How to pass the MRCS

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Kolb’s Learning Cycle

- Concrete Experience
  - Planning Active Experimentation
  - Reflective Observation
- Abstract Conceptualisation
  - Converging
  - Diverging
  - Assimilating
Structure of the exam

• Part A
  • Paper 1 Applied Basic Science 3 hours
  • Paper 2 Principles of Surgery in General 2 hours
  • No negative marking
  • Single best answer and extending matching
  • Pass mark about 67%-determined by process of standard setting
  • Total number of questions will increase from 270 to 300
  • Total time: increase from 240 minutes to 300 minutes
  • Applied Basic Science (ABS) and Principles of Surgery in General (PoSG), currently equal at 135 questions for each, will change to become 60% ABS (180 questions, an increase of 45) and 40% PoSG (120 questions, a decrease of 15)
  • The number of questions testing anatomy will increase from 45 to 75 (16.7% to 25% of Part A as a whole)
  • A minimum level of competence in each of the ABS and PoSG paper will be retained.
Part A

- **Preparation**
  - At least 3 months revision
- **This is your “spare time”**
- You will be working an average of 48 hours per week
- Roughly 1 weekend per month
- 1 week of nights per month
- On call approx 2-3 times per month
Remember

• MRCS is required to complete core surgical training
• You are spending your hard-earned money to take the exam
• Therefore it makes sense to prepare well and not have to waste time and money on re-sits
• The earlier you complete MRCS the more time you have to write papers and prepare for interview
Timetable

• Make a plan
• Don’t procrastinate
• Focus on topic which are weakest
• Organise the questions under theme
• Use your spare time after work/eating/watching TV
• You can do 2-3 hours of revision per day like this
• Do lots of MCQs again and again
• Read through answers you got wrong and move on
Pro tip

• Suggestions
  • Bring your revision book to theatre
  • If you have some spare time on-call, do some questions

• Timing
  • Try and book MRCS A during an “easy” job
  • Good EWTD compliant jobs
How to revise

• Try to stick to revision plan
• Resources
  • Officially you should read anatomy, physiology and pathology texts. You should do this for preparation for CT1 teaching

Online
• www.onexamination.com
• www.past.co.uk

Books-loads out there
• Essential Revision Notes for Intercollegiate MRCS parts 1 & 2
• SBA MCQs and EMQs for the MRCS Part A Pack: 2 (Oxford Specialty Training: Revision Texts)
• MRCS Part A: 500 SBAs and EMQs by Pradip K Datta (Editor), Christopher JK Bulstrode (Editor),
• Ask colleagues, borrow from library
Question Banks

• Local ‘Q banks’
• eMRCS.com
  • Cheap
  • Questions closely match MRCS
• Pastest and OnExamination
  • More expensive
• Useful to reinforce knowledge
• Highlights weak topics
• Should aim for about 70% or more
On the day

- Stay at nice hotel
- Reach there previous night
- Get some sleep
  - This makes a LOT of difference
- Try not to stress out too much
MRCS Part B

• 18 Stations
• Three times a year
• It’s just another OSCE
Two broad content areas

• Applied knowledge: 8 stations
  • Anatomy, pathology, critical care

• Applied skills: 10 stations
  • Procedures, History taking, Examinations, Communication skills, Reading

• Both broad content areas must be passed in order to achieve an overall “pass”
How to prepare

- Set aside at least 2-3 months
  - (The exam costs £930)
- Remember this will be in your spare time because you also have a job
  - Evenings
  - Weekends
- Get some **BOOKS**
- Useful to work in **groups** (almost essential)
  - Can test each other
  - Use each other to practice histories/examinations
  - Share the burden of pain and suffering
- Do a course (optional)
- Reinforce knowledge by doing all the past paper questions
- Sit exam
General Books


- DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Clinical Examination, Communication Skills and History Taking Bk. 2 by B. H. Miranda, K. Asaad, P. E. M. Butler (Paperback)

Anatomy Books

- **MRCS Part B OSCE: Anatomy** by Jeremy Lynch, Susan Shelmerdine, Vishy Mahadevan (Paperback)
  - Excellent questions for anatomy viva practice. Good quality pictures and diagrams, with answers.

- **Get Through MRCS: Anatomy 2E (GTH)** by Simon Overstall, Amit Zaveri (Paperback)
  - Excellent anatomy viva question book - covers most main areas, with good pictures and answers.

- **Clinical Anatomy: Applied Anatomy for Students and Junior Doctors** by Harold Ellis, Vishy Mahadevan
Physiology and Critical Care

- Applied Surgical Physiology Vivas by Mazyar Kanani, Martin Elliott (Paperback)

- Surgical Critical Care Vivas by Mazyar Kanani (Paperback)
Books

• Pastest Essential Revision Notes for Intercollegiate MRCS 1 & 2
  • For stuff you don’t understand/keep getting wrong/forgot/never learnt properly in the first place

• Full list:
  http://www.amazon.co.uk/registry/wishlist/AZK65U2KDCWO/
Websites

- **PassTheMRCS.co.uk**
  - £120
  - Good bank of questions
  - Includes Aclands Anatomy subscription
  - Tip: If you have a flatmate also studying for MRCS B you can split the cost

- **Anatomy dissector (free)**
  - [http://ect.downstate.edu/courseware/haonline/quiz/practice/u7/quiztop7.htm](http://ect.downstate.edu/courseware/haonline/quiz/practice/u7/quiztop7.htm)

- **Anatomy Zone (free)**
Revision Courses

• MRCS: 2 days preparations in Liverpool 5th and 6th October 2017 Broadgreen Hospital
• Anatomy prosections: demonstration is useful for anatomy – recommended
• Waste of money if you haven’t done much revision
• Lots of different courses
  • Dr Exam - £549 per course (£999 for both)
    • Bradford
    • http://www.drexam.co.uk/book-online-now/
  • Doctor’s Academy - £385
    • Cardiff
    • http://doctorsacademy.org/Course/SurgicalAnatomyandmockOSCE/Home.htm
  • RSM - £399 - £499
    • London
    • https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/events-listing/2014-2015/groups/rsm-professionals/rpf34-mrcs-part-b-revision-course.aspx
Past Paper Questions

- Very important to use these for practice
- There are lots flying around the internet and from previous candidates
- **Questions get repeated**
- There are some less obvious topics which come up e.g:
  - TB
  - Giant Cell Arteritis
  - Rheumatic Fever and Infective endocarditis
  - Reactive post-op depression
Specifics

• Anatomy
  • Get a skull – very useful for vivas as cranial fossa is examined repeatedly
  • Get some bones – e.g. Femur, ulna, radius, vertebrae

• Critical care and Physiology
  ❑ 7th September, whole day Ajay Sharma and possibly one more in January 2018
  ❑ Ask a friendly anaesthetist if they would be willing to teach your group some topics
    ❑ In the exam, anaesthetists often examine these stations

• Surgical procedures e.g. excision of skin naevus
  • Practice at work under exam conditions
  • Simulate at home and examine each other
  • Easy to fail if they haven’t been practiced
Study leave

• If your boss will let you

• Ask if you can attend clinics for Orthopaedics, Breast/Endocrine, Vascular, Urology if you have not done these jobs before
• https://www.passthemrcs.co.uk
The Exam

• Check you have the right date!
• Don’t miss your train!
• Get a nice hotel
• Get an early night
Practice

• At every opportunity
  • Seeing patients
  • Presenting to senior colleagues
  • Viva practice

• Deliberate practice
  • Listen to what you’re saying and think(!)

• Study groups
  • Best way to practice
  • Feedback and learn from others
  • Revise and prepare specific scenarios
Turn it into a strength

• Communication skills assessed in all stations
• It may be obvious ...
• Or not so obvious ...
• Easy marks to gain and may ‘sway’ examiners
• Think, structure and respond
• Insight into clarity of thought, prioritisation, organisation of ideas, decision making
• Aim to have a subservient but confident and professional discussion with a senior colleague
Summary

• Don’t underestimate the communication skills elements of the examination
• (Even if you think your communication skills are good)
• Make sure you know the game
• Deliberate practice at every opportunity
• Remember your communication skills are being continually assessed – use it to your advantage!