

## **ANNOUNCEMENT TO CANDIDATES: June 2008**

### **Intercollegiate Membership Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain**

**(From September 2008)**

With effect from the first examination in September 2008 the format of the MRCS examination has been revised for trainees following the new pattern of surgical training introduced in the United Kingdom from August 2007.

All **NEW** candidates for the MRCS must take this revised format of the MRCS examination that has been approved by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB). With effect from September 2008 the MRCS examination will have two parts: Part A (written paper) and Part B (OSCE).

All existing candidates for the MRCS who have *not yet passed* the Part B structured interview component of the MRCS (September 2007 to August 2008 Regulations) will be required to transfer to the Part B (OSCE) to complete the examination.

PMETB has agreed, exceptionally, that any candidate who has **PASSED** any component of Part B of the MRCS (September 2007 to August 2008 Regulations) i.e. structured interview, clinical and communication skills, may continue with this format of the MRCS until and including the diet commencing in March 2009 (clinical and communication skills). Thereafter all such candidates who have not completed the MRCS **MUST** transfer to the MRCS (September 2008 Regulations dated July 2008) and take the Part B (OSCE) to complete the examination.

The Part A test of knowledge will continue as a machine-marked written examination using multiple-choice Single Best Answer and Extended Matching Items. It is a four hour examination consisting of two papers, each of two hours' duration, taken on the same day. The marks for both papers are combined to give a total mark for Part A. To achieve a pass the candidate will be required to demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge in each of the two papers in addition to achieving or exceeding the pass mark set for the combined total mark for Part A. The papers cover generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, including the core knowledge required in all nine specialties as follows:

- Paper 1. Applied Basic Science
- Paper 2. Principles of Surgery-in-General.

Any candidate who has passed Part A of the MRCS (September 2007 to August 2008 Regulations) will have a full exemption from Part A of the MRCS (September 2008 Regulations dated July 2008).

Any candidate who has passed Part 1 and Part 2 of the Intercollegiate MRCS (June 2006 Regulations revised June 2008) and who remains within the time specified for completion of Part 3 will have a full exemption from Part A of the MRCS (September 2008 Regulations dated July 2008).

The Part B (OSCE) will normally comprise 16 examined stations and four rest or preparation stations, each of 9 minutes. The total examining time will be 2 hours 24 minutes, which is similar to the combined examining time for the current structured interview, clinical and communication skills components of the MRCS. Twelve of the 16 stations will be 'manned' and four of the stations will be 'unmanned'.

The 16 examined stations will be grouped into five broad content areas as follows:

- Anatomy and surgical pathology (3 stations)
- Surgical skills and patient safety (2 stations)
- Communication skills (3 stations)
- Applied surgical science and critical care (3 stations)
- Clinical skills in history taking and physical examination (5 stations).

The MRCS examination is designed for candidates in the generality part of their specialty training. However, to meet the emerging intentions of trainees with regard to future career progression, and to accommodate different patterns of specialty training, four of the 16 examined stations will be presented within a specialty context. The specialty contexts are:

- head and neck;
- trunk and thorax;
- limbs (including spine);
- neurosciences.

Candidates will be asked to specify their choice of specialty context stations at the time of their application to the examination.

Part B (OSCE) of the MRCS from September 2008 is significantly different from the MRCS Part B (structured interview, clinical and communication skills). Consequently there will be no exemptions from any aspect of the Part B (OSCE) for any candidate who has passed any component of the Part B (structured interview, clinical and communication skills).

Regulations and application forms for the MRCS (September 2008 Regulations dated July 2008) will be published on this website during July 2008. Candidate guidance notes will also be published on this website.

The Intercollegiate MRCS Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and Ireland (June 2006 Regulations revised June 2008) will continue to be offered in its current format in the UK to existing candidates only, until October/November 2010 (see <http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/old>). However, it will continue to be offered to existing and new candidates in centres outside the UK until further notice.