

# **CANDIDATE GUIDANCE NOTES**

## **MRCS PART 3 MRCS ORAL EXAMINATION**

October 2004 (revised May 2008)

# MRCs ORAL EXAMINATION

## **CONTENTS**

1. General information .....	3
2. Admittance to the examination .....	4
3. Guidance.....	4
4. Results .....	5
5. Feedback to candidates .....	5

# MRCS – PART 3 ORAL EXAMINATION

## CANDIDATE GUIDANCE NOTES

### 1. General information

The oral section consists of three examinations of twenty minutes each, each of which is divided into two 10-minute parts.

You will be taken to the examination area at the appropriate time by the examinations administrator.

The orals are categorised into the areas of Applied Surgical Anatomy and Operative Surgery, Applied Physiology and Critical Care, Applied Surgical Pathology and Principles of Surgery and these are grouped together as below:

Part 1      Applied Surgical Anatomy  
Part 2      Operative Surgery

*The examiners may use prosections, bones, live models, images (X-ray, CT, MRI) or photographs.*

Part 1      Applied Physiology  
Part 2      Critical Care

Part 1      Applied Surgical Pathology  
Part 2      Principles of Surgery

The orals are held at separate tables, at each of which is a pair of examiners: one surgeon and one examiner of the basic sciences.

The examiners take it in turns to act as questioning examiner and observing/recording examiner.

The examiner of the basic sciences always starts, asking questions on the basic science topics only. While s/he asks the questions, the other examiner takes a note of the questions asked and the candidate's responses.

When the 10 minutes are over, a bell is sounded and the questioning/recording roles reverse with the surgeon examiner questioning for 10 minutes and the examiner of the basic sciences observing/recording.

When the second 10-minute period is over the bell sounds again signalling the end of the oral. You should then leave the table and return to the examinations administrator who will advise on what to do next.

This will be repeated until you have completed all three oral sections. Please note that there is no defined order for the three oral examinations.

You will be given a form with your candidate number on it, which must be handed to the examiners at each of the orals to enable them to write brief headings for the topics you were asked about. This is to ensure that your orals cover different areas of the syllabus. This document will be retained by the examiners who carry out the final oral.

## **2. Admittance to the examination**

You must bring proof of identity to the 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.

From May 2008 for the purposes of visual identification, any candidate sitting any examination may 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 in the visual identification of candidates.

To facilitate the assessment of non-verbal communication skills and interaction with the examiner the Colleges reserve the right to require candidates to remove any clothing and/or other item which covers all, or part of the candidate's face.

## **3. Guidance**

You may be asked questions on any part of the syllabus; questions are derived from a common bank used for all candidates. If you do not understand a question, you may ask the examiner to repeat it.

Examiners are asked to cover at least three topics in each 10 minute section but this is not mandatory.

You need to be clear and precise in your replies, making sure that the answers are given in a logical manner.

If you feel that you have done badly in any of the questions, you should not dwell on this but concentrate on answering the next question well. A weaker performance on one question may be counterbalanced by a stronger performance elsewhere.

Examiners are there to assess your knowledge and understanding on essential issues. The degree of difficulty of the questions will vary during the examination.

#### **4. Results**

Results will appear on the College website on the date specified on the admittance letter and written confirmation will follow at a later date

#### **5. Feedback to Candidates**

With effect from the May 2008 diet, feedback to *all* candidates for Part 3 (Oral) of the MRCS examination will comprise the mark awarded in each part of the Part 3 (Oral) examination together with the overall mark, the marking scheme and the mark descriptor. No further feedback will be available.

The mark descriptors are as follows:

#### **MRCS ORAL MARK DESCRIPTORS**

Examiners award marks based on their professional judgement using the following generic mark descriptors as guidance:

##### **Mark of 1 (Fail)**

The candidate did not demonstrate a satisfactory level of knowledge in the majority of areas examined or in critical areas. Where relevant knowledge was demonstrated the candidate was unable to apply it to show his/her depth of understanding of the topic examined. The candidate made critical errors and was unable to prioritise. The candidate usually needed frequent prompting and hints. The responses were not organised and he/she was unable to cover the range of topics to be examined.

##### **Mark of 2 (Borderline fail)**

The candidate was able to demonstrate the minimum acceptable level of knowledge in some areas but not in others. Some of the gaps in knowledge were significant. The candidate's ability to apply knowledge to demonstrate his/her depth of understanding was limited. The candidate made significant errors and was generally unable to prioritise. The candidate's responses were not well organised and he/she usually needed some prompting and hints. The candidate was slow in producing answers and might have produced one good answer and two poorer ones.

##### **Mark of 3 (Borderline Pass)**

The candidate was able to demonstrate a satisfactory, or the minimum acceptable, level of knowledge in most areas and in all critical areas but not usually in depth. The candidate's ability to apply knowledge to demonstrate his/her depth of understanding was generally adequate. The candidate made no significant errors and was usually able to prioritise. The responses were organised and he/she was generally able to cover the range of topics to be examined with little prompting or hints. The examiner judged that the candidate had the knowledge and understanding to pass, despite requiring some support to demonstrate this in the interview, and was capable and safe to proceed into further surgical training.

**Mark of 4 (Pass)**

The candidate was able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of knowledge in most areas and in all critical areas often, but not always, in depth. The candidate was able to apply knowledge to demonstrate his/her depth of understanding. The candidate made no significant errors and was able to prioritise. The responses were well constructed and organised and he/she was able to cover the range of topics to be examined with very little prompting. The examiner judged that the candidate had the knowledge and understanding to pass and was capable and safe to proceed into further surgical training.