



Your Guide to the MRCS



THE ROYAL COLLEGE
OF SURGEONS OF
EDINBURGH

FROM HERE, HEALTH

Your Guide to the MRCS

The Membership Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain and Ireland, or MRCS, is designed for surgical trainees in the generality part of specialty training. The MRCS is a crucial milestone in your surgical career; it determines whether you possess the correct knowledge, skills and attributes to complete basic training and to progress to higher levels of specialist surgical training.

The MRCS examination is intercollegiate, meaning that it is common to all Colleges. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh offers the examination at a variety of locations throughout the UK. The examination is made up of two parts, A and B.

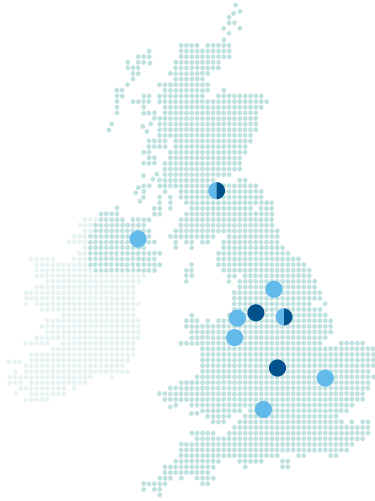
PART A

Part A of the MRCS is a written examination, divided into two papers. From January 2017 the Applied Basic Science paper is three hours' duration and the Principles of Surgery in General paper is two hours. Both papers are taken on the same day and examine generic surgical sciences and applied knowledge, using multiple-choice Single Best Answer and Extended Matching Questions. The marks for both papers are combined to give a total mark for Part A, but as a candidate you are expected to demonstrate a minimum level of knowledge in each of the two papers in addition to achieving the set pass mark for the combined papers.

PART B

The Part B Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) integrates basic surgical scientific knowledge and its application to clinical surgery. Its purpose is to build on the test of knowledge in Part A and assess how you are able to integrate knowledge and apply it in clinically appropriate contexts. This is done through a series of stations reflecting elements of day-to-day clinical practice.

It is worth giving some thought to which College you wish to ultimately become a member of, as the College where you pass Part B will be the College which offers you membership. We hope that you will consider The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for your examinations and membership throughout your surgical career.



Where can I sit the MRCS?

The MRCS Part A is held in January, April and September of each year, and The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh holds it throughout the UK, in **Belfast, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield** and **Wrexham**.

The MRCS Part B is held in February, May and October of each year at the College in central Edinburgh, only a 10 minute walk from the railway station or a short 20 minute journey from the airport.

In addition to **Edinburgh**, Part B is also rotated around three other locations in the UK: **Coventry, Manchester** and **Sheffield**. Please visit the website for dates and venues at www.rcsed.ac.uk.

When should I sit the MRCS?

To be eligible to sit the MRCS, you must have completed an undergraduate medical degree from an institution acceptable to the College. As a guideline, it is recommended that Part A should be taken in Specialty/Core Training Year 1 (ST/CT1), and Part B in Specialty/Core Training Year 2 (ST/CT2).

For more details, please read the MRCS examination regulations at www.rcsed.ac.uk.



Taking my MRCS with Edinburgh was as enjoyable and stress-free experience as sitting that exam can be! It was a high quality but fair test of my surgical knowledge, and along with the excellent skills and training courses the Edinburgh College runs, I'd recommend it to anyone.

Andrea Warwick MRCSEd.
Specialty Registrar in General Surgery

How can I best prepare for the MRCS?

ESSQ

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh has developed a unique online learning programme in conjunction with the University of Edinburgh to guide and support surgical trainees in the early stages of their career, and in particular with preparation for the MRCS.

The Edinburgh Surgical Sciences Qualification, (ESSQ), provides a strong grounding in basic sciences as applied to surgery, taking students via a modular route to the MRCS. The online programme allows busy trainees to be flexible with when and where they learn but also ensures that sustained effort is applied. Applicants can choose to undertake the Certificate, Diploma, or full MSc course, and on completion are awarded with educational credits by the University of Edinburgh, recognised by The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

Results show that ESSQ students' percentage pass rates in the MRCS are significantly higher than those of non-ESSQ students. Visit www.essq.rcsed.ac.uk for detailed information about the qualification.

REVISION COURSES

The College also offers regular MRCS revision courses, including the Mock MRCS OSCE Course which simulates examination conditions to improve your examination technique and develop self-assessment, The Edinburgh MRCS Revision Course which will help improve your performance in the MRCS Part B examination via practice sessions and discussions with examiners on the pitfalls and problems commonly encountered with the examination process, and the Anatomy for MRCS OSCEs Course which aims to adequately prepare you for the anatomy sections of the MRCS, both in building knowledge and in presentation/delivery. Please visit the Education section of the College website for more information at www.rcsed.ac.uk.



In preparation for the MRCS I would advise the following tips:

1. Register with the RCSEd website to browse the examinations timetable and more importantly to read the regulations and guide for the Intercollegiate MRCS examination.
2. Allow 4 to 6 months preparation for the examination. Clinical duties can be unpredictable and the guide does not allow, and nor should it, for last minute cramming. Planning short sessions of revision over a long period of time should be the ideal strategy.
3. Attend courses with the college that can help prepare for various aspects of the examination, for example brushing up on anatomy and practising OSCE skills. This adds to understanding and can boost confidence.
4. Attempt as many similar style questions in the run-up to the examination. For MCQ's and EMQ's there are a number of revision aids for purchase. For OSCEs and Oral/Communications aspects, practice as much as possible on consenting subjects, including ward or community patients. You'd be surprised at the willingness to help and the ability of some to be quite objective at feedback!
5. Approach those who have sat and successfully passed the MRCS examination recently and other senior surgical colleagues for advice and mentoring. This is an excellent resource that should not be underestimated and was most vital in my successful preparation for the exam.

Adarsh Babber MRCSEd,
Specialty Registrar in General Surgery

How do I apply for the MRCS?

Visit the examinations section of the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk to choose the relevant examination, location and date. Both parts of the examination can be applied for online including payment of fees.

What documents will I need in order to complete an application?

If you are a first time candidate for Part A, you will need to provide your GMC Registration number, or alternatively, a certified copy of your basic medical degree certificate; two passport sized photographs for your ID/admittance card; payment (via credit/debit card or bank draft); and a signed declaration page to confirm you have read and understand the Regulations for the examination. If you are a re-sit candidate, you will not need to resubmit the documents above and can simply pay the fee online.

If you are a first-time candidate for Part B, you will need all the above documents as for first time Part A, along with certified confirmation of your pass at Part A if passed with another College.

If you are an ENT trainee, we would advise you to make yourself familiar with the DOHNS examination regulations with regards to the limit on the number of attempts at DOHNS and MRCS. These can be found in the Examinations section of the College website at www.rcsed.ac.uk



At exam time with stress levels rising there is nowhere better than Edinburgh to sit MRCS - a small, friendly city with supportive staff at the college - it makes all the difference.

Rhys Clement MRCSEd, Specialty Registrar in Orthopaedics and Director of meducation.net, the medical education network

How do I know when and where to attend my examination?

You will be emailed a candidate notice around five weeks prior to your examination date, detailing exactly when and where your examination will be held, and what documents you will need to bring with you. This notice may ask you to attend registration well in advance of the actual start of the examination, so it is advisable to be prepared for a wait of one-and-a-half to two hours.

What time should I arrive?

Please aim to arrive at the time indicated on your candidate notice for registration. If you arrive too early you will be asked to return at a later time. This is simply to avoid candidates from earlier circuits coming into contact with candidates who have not yet sat the examination.

Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a member of staff from the examinations team who will register you and ask you to take a seat in a waiting area. For Part A, once all the candidates have arrived you will be shown into the examination hall and asked to take a seat at the desk which shows a corresponding candidate number to your examination notice.

When undertaking Part B, a member of the College's examinations team will call your candidate number when it is time for you to take your examination and ask you to line up with the other candidates sitting in the same circuit as you. You will then be led to your station and the examination will start.

The examinations team will brief you on the route that you will take around the stations; however there will be a staff member available at all times to make sure you are heading in the right direction.

Is there a dress code?

For Part A, you should attend in comfortable clothes as you will be writing your examination papers for five hours.

For Part B, there is a dress code. In order to comply with modern infection control practices you must have your arms bare below the elbow, with no jewellery on hands or wrists (with the exception of wedding rings). It is worth noting that polo shirts or t-shirts are not considered acceptable items of dress, and you should present yourself as you would for a job interview.

Will lunch be provided?

For Part A examinations, lunch is not provided; there is a break between the two papers to allow you to have food.

For Part B, if your examination is in the morning, you will be quarantined until the candidates for the afternoon circuits have started their examination. Due to this we do provide lunch for the morning candidates. Coffee, tea, and fruit juice is also provided during morning and afternoon breaks.

Can I bring food and drink into the examination room?

No, however the examinations staff will have water available for you.

I have a disability, will this affect my examination?

Not at all, you will simply be required to declare any special requirements at the time of application to ensure that all staff are fully aware and suitable preparations can be made. Please refer to the ICBSE Reasonable Adjustments policy for full guidance.

What should I do if I am running late or cannot attend?

Contact the College immediately on 0131 527 1600, even if you are sitting the examination in a centre outside of Edinburgh.

Do I need to bring any equipment?

No, all equipment required will be provided.

I've been told I have to hand over my mobile phone; is this true?

Yes, in order to comply with our electronic device policy. Candidates often ask if they can leave these in their bags in the cloakroom, however in order to keep them secure we request that you hand them in, and sign to confirm that you have done so. At the end of the examination you will be asked to sign again to confirm that your phone has been returned to you.

When and how will I get my results?

Results are generally released around a month after the examination. You will be informed of the date on the day of your examination. The results are announced on the College website at 12 noon, and a copy of your result letter will be emailed to you as soon as possible. A hard copy of this letter will also be posted out to you within a few days.

What happens if I fail?

There is a limit of six attempts for Part A, so if you fail, you can apply to re-sit at the next available diet of your choice. An application as a re-sit candidate can be done online very simply, with no submission of paperwork required.

For Part B, there is a limit of four attempts at the examination.



I've passed both parts of the MRCS, what next?

Once you have successfully passed the MRCS with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, you will be sent documentation informing you of the next steps to becoming a Member of the College. You will need to return election papers and your election fee which will allow your name to go forward in the historical 'ballot' for election to the College at the next Council meeting.

Can I attend a diploma ceremony?

Once the Council approves you as a new Member of the College, you will receive further communication and be invited to attend a Diploma Ceremony in Edinburgh. Diploma Ceremonies are one of the most popular events in the College calendar. New Fellows and Members travel from all over the world to attend and have their Diploma presented to them by the College President.

Each ceremony is usually followed by a drinks reception or dinner.



I thoroughly enjoyed the degree ceremony at the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh. It was a suitable end to the examination process. It was good to meet up with fellow graduates from all over the country.

Ben Stutchfield MRCSed,
Specialty Registrar in General Surgery



With positive experiences and knowledge of its working humble mission to provide surgical training and education of the highest standard both nationally and internationally, I am a strong advocate of the RCSEd. My interactions with the College have provided exposure to vital courses (BSS, CCRISP), allowed achievement of my membership diploma and a postgraduate degree. I hope my links to the RCSEd, which started as a medical student, continue in the present as an elected member and in the future course of my surgical career.

Adarsh Babber MRCSEd,
Specialty Registrar in General Surgery

Why should I sit the MRCS and affiliate with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh?

A Growing Network – By choosing to sit the MRCS and affiliate with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) you will be joining a network of almost 22,500 professionals based in over 100 countries worldwide. With bases in both Edinburgh and Birmingham, as well as an International School of Surgery, RCSEd is strongly committed to supporting our membership wherever they are based. The opening of our Birmingham Centre of Operations in 2014 demonstrates this commitment by providing a focal point for our activity in England and Wales (80% of RCSEd's UK membership is based in England and Wales – over 11,000 professionals in total) and cements our position as a College with strength and relevance throughout the UK and beyond.

Relaxed and Friendly Atmosphere – We understand that the examination is a very important event for you, and our staff will do everything possible before and on the day to make you feel welcome and comfortable.

History – The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is the oldest surgical institution in the world. When you become a Member of the College you join an illustrious membership which has included some of the greatest surgeons and medical innovators in history.

Representation – The College works tirelessly to represent its Fellows and Members and their interests in the UK and worldwide.

Local Presence – With Regional Surgical Advisers throughout the UK, career advice or local assistance is never far away.

Benefits – As a Member of the College you will receive access to an increasing number of membership benefits from discounts at several major medical publishers, discounts on College educational courses and much more.



AFFILIATION NETWORK

The College offers three affiliation opportunities: Student, Foundation and Pre-MRCS Affiliation. Contact the College or visit www.rcsed.ac.uk for more information.

For more information about the MRCS, please contact:

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View the MRCS Examination Regulations at
www.rcsed.ac.uk