Your Guide to the MRCS International Examinations

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH

FROM HERE, HEALTH
Your Guide to the MRCS

INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
The Membership Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain, or MRCS, is designed especially for surgical trainees.

The MRCS examination is Intercollegiate, meaning that it is common to all Colleges. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh offers the examination at a variety of locations.

From January 2011, the examination is made up of two parts, A and B.

PART A
Part A of the MRCS is a written examination, divided into two papers, each of two hours’ duration. Both papers are taken on the same day and examine generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, using multiple-choice Single Best Answer and Extended Matching Items. The marks for both papers are combined to give a total mark for Part A, but as a candidate you are expected to demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge in each of the two papers in addition to achieving the set pass mark for the combined papers.

PART B
The Part B (Oral, Clinical and Communications Skills) exam (which is held overseas only), consists of an oral component, clinical component and communication skills component.

The oral component is a knowledge-based part comprising three individual question and answer sessions, each lasting 20 minutes, covering:

- Applied surgical anatomy and operative surgery
- Applied physiology and critical care
- Applied surgical pathology and principles of general surgery

The clinical short cases will be organised into four 15 minute bays. The bays will require candidates to be able to diagnose, elicit physical signs from and be familiar with the treatment of patients with conditions in the following areas: trauma and orthopaedics, vascular, endocrine, breast, skin, head and neck, and trunk and groin.
Communication Skills will be assessed in two bays. One bay will assess the giving of information and one will assess taking and presenting a history. The total assessment time will be 25 minutes. Candidates will be required to demonstrate the ability to provide information to, and receive information from, patients, their relatives and other healthcare professionals.

The Intercollegiate MRCS Part B (OCC) examination will cease to be offered after 31 January 2016.

The Intercollegiate MRCS Part B Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) Examination is being introduced internationally to replace the Intercollegiate MRCS Part B (OCC).

The Intercollegiate MRCS Part B OSCE integrates basic surgical scientific knowledge and its application to clinical surgery. Its purpose is to build on the test of knowledge in Part A and assess how you are able to integrate knowledge and apply it in clinically appropriate contexts. This is done through a series of stations reflecting elements of day-to-day clinical practice.

It is worth giving some thought to which College you wish to become a member of, as this will be determined by the College with which you sit Part B Exam. We hope that you will consider The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for your examinations and membership throughout your surgical career.
Where can I sit the MRCS?

The MRCS Part A is held in January, April and September of each year. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh currently offers the examination in 25 centres worldwide.

The MRCS Part B is held a number of times throughout the year, at a selection of venues. Please refer to the Examinations Calendar on our website for all current centres and dates for examinations.

www.rcsed.ac.uk

When should I sit the MRCS?

To be eligible to sit the MRCS, you must have completed an undergraduate medical degree from an institution acceptable to the College. Prospective candidates who wish to check the acceptability of their medical degrees should see the International Medical Education Diary (IMED) at www.avicenna.ku.dk/database/medicine
Part A
- Egypt (Cairo)
- Ghana (Accra)
- India (Chennai, Hyderabad, Kerala & Mumbai)
- Iraq (Erbil)
- Jamaica
- Kuwait
- Malawi
- Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur & Kuching)

Part B
- India (various locations)
- Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur & Kuching)
- Myanmar
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka (Colombo)
- Sudan (Khartoum)

* These centres may be subject to change; please check the website for exact exam locations at time of booking.
How can I best prepare for the MRCS?

You can access the syllabus, sample questions and guidance notes for both parts of the examination via the examinations section of the website at www.rcsed.ac.uk

How do I apply for the MRCS?

Visit the examinations section of the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk to choose the relevant examination, location and date. Both parts of the examination can be applied for online including payment of fees.

What documents will I need in order to complete an application?

If you are a first time candidate for Part A, you will need a certified copy of your basic medical degree certificate; two passport sized photographs for your ID/admittance card; payment (via credit/debit card or bank draft); and a signed declaration page to confirm you have read and understand the Regulations for the examination. If you are a re-sit candidate, you will not need to resubmit the documents above and can simply pay the fee online.

If you are a first-time candidate for Part B, you will need all the above documents as for first time Part A, along with certified confirmation of your pass at Part A if passed with another College.
How do I know when and where to attend my examination?

You will be emailed a candidate notice around four weeks prior to your examination date, detailing exactly when and where your examination will be held, and what documents you will need to bring with you.

What time should I arrive?

Please aim to arrive at the time indicated on your candidate notice for registration. If you arrive too early you will be asked to return at a later time.

Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a member of staff who will register you and ask you to take a seat in a waiting area. For Part A, once all the candidates have arrived you will be shown into the examination hall and asked to take a seat at the desk which shows a corresponding candidate number to your examination notice.

When undertaking Part B, a member of the College’s examinations team will call your candidate number when it is time for you to take your examination and ask you to line up with the other candidates sitting in the same circuit as you. You will then be led to your station and the examination will start.

Is there a dress code?

For Part A, you should attend in comfortable clothes as you will be writing your examination papers for at least four hours.

For Part B the dress code requirements are as follows:

- Arms to be bare below the elbows
- No jewellery on hands or wrists with the exception of wedding rings/bands
- No tie
As an example, acceptable dress for men would be a conventional short-sleeved shirt, open at the neck, or for a long sleeved shirt to have the sleeves rolled up throughout the exam. It is important to note that T-shirts or polo shirts are not considered acceptable dress.

**Is there a break during the exam?**

For Part A examinations there is a break between the two papers.

For the Part B (OCC) you will be required to attend either a morning or afternoon session for the Oral Component of the examination. If successful, you will be given a date and time to attend your Clinical and Communications Skills components (usually within the same week). For the Part B (OSCE) however you will only be required to attend a single morning or afternoon session.

**Can I bring food and drink into the examination room?**

No, however the examinations staff will have water available for you.

**I have a disability, will this affect my examination?**

Not at all, you will simply be required to declare any special requirements at the time of application to ensure that all staff are fully aware and suitable preparations can be made.

**Do I need to bring any equipment?**

No, all equipment required will be provided at each station.
When and how will I get my results?

For Part A, results are generally released around a month after the examination. You will be informed of the date on the day of your examination. The results are announced on the College website at 12 noon, and a copy of your result letter will be emailed to you by 5pm. A hard copy of this letter will also be posted out to you.

For Part B (OCC) results for each component are usually available on the same day. The results for the Part B (OSCE) are not released on the same day but are published on the College website at a later date that will be confirmed to you at the exam. A hard copy result letter will also be posted to you in due course.

What happens if I fail?

There is a maximum of 6 attempts permitted for the Part A, so if you fail, you can apply to re-sit at the next available diet of your choice. An application as a re-sit candidate can be done online very simply, with no submission of paperwork required.

There is a maximum of six attempts across all components of Part B (OCC) or four attempts at the Part B (OSCE). Candidates may now move between the different formats but their attempt limit in that situation is limited to a maximum of four.

I've passed both parts of the MRCS, what next?

Once you have successfully passed the MRCS with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, you will be sent documentation informing you of the next steps to becoming a Member of the College. You will need to return election papers and your election fee which will allow your name to go forward in the historical ‘ballot’ for election to the College at the next Council meeting.
With positive experiences and knowledge of its working humble mission to provide surgical training and education of the highest standard both nationally and internationally, I am a strong advocate of the RCSEd. My interactions with the College have provided exposure to vital courses (BSS, CCrISP), allowed achievement of my membership diploma and a postgraduate degree. I hope my links to the RCSEd, which started as a medical student, continue in the present as an elected member and in the future course of my surgical career.

Adarsh Babber MRCSEd, Specialty Registrar in General Surgery
Will I get to attend a diploma ceremony?

Once the Council approves you as a new Member of the College, you will receive further communication and be invited to attend a Diploma Ceremony. Diploma Ceremonies are one of the most popular events in the College calendar and are held in Edinburgh at various times throughout the year. New Fellows and Members travel from all over the world to attend and have their Diploma presented to them by the College President. If you are not able to attend, we will post your diploma to you by international recorded mail.

Why should I sit the MRCS and affiliate with the Edinburgh College?

Individual attention – We understand that the examination is a very important event for you, and our staff will do everything possible before and on the day to make you feel welcome and comfortable.

History – The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is the oldest surgical institution in the world. When you become a Member of the College you join an illustrious membership which has included some of the greatest surgeons and medical innovators in history.

Representation – The College works tirelessly to represent its Fellows and Members and their interests in the UK and worldwide.

Benefits – As a Member of the College you will receive access to an increasing number of membership benefits from discounts at several major medical publishers, travel discounts such as 10% off British Airways flights, to receipt of regular College publications like Surgeon’s News Global.
The International School of Surgery

The Royal College of Surgeons Of Edinburgh has represented the surgical workforce for over 500 years. In that time we have grown from our foundation to become a modern, international network with some 19,000 Fellows, Members and Affiliates based in almost 100 countries worldwide. We are proud of being a truly global College and have long been dedicated to providing opportunities, support and resources to our international membership.

Our International School of Surgery (ISS) brings together the College’s wide range of international activities, events, courses and exams. It works to develop and deliver new international opportunities for the College’s Fellows and Members and support them through a combination of online and locally-delivered support, engaging our Internal Surgical Advisor network.

For further information visit www.rcsed.ac.uk/iss

For more information about the MRCS, please contact:

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Edinburgh EH8 9DS

Phone: 0131 527 1600
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And visit the MRCS Examination Regulations at www.rcsed.ac.uk

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