertake microscopy as a significant component of their work and use the project to enhance their understanding of microscopy by developing or optimising protocols or applications.

During your course of study you will attend one of the Society's renowned courses where you will be instructed by eminent microscopists in your field, and have valuable hands-on and group time to address your weaknesses and to build on your strengths. If you are resident outside of the European Union you may be able attend a non-RMS course, providing that the RMS is satisfied that it meets your requirements.

Your final portfolio will demonstrate a range of skills and capabilities; not just technical, but also your ability to communicate these to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

At the end of your study – which most candidates will complete within two years you will have improved your existing skills - and should have acquired new ones - that will be of great benefit to your career and your employer for many years to come.

2 STUDY FOR A DIPLOMA

Studying for a Diploma is open to all members of the Society who meet the qualifying criteria. The award is made to those members who are professionally active in microscopy and who have used *the project to enhance their understanding of microscopy by developing or optimising protocols or applications*.

The Society is currently pursuing a path to become licensed by the Science Council to award Chartered Scientist. When this is in place, a Diploma should provide a pathway to Chartered Scientist. Other pathways to Chartered status include a Masters (or higher) qualification in microscopy coupled with significant experience within the field.

Undertaking a Diploma is a clear demonstration of your commitment to improving your skills and to promoting awareness of microscopy to a wider audience. And, it is a clear statement of your commitment to continuing professional development. During your study, you will have the support of the Society plus access to the experience of the Society's Fellowship. Your period of study should be demanding and challenging and, at the same time, it should be enjoyable and fulfilling.

One of the attractive features of the programme of study is that it is designed by you to fit in with your current employment. However, should you need assistance in the design, then members of the Society will be on-hand to help you.

Once your study programme has been agreed, you will continue to have the support of the Society – via a designated mentor – and from your local supervisor. Further support can be obtained through attending meetings of the Society, and by becoming more actively involved with it.

The sections that follow will guide you through the registration process, and they should provide a clear indication of what is expected of you if you are to be awarded a Diploma of the Royal Microscopical Society.

2.1 STEP 1: PRE-REGISTRATION

Once you have read this document, the first step to a Diploma is to complete the Study Proposal Form (SPF). In this, you provide personal details and a description of your proposed study. The form should then be submitted with your registration fee which can be found on the Society's website.

Your proposal will be considered by members of the Society's Education and Outreach Committee and they may seek input from other Fellows of the Society. They will take one of three decisions –

- To accept your proposal
- To accept your proposal subject to their suggested amendments
- To reject your proposal and to return your registration fee

The Committee's decision is final and it is under no obligation to enter in to correspondence with the candidate.

2.2 STEP 2: REGISTRATION

When your proposal is accepted you will be informed in writing. You will be enrolled, and you will be sent confirmation of registration, your portfolio binder with templates, and –

- Enrolment details
- Confirmation of a reserved place on an RMS course. This reservation is valid until three months prior to the start of the course, by which time full payment should have been received by the Society. RMS courses are popular, so failure to make full payment by this date may result in you losing your place on the course. This could delay your studies by a year
- Contact details of your mentor
- Login details for the Diploma area of the website

2.3 STEP 3: STUDY PERIOD

A Diploma can be completed within two years. However, the Society understands that the demands of employment can change, so it may be that you need a little longer. You are responsible for your work and you have up to four years from the date of enrolment to submit your portfolio.

At six-monthly intervals during the period of study, you will submit brief progress reports that include input from your local supervisor.

During the study period you will –

- produce a project report (min 8,000 words) that demonstrates that you have used the project to enhance your understanding of microscopy by developing or optimising protocols or applications. The report should be in the style of a research article with sections titled Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, and Discussion. References will be in addition to the word count.
- attend one of the Society's courses and provide a report (min 500 words) on that course, and obtain feedback from the course leader regarding your competence. If you reside outside of the European Union and choose to attend a non-RMS course, you may be asked to provide an extended report.
- attend one or more of the Society's meetings during the period of study and provide a brief report (min 500 words) on the meeting(s). For candidates from outside the European Union, the Society's biennial MICROSCIENCE Conference and Exhibition is recommended.
- produce at least one of the following –
 - a broad-appeal article (min 2000 words) for *infocus* magazine that describes the project and its results to a wide audience. This will be published at the discretion of the Editor
 - evidence of presenting work to peers – including feedback from peers. This may be at an internal meeting, but presenting to an external audience is encouraged
 - evidence of outreach activity to promote understanding of the field of study

The study period should not exceed four years. However, the Society understands that your situation may change during the course of study and it will consider requests for an extension and provide a written response. If you wish to appeal the Committee's decision, you can do so. This appeal will be made to the Executive Committee of the governing Council of the Society. Its decision will be final and it is under no obligation to enter in to correspondence.

2.4 STEP 4: SUBMISSION

Each item within the portfolio, along with progress reports, can be submitted on-line during the study period. When your study is complete you will submit a hardcopy of your portfolio in the binder provided. The hardcopy will be retained in the Society's library.

Your final submission will be considered by members of the Education and Outreach Committee, and they may seek input from other Fellows of the Society. They may also choose to meet with you at a time convenient to both parties.

The Committee will make one of four decisions –

- Accept
- Accept subject to minor revisions
- Resubmit with major corrections
- Reject and fail

2.5 STEP 5: DECISION

The Committee will produce a brief report, citing the reasons for its decision. This report will be shared with you. In the case of acceptance, positive extracts from this report will be used in articles and news items relating to the award and the qualification.

Right to appeal

You have the right to appeal against the decision of the Committee. This appeal will be made to the Executive Committee of the governing Council of the Society. Its decision will be final and it is under no obligation to enter in to correspondence.

2.6 STEP 6: AWARD

If your study is accepted you will be informed in writing immediately and you will have the right to display the post nominal DipRMS.

The formal award will be made at the first Annual General Meeting of the Society after your award date.

2.7 FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require further information on the Diploma you can contact the Society via its website – www.rms.org.uk.