

How to pass the MRCS



VIDEHA SHARMA
ST5 GENERAL SURGERY



Welcome!



- Excellent deanery providing range of knowledge and skills based teaching on a regular basis
- Fantastic tutors and educationalists who are keen to share their experience
- Passing the MRCS is an essential prerequisite for any aspiring surgeon
- Post graduate exams are tough!
- No one size fits all approach – identify your strengths and weaknesses and use them to your advantage

General information (Part A)



- 5-hour MCQ/EMQ exam
- 3 hours 'Basic Applied Science'
- 2 hours 'Principles of Surgery in General'
- No negative marking
- Pass mark around 70%
- <https://www.intercollegiatemrcsexams.org.uk/mrcs/mrcs-exam-overview/>
- Mainstay of revision is practicing questions

Advice



- **Timing: >3 months prep**
 - Plan during less busy job/around other life events
 - Tell your AES/CS/rota coordinator you are sitting the exam – they will accommodate
- **Make a revision plan**
 - Recurring themes in questions – make a list of weak areas
 - Commit knowledge to short term memory close to exam date
 - Be effective with your time: in between cases, nightshifts, driving to work

Resources



- CT teaching programme
- Small focus group sessions
- Books – most available in local library
- Acland's Video Atlas of Anatomy
- 'School of Surgery' podcasts
- Online question banks
 - eMRCS
 - Passtest
 - OnExamination

General information (Part B)



- 18-station OSCE
 - 10 stations: Applied Skills
 - 8 stations: Applied Knowledge
- Each station 9 min, marks out of 20
- Combination of reading and hands on revision
- Essential to practice with a partner/in a group
- Identify MRCS examiners in your hospital and ask them to viva you
- Read guidance very carefully (timings, dress code, scenarios etc)

General information (Part B)



- Approach each station as if it is the first
- Develop your own pattern/style that works
- Communication skills are assessed in every station
- ‘humble confidence’
- Break answers down into categories
- Think, structure and respond giving examiner insight into clarity of thought, prioritisation, organisation of ideas and decision making

Advice



- Anatomy usually a challenging part
 - Prosections
 - Bones/skeletons
- Pathology also challenging
 - Visit path lab to look at specimens
- Attend clinics and practice examinations
- Practice answering questions (record yourself!)
- Do a 'mock exam'
- Go to exam location the night before – try to relax and approach the exam positively

Resources



- **Books list:**

- http://www.themastersurgeon.com/questions/OSCE/MRCS_OSCE_stations.aspx

- **Online resources:**

- www.passthemrcs.co.uk

- Anatomy dissector

- <http://ect.downstate.edu/courseware/haonline/quiz/practice/u7/quiztop7.htm>

- Anatomy zone <http://anatomyzone.com>

Resources



- **Courses:**
 - Locally organised days
 - More intensive multiple days:
<http://www.surgicalcourses.com/>
 - Dr Exam/St Thomas'/RSM

Past papers are key as many questions are repeated!

Conclusions



- Tough exams!
- Plenty of support, resources and help available
- Make a plan and stick to it
- Commit your time – it will be worth it

