

Intercollegiate Membership Examination of the Surgical Royal Colleges of Great Britain

Lay Examiners' Person Specification and Further Particulars

Background

The revised MRCS (2008) was developed to meet the requirements of assessing trainee surgeons in MMC (Modernising Medical Careers) training programmes. Obtaining membership to one of the Surgical Royal Colleges is one of a number of mandatory requirements for trainees to progress from their second year of core/specialty training. As well as Medically Qualified Clinicians, Basic Scientists, and nurse/technician examiners, suitably qualified and interested lay examiners are sought to assist with the examination process.

The purpose of the MRCS examination

The purpose of the MRCS examination is to determine that trainees have acquired the knowledge, skills and attributes required for the completion of core training in surgery and, for trainees following the Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum Programme (see www.iscp.ac.uk), to determine their ability to progress to higher specialist training in surgery.

The structure of the MRCS examination

The MRCS examination has two parts: Part A (written paper) and Part B Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE). The Part B (OSCE) is at present offered to candidates up to three times each year (i.e. three 'diets'). This may be increased as necessary.

The role of the lay examiner

The Broad Content Area of *Communications Skills* is designed to assess a candidate's ability to communicate effectively with patients, relatives and carers and also with colleagues. There are three stations where lay examiners co-examine with a medically qualified examiner. Each examiner assesses different aspects of the candidate's performance.

One station involves giving and/or receiving information to/from a patient, relative or carer where candidates are expected to role-play a given scenario with an actor. The examiners observe and assess the candidate's performance.

Two stations are concerned with 'history taking' where the candidate gathers information from an actor/patient and presents their findings and possible diagnosis to the medically qualified examiner. The lay examiner assesses the candidate's ability to communicate appropriately with both the patient and the medical examiner and their professionalism in doing so.

Lay examiners should not be qualified in professions allied to medicine or have received previous medical training.

General information for applicants

- Each OSCE diet will normally be held over a period of up to two weeks but this may vary. Lay examiners will normally be expected to be available to examine for whole days during each diet but will not be expected to examine for each day of a diet.
- The examinations will normally take place in venues in Edinburgh, Glasgow and England (usually London) and Dublin. Other venues may be used. Successful applicants may be asked to examine at any of those venues.
- Lay examiners will be given mandatory training in elements of the examination, and the principles of examining including equality and diversity issues.

- Successful applicants will be appointed to a panel of lay examiners and will be asked to commit to a minimum of four days each year.
- Where possible, lay examiners will be given a minimum of eight weeks' notice of examination duties.
- All examiners are periodically assessed in the way they perform their duties as an examiner by a senior examiner/assessor and are given constructive feedback in a supportive manner.
- Lay examiners may be expected to participate in the development of the examination question banks including drafting questions or details of proposed OSCE stations, together with proposed marking structures and schemes. All Intellectual Property created by lay examiners in the course of the carrying out of the examination will vest in the ICBSE unless otherwise agreed between the parties.
- Applicants may be required to attend an interview as part of the selection process.
- As part of the appointment process, applicants may be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Key Responsibilities

Lay examiners are responsible for:

- participating as a member of the panel of examiners in the conduct of Part B (OSCE);
- awarding marks consistently in accordance with agreed criteria;
- seeking the advice of the lead examiner in situations where there is disagreement with another examiner;
- attending examiner training as and when required;
- attend the examiner briefing meeting which precedes the examination;
- meet with the co-examiner and actor to make sure the station is complete, the documentation is understood and any problems remedied;
- reporting any suspected malpractice or cheating during the examination;
- assisting the ICBSE in responding to any complaints following the examination;
- maintaining the confidentiality of the examination.

Person specification

- Knowledge of the rationale, expected standard and structure of the MRCS as defined in the regulations for the examination.
- High levels of integrity and professional standards as an examiner.
- A commitment to ongoing assessment, training and development as an examiner.
- Ability to understand appropriate examination techniques.
- A commitment to the examination process.
- Effective oral and written communication skills.
- A commitment to equality and diversity.
- Able to remain objective and dispassionate where necessary.

Term of appointment

Lay Examiners will be appointed for a term of six years which will include a one-year probationary period. Lay Examiners can be re-appointed for a further term of three years at the discretion of the College.

Expenses and remuneration

A daily honorarium of £125 will be paid. Travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed to agreed rates.

How to apply

Suitable applicants are encouraged to apply and may do so by submitting a completed application form to one of the Surgical Royal Colleges whose addresses appear below.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9DW
0131 527 1600
Fax: 0131 668 9218
E-mail: examinations@rcsed.ac.uk
Web: www.rcsed.ac.uk

The Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London
WC2A 3PE
0207 869 6281
Fax: 0207 869 6290
E-mail: mrcs&dohns@rcseng.ac.uk
Web: www.rcseng.ac.uk

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
232-242 Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5RJ
0141 221 6072
Fax: 0141 241 6222
E-mail: imrcs@rcpsg.ac.uk
Web: www.rcpsg.ac.uk

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
123 St Stephens Green
Dublin 2
Ireland
00353 1402 2221
Email: examinations@rcsi.ie
Web: www.rcsi.ie