Training in Intensive Care Medicine

A guide to the UK CCT programme

The FFICM Examination

The FFICM examination is a two part exam required for the completion of a CCT in ICM. The Primary FFICM is taken during core training (CT1-2) and consists of an MCQ paper. Exemption from the Primary FFICM can be gained through the completion of one of the following partner specialty examinations:

- FRCA (Primary)
- MRCP UK (Full)
- MCEM (Full)

The Final FFICM is taken during Stage 2 training (ST5-6) and must be passed to progress to Stage 3. The Final FFICM consists of an MCQ followed by an OSCE and SOE (viva) examinations. Example questions are now available on the FICM website, www.ficm.ac.uk.

Overseas training

It is possible to accredit training abroad toward your UK ICM training programme. The FICM will allow up to a year of overseas training to count toward your CCT. This must be undertaken during Stage 2 or Stage 3 training and must be prospectively approved by both the FICM and GMC. Overseas training undertaken before starting an ICM training programme cannot be counted toward a CCT. In order to complete your training you must undertake the final 6 months of your overall training programme (the second half of Stage 3 training) in the UK.

Registration for training

Once appointed to an ICM CCT programme it is essential that you register with the FICM for your training to be approved. Without registration you will not be eligible to complete your CCT programme.

Further information

More information on training in ICM can be found at www.ficm.ac.uk. Trainees may also find useful contacts from the Intensive Care Society and its Trainee Committee at www.ics.ac.uk.

Note:

This guidance is intended for trainees entering the standalone ICM CCT programme (either single or Dual CCTs) after 1st August 2012. Trainees appointed to the outgoing 'Joint' CCT in ICM may continue training under the provisions of the guidance pertaining to that programme. Recruitment to the 'Joint' CCT will not be possible after 31st July 2013. Joint CCT trainees should contact the FICM for further information if required.
Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) is an exciting and dynamic specialty with the responsibility for caring for the most critically ill patients in hospital. Whilst other medical specialties deal exclusively with specific organs or body systems, ICM encompasses patients with the entire spectrum of medical and surgical pathology. An ICM doctor is able to provide advanced organ support during critical illness and is responsible for co-ordinating the care of patients on the ICU. ICM is high-tech, life-saving care that underpins and interacts with all other areas of the hospital.

For the first time it is now possible to train exclusively in ICM in addition to combining it with another specialty.

**Single CCT training**

The ICM training programme runs from ST3 to ST7 and consists of 3 stages of training. Entrance to ST3 is from a number of defined core training routes.

**Core training/entry requirements**

Before starting dedicated ICM training you will need to have completed one of the following core training programmes, in addition to your Foundation years:

- Acute Care Common Stem (ACCS)
- Core Anaesthetic Training (CAT)
- Core Medical Training (CMT)

Entrance to ST3 ICM is through competitive national interviews which are run by the West Midlands Deanery. In addition to completion of a core training programme, you will need to have obtained one of the following:

- FFICM (Primary) *Currently under development*
- MRCP UK (Full)
- MCEM (Full)
- FRCA (Primary)

**Stage 1 training**

Stage 1 training encompasses the completion of one of the defined core programmes (see above) and the first two years of Higher Specialist Training (ST3-4). These two HST years aim to develop the core competencies that were not covered in your core training programme, in addition to extending ICM experience. For example, if you have undertaken CMT then you will gain further experience in anaesthesia during these years. Alternatively if you have completed CAT then you will undertake a period of basic medical training.

**Stage 2 training**

Stage 2 training runs from ST5 to ST6. During these years you will gain experience of sub-specialty ICM including cardiothoracic, neurosciences and paediatric ICM in addition to further general ICM experience. Stage 2 training also encompasses a ‘Special Skills’ year. This year allows you to develop an area of special interest; examples include academic ICM, management, pre-hospital medicine, education or echocardiography.

During Stage 2 training you will be required to pass the Final FFICM in order to progress to the final year of training.

**Stage 3 training**

Stage 3 is the final year of training (ST7) which is spent exclusively in ICM. This year is aimed at developing higher level clinical and non-clinical skills in the run up to becoming a consultant.

**Dual CCT training**

Prior to the introduction of single CCT ICM, doctors wanting to train in ICM would do so in conjunction with a ‘parent’ specialty. Whilst this is no longer necessary, you may wish undertake a Dual CCT programme leading to qualification in both ICM and a partner specialty. Undertaking Dual CCTs will inevitably extend your training; the length will depend on your previous experience and chosen partner specialty, though 8.5 years is an indicative minimum duration.

Application to the partner specialty is through competitive national interview. Dual programmes are available in:

- Acute Medicine
- Anaesthesia
- Emergency Medicine
- Renal Medicine
- Respiratory Medicine

During your ICM training your Special Skills year will be undertaken in your partner specialty. Any further agreed dual specialties will be announced by the Faculty.

**The ICM Curriculum**

Training in ICM is governed by the 2011 ICM curriculum, which can be found at [www.ficm.ac.uk](http://www.ficm.ac.uk). Assessment of training will be through a number of mechanisms familiar to UK trainees, such as Structured Learning Episodes (formerly Workplace-Based Assessments) and maintenance of a portfolio. In addition you will be required to write two expanded case reports per year during your Higher Specialist Training. Assessment of knowledge will take place through the Fellowship examination that you will be required to pass before entering Stage 3 training.