

MEMBERSHIP OF ONE OF THE SURGICAL ROYAL COLLEGES

NOTES TO CANDIDATES: "FOUR ATTEMPT" RULE

March 2009

1. MRCS Regulation 4.1 (September 2008, dated July 2008) permits candidates a maximum of *four attempts* in which to pass the Part B (OSCE) and states that failure to pass the Part B (OSCE) within this number of attempts debars a candidate from applying for any component/ part of the MRCS examination.
2. The "Announcement to DO-HNS Candidates" (July 2008 amended December 2008) states that holders of the Intercollegiate DO-HNS who seek Membership of a College using the DO-HNS plus Part 1 and Part 2 of the MRCS or plus Part A of the MRCS may do so providing they have not had more than four attempts at passing the Intercollegiate DO-HNS Part 2 (OSCE) or the MRCS Part B (OSCE), or any combination of both of these OSCEs. Candidates who have had a total of four attempts at these OSCEs will not be permitted to apply for any component of the MRCS. The number of attempts cannot be increased.
3. An "attempt" is defined as an occasion when a candidate commences, but not necessarily completes, an OSCE examination circuit.
4. With this definition, a candidate may withdraw from an examination prior to the examination date, or fail to appear for an examination without this being classified as an attempt. A candidate who commences an OSCE circuit but decides to withdraw from the examination before the circuit is completed is classified as having attempted the examination.
5. Given the above definition of an attempt, a candidate may withdraw from the examination at any stage prior to the OSCE commencing. The candidate is therefore well placed to make any decision to withdraw based on health, family circumstances, opportunity to study, travel difficulties, and other reason up to the moment when the examination commences. Under these terms the four-attempt rule will be considered absolute in accordance with MRCS Regulation 4.2 (September 2008, dated July 2008) which states that the number of attempts for completion of the Part B (OSCE) cannot be increased.
6. There may be the very isolated occurrence when a candidate becomes unwell during the course of an OSCE circuit, or lodges a complaint against the conduct of the examination.
7. Should a candidate become ill during an OSCE, there should be appropriate medical expertise within the examination or shortly after the examination to decide whether the illness is valid. Under these circumstances certification by an examiner or by another doctor will be taken into account when considering any request for an extension to the four attempt rule.
8. Should the candidate's complaint against the conduct of the examination be upheld, then the candidate may be given an additional attempt.
9. If, for any reason, an OSCE examination is cancelled after commencement of the OSCE circuit, this will not be counted as an "attempt."
10. Should a candidate withdraw, transfer or not appear for any OSCE examination, any consideration of refund of all or part fees will be carried out in accordance with current practice.