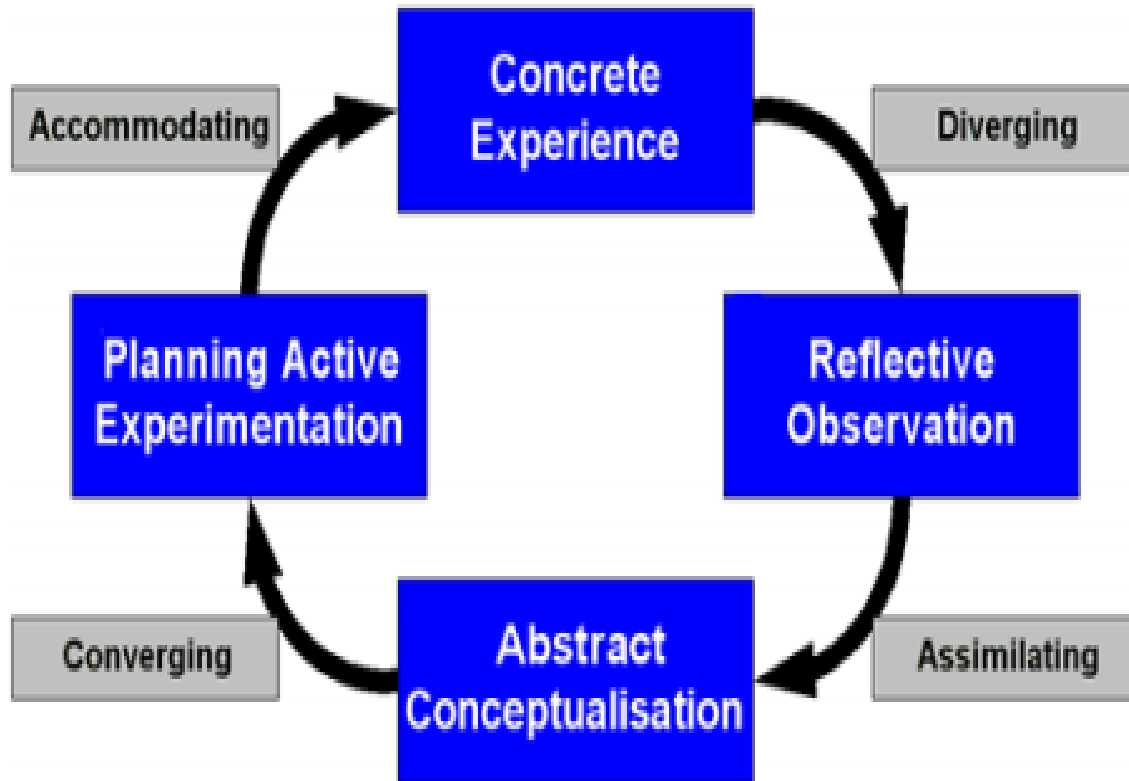


# How to pass the MRCS

Klaire Exarchou  
Naved Hossain  
Ajay Sharma



# Kolb's Learning Cycle



# 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](http://www.onexamination.com)
- [www.past.co.uk](http://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

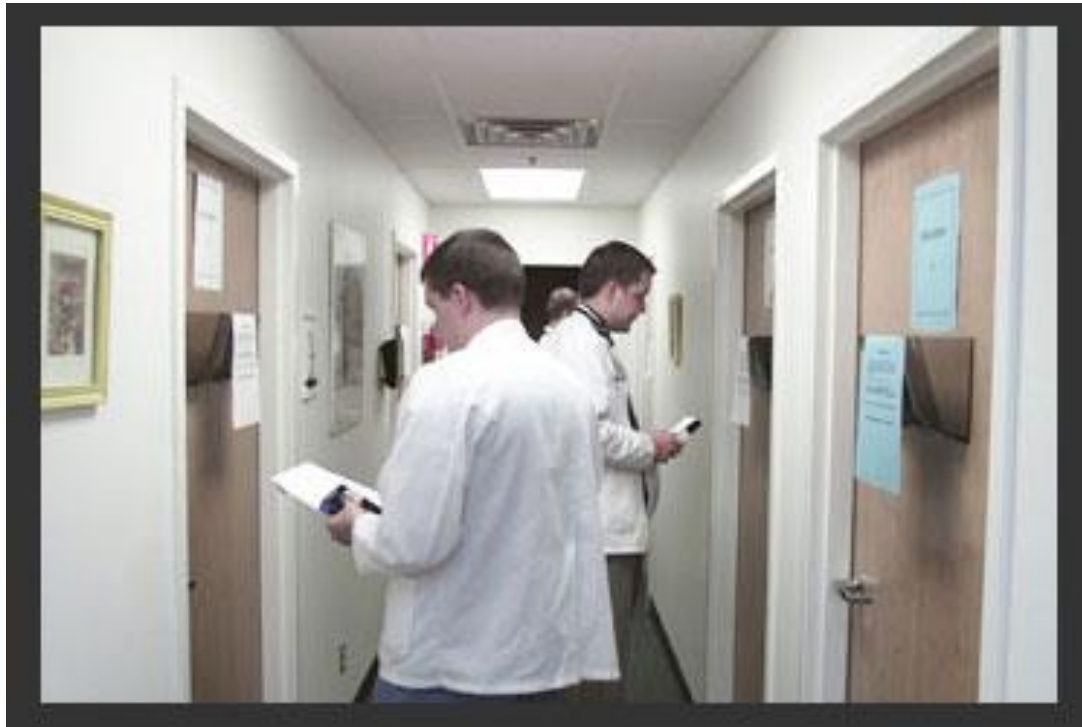
- Local 'Q banks'
- eMRCS.com
  - Cheap
  - Questions closely match MRCS
- Pastest and OnExamination
  - More expensive
- Useful to reinforce knowledge
- Highlights weak topics
- Should aim for about 70% or more

# 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

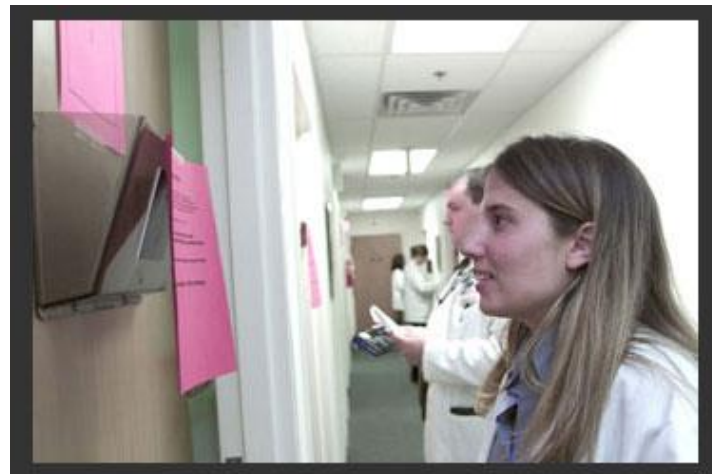
# MRCSC Part B

- 18 Stations
- Three times a year
- It's just another OSCE

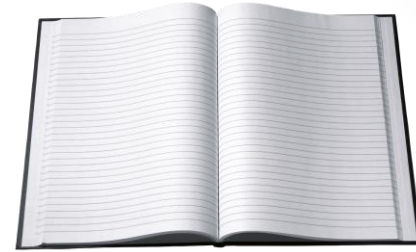


# Two broad content areas

- 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”

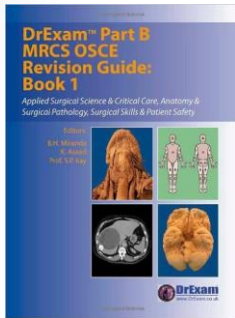


# How to prepare

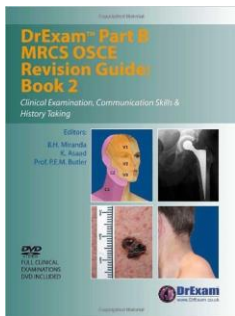


- Set aside at least 2-3 months
  - (The exam costs £930)
- Remember this will be in your spare time because you also have a job
  - Evenings
  - Weekends
- Get some **BOOKS**
- Useful to work in **groups** (almost essential)
  - Can test each other
  - Use each other to practice histories/examinations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

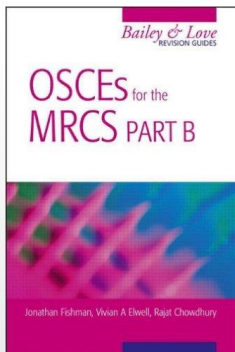
# General Books



- **DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Applied Surgical Science and Critical Care, Anatomy and Surgical Pathology, Surgical Skills and Patient Safety Bk. 1** by B. H. Miranda, K. Asaad, S. P. Kay (Paperback)

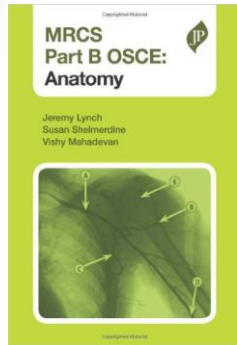


- **DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Clinical Examination, Communication Skills and History Taking Bk. 2** by B. H. Miranda, K. Asaad, P. E. M. Butler (Paperback)

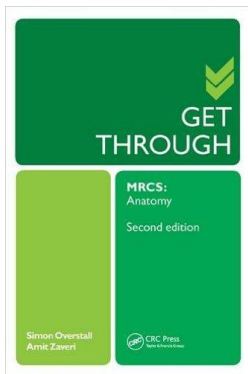


- **OSCEs for the MRCS Part B A Bailey & Love Revision Guide: A Bailey and Love Revision Guide: Pt. B** (Hodder Arnold Publication) by Jonathan Fishman, Vivian A Elwell, Rajat Chowdhury (Paperback)

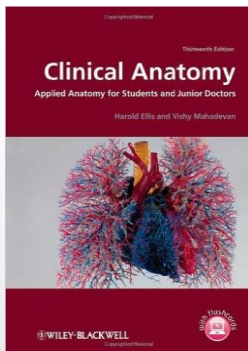
# Anatomy Books



- **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.

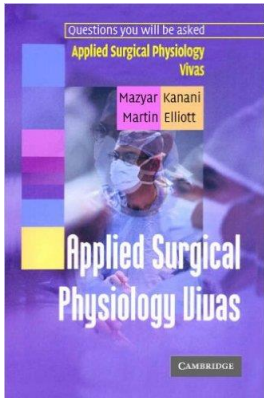


- **Get Through MRCS: Anatomy 2E (GTH)** by Simon Overstall, Amit Zaveri (Paperback)
- Excellent anatomy viva question book - covers most main areas, with good pictures and answers.

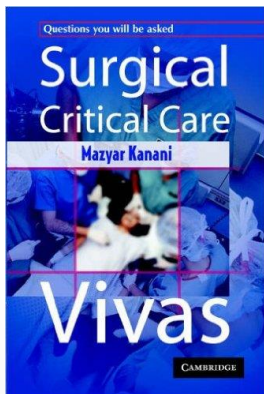


- **Clinical Anatomy: Applied Anatomy for Students and Junior Doctors** by Harold Ellis, Vishy Mahadevan

# Physiology and Critical Care



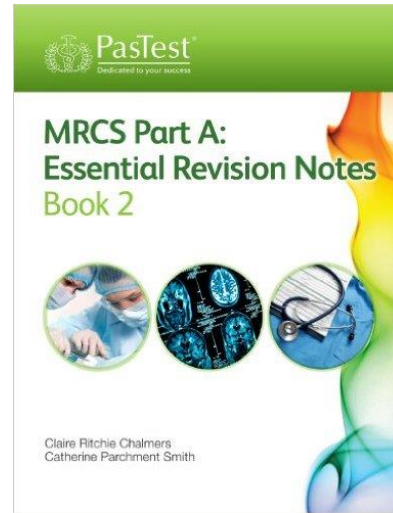
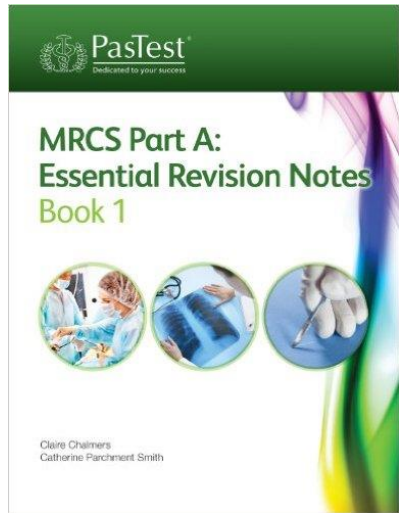
- Applied Surgical Physiology Vivas by Mazyar Kanani, Martin Elliott (Paperback)



- 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

- PassTheMRCSCo.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>
- Anatomy Zone (free)
  - <http://anatomyzone.com/>



# 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
  - 7<sup>th</sup> 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!