

NOTICE – Changes to MRCS Part A Examination – Start Date – January 2017

The four Surgical Royal Colleges have recently received approval from the GMC to make changes to the MRCS Part A Examination.

In October 2012, ICBSE established an intercollegiate committee to review the question bank and the format of the Part A (MCQ) examination. Whilst recognising that the current Part A is a first class examination with a high reliability the review of the question bank allowed ICBSE to gauge the coverage of the exam against the curriculum.

The working group produced recommendations for a future test specification (blueprint) of the Part A examination, to ensure that the exam adequately tested, and is clearly mapped to, the topics and skills defined within the ISCP core curriculum and MRCS Guide. The full agreed changes are provided below:

- The total number of questions will increase from 270 to 300.
- The total time available to candidates will increase from 240 minutes to 300 minutes, to allow 1 minute per question (candidates currently have to work at the rate of 1.13 questions per minute).
- The balance of 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 administrative model will be one three-hour session for ABS and a second two-hour session for PoSG with a break in between. There will be proportionally greater time available for candidates for whom special accommodation is made, as at present.
- The number of questions testing anatomy will increase from 45 to 75 (that is, from 16.7% to 25% of Part A as a whole).
- Candidates will continue to be judged by the aggregate score on Part A as a whole, with no requirement to pass ABS and PoSG as separate examinations.
- The secondary requirement that passing candidates will be required to demonstrate a minimum level of competence in each of the ABS and PoSG paper will be retained.

The approved changes above will be implemented from January 2017 examination and the revised Candidate Guidance material is available on the Intercollegiate website -

<http://www.intercollegiatemrcsexams.org.uk/>.

ENDS