

**Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations
July 2007**

Notice to UK Trainees and prospective examination candidates regarding the Intercollegiate MRCS Examination.

Transitional arrangements for entry to Specialty Training (ST3).

1. The Intercollegiate MRCS examination has been revised to make it appropriate for the new curriculum and the pattern of surgical training being introduced in the United Kingdom (UK) from August 2007. This revision has been agreed for a transitional period starting with the first examination in September 2007.

[Update September 2007 – See full regulations, paragraph 1.1.

http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/transitional/pdf/transitional_regulations.pdf]

2. All trainees in run-through Specialty Training (ST) and in Fixed Term Specialty Training (FTST) appointments must satisfy the examination requirements specified below for entry to ST3. The non-examination requirements are determined by the Postgraduate Deans.

3. Trainees who have already passed part(s) of the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination may choose to take further part(s) of the Intercollegiate MRCS examination under current examination Regulations* in order to satisfy the examination requirements for progression to ST3 (see paragraph 12).

4. Trainees who have not already attempted Part 1 or Part 2 of the current Intercollegiate MRCS are required to sit the revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination in order to satisfy the examination requirements for progression to ST3.

The MRCS examination

5. The revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination will comprise two Parts as follows:

Part A

Part A is a four hour MCQ examination consisting of two papers, each of two hours' duration, taken on the same day. The mark for each paper will be combined to give a total mark for Part A. The papers will cover generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, including the core knowledge required in all nine specialties.

Part B

Part B consists of three components: structured interviews; and clinical and communication skills components that are unchanged from the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination.

5.1 The structured interviews consist of six interviews each lasting ten minutes in the following areas:

1. applied physiology
2. critical care
3. applied anatomy, including three-dimensional anatomy
4. surgical anatomy
5. applied pathology
6. generic clinical skills.

5.2 The clinical component consists of short cases 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. The clinical component is identical for the revised and the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination.

5.3 The communication skills component consists of two bays with a total assessment time of 30 minutes. One bay will assess the giving of information and one will assess taking and presenting a history. The communication skills component will be held at the same time as the clinical component. The communication skills component is identical for the revised and the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination.

6. Candidates must pass the structured interviews component of Part B before proceeding to the clinical and communication skills components of Part B and must take all Part B components with the same College.

7. Candidates must pass Part A before proceeding to Part B. It is recommended that Part A should be taken in ST1, and that Part B, should be taken in ST2. Trainees may, however, take the examinations earlier. Trainees in FTST appointments are recommended to sit the examination as appropriate to the training being given.

8. There will be a limitation on the number of attempts that candidates will have to complete Part A and Part B of the revised MRCS. This limitation will commence with the candidate's first attempt at Part A, but the exact limit has yet to be specified. Full details of the limitation will be stipulated in the Regulations that are due to be promulgated within the next few weeks. [Update September 2007 – See full regulations, paragraph 4.5. http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/transitional/pdf/transitional_regulations.pdf]

9. The revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination will be held three times each year in the UK but will not be held by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland or at other venues outside the UK.

10. The revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination may be taken by those who are not in recognised training posts.

11. Passing the revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination is part of the requirements for gaining membership of one of the Surgical Royal Colleges in the UK but is not necessarily sufficient to gain membership. Criteria for membership are to be announced by the individual Colleges.
[Update September 2007 – See full regulations, paragraphs 1.4 and 14. http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/transitional/pdf/transitional_regulations.pdf]

Transitional Arrangements for entry to ST3

12. The Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations (ICBSE) has agreed that, with effect from August 2007, the examination requirements for progression from ST2 to ST3 may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

12.1 A pass in all parts of the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination.

12.2 A pass in all parts of the Collegiate MRCS examination.

12.3 A pass in all parts of the revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination.

12.4 A pass in Part 1 and Part 2 of the current Intercollegiate MRCS examination *and* a pass in Part B of the revised intercollegiate MRCS.

13. Candidates who are out of time in the current Intercollegiate MRCS or the Collegiate MRCS are not permitted to sit any part of the revised Intercollegiate MRCS examination unless they are in an ST1, ST2 or FTST post.

14. Full details of the new examination requirements and the regulations will be published on the MRCS website: www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk .
[Update September 2007 – The regulations have been published and are available at:
http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/transitional/pdf/transitional_regulations.pdf]

15. Subject to certain limitations on entry (please see the end date notice at <http://www.intercollegiatemrcs.org.uk/old/announcements.html>) the current Intercollegiate MRCS Examination will continue to be offered in the UK until October/November 2010. It will continue to be offered outside the UK until further notice. Prospective candidates had until and including the diet held in April 2007 in which to make their *first* attempt at Part 2 of the examination in the UK. After this diet, trainees have until and including the final oral/clinical diet to be held in the UK in October 2010 to pass all parts of the examination within the three-and-a-half year period specified in the Regulations* in order to gain membership of a College by this Intercollegiate MRCS examination route.

*Regulations for the Intercollegiate Membership Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and Ireland (revised June 2006).