

CANDIDATE GUIDANCE NOTES

MRCS PART A (MCQ)

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MRCS PART A (MCQ) EXAMINATION

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1. General information - Intercollegiate MRCS

Part A is a five-hour MCQ examination consisting of a three hour paper (Applied Basic Science) followed by a two hour paper (Principles of Surgery in General), taken on the same day.

The marks for both papers are combined to give a total mark for Part A.

The papers administered by any of the colleges at any particular sitting are identical and are held almost simultaneously. The papers cover generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, including the core knowledge required in all nine specialties as follows:

Paper 1. Applied Basic Sciences

Paper 2. Principles of Surgery in General.

To achieve a pass in Part A the candidate will be required to demonstrate a minimum level of competence in each of the two papers in addition to achieving or exceeding the pass mark set for the combined total mark for Part A.

Candidates may attempt to pass Part A of the MRCS examination six times.

2. Examination Procedure

Candidates are required to obey the instructions of the senior invigilator. It is the duty of the senior invigilator to prevent any behaviour likely to cause disturbance to other candidates. Both entry to and exit from an Examination shall be at the absolute discretion of the senior invigilator.

Candidates who are late by no more than 30 minutes for an Examination may be allowed entry to the Examination at the discretion of the senior invigilator but will not be given extra time to compensate for their late arrival.

Candidates may not leave in the first 90 minutes of the Applied Basic Sciences paper or the first 60 minutes of the Principles of Surgery in General paper. Candidates may not leave for the last 15 minutes of the Examination and then until their answer sheet and question booklet has been collected from their desk. Candidates leaving the Examination Hall within the allotted time period should leave quietly without causing disturbance to other candidates.

Candidates should assemble outside the Examination Hall as instructed on the letter sent from the relevant Examinations Department before the start of the Examination and should not enter until instructed to do so by the senior invigilator. Coats, bags or any books and papers brought into the Examination Hall should be deposited away from the

candidate's desk as directed by the senior invigilator. All stationery required for the Examination will be provided.

ALL MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC/COMMUNICATION DEVICES BROUGHT INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL MUST BE SWITCHED OFF. ELECTRONIC/COMMUNICATION DEVICES ARE NOT PERMITTED EITHER ON YOUR PERSON OR AT YOUR DESK DURING THE EXAMINATION

Any candidate found to have a mobile phone or electronic/communications device on their person in the Examination may be suspended from the Examination, and will have his or her results withheld pending investigation.

Each desk in the Examination Hall will be numbered and candidates must sit at the desk that corresponds to their examination/candidate number. Please ensure that the coloured flash on the Question booklet and Answer sheet is the same (e.g. answers corresponding to a Purple Question booklet should be marked on a Purple Answer sheet).

3. Admittance to the examination

You must bring proof of identity to each examination. Proof of identity must be an official document, such as a current passport or driving licence that includes your name, signature and a photograph.

Once seated, candidates should leave their identification and anything else required by the relevant examinations department/ section on the desk ready for inspection.

For the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting any examination will be required to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of, the candidate's face. The Colleges will observe sensitivity and, in specific circumstances, privacy in the visual identification of candidates.

4. Guidance

Candidates should write their examination/candidate number on the Question booklet provided and on the Answer sheet using the pencil provided.

Candidates shall not give or receive any assistance or communicate by any means with one another or any person, other than the invigilator(s), at any time during the Examination period. Any candidate acting in breach of this Regulation or misbehaving in any other way that may disrupt the Examination may, at the discretion of the senior invigilator, be suspended from the Examination, or have their results withheld pending investigation.

Candidates may not begin reading the paper (apart from the instructions on the front of the Question booklet), or marking answers on the Answer sheet before the senior invigilator announces the start of the Examination period.

Candidates must stop writing when the senior invigilator announces the end of the Examination. If they fail to do so they will be disqualified. All answers must be transferred to the Answer sheet before the end of the Examination.

Extra time will not be allowed for the transfer of answers. No part of a Question booklet shall be torn out or removed from the Examination Hall.

Any candidate who wishes to leave the Examination Hall to go to the toilet must ask the permission of an invigilator who will escort them. Candidates should be aware that they may finish well within the time allowed. For security reasons if a candidate stays until the end of the Examination they will be unable to leave the Examination all until ALL the Question booklets and Answer sheets have been collected.

Candidates who have any questions or comments on the content of the Examination should report these to the invigilator or record those on the Feedback Questionnaires provided. All such comments will be noted and considered at the adjudication stage. No clarification will be given by the invigilator.

Refreshments are not always available at a centre. Candidates may bring a small plastic bottle or carton of drink with them to the Examination.

Any candidate who contravenes any of these instructions will be liable to penalties that may include expulsion from the Examination, annulment of results and referral to the appropriate Registration body. The Malpractice Regulations that the colleges adhere to are available on our website (www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk). It is the candidate's responsibility to be familiar with these before they attend the examination. Candidates should note that the copyright on the content of the papers is held by the three Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and that unauthorised use of any of the questions is prohibited. In the event of contravention of this copyright, legal action may be taken. Any candidate found making notes on the content of questions will be disqualified.

5. Results

Results will appear on the college website on the date specified on examination documentation sent to the candidate, or as announced at the examination. Candidates will receive subsequently written confirmation of their results.