

**Primary and Final FRCA Examinations  
(Selection and Appointments of  
Examiners)  
Regulations**



**Edition date: 1 September 2018**  
**Replacing edition date: 1 April 2018**

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## 1. Commencement and Revocation

These Regulations shall be known as the Royal College of Anaesthetists' Primary and Final FRCA Examinations (Selection and Appointment of Examiners) Regulations and shall come into force on 1 April 2017. All previous decisions of Council ETE Board relating to this subject are hereby revoked.

## 2. Definitions

The words and phrases in the left hand column shall have the meanings attached to them in the right hand column:

<b>Board</b>	The Board of Examiners of the Primary or Final FRCA examinations.
<b>Chair</b>	Relevant exam or committee Chairperson
<b>College</b>	The Royal College of Anaesthetists.
<b>Committee</b>	The Examinations Committee of the Royal College of Anaesthetists.
<b>Council</b>	The Council of the Royal College of Anaesthetists.
<b>Dismissal</b>	The removal of an examiner following a decision of Council.
<b>ETE Board</b>	The Education, Training and Examinations Board.
<b>Examinership term</b>	The standard duration of appointment for examiners.
<b>Extension</b>	An increase in the duration of a standard examinership term.
<b>Flexible working</b>	An option for examiners to work on a flexible basis.
<b>Job Description (JD)</b>	The Job Description for the role of FRCA Examiner.
<b>LTFT</b>	Less Than Full Time. Examiners may request to examine on a less than full time basis.
<b>Person Spec (PS)</b>	The Person Specification for the role of FRCA Examiner.
<b>Re-appointment</b>	a The appointment of an examiner who has retired within the previous two years for a further specified number of years. b The appointment of a former examiner to a second full term.
<b>Resignation</b>	The departure of an examiner at his/her request before the end of his/her full term of office.
<b>Retirement</b>	The departure of an examiner at the end of his/her term of examinership.
<b>Selection group</b>	A minimum of eight members of the Exams Committee who have all held senior roles within the exams or training process.
<b>Stand down</b>	A period of one academic year during which an examiner is prospectively excused from all duties.

## 3. Introduction

- 3.1 Appointments to the Boards of Examiners of Primary and Final FRCA examinations shall be made at least annually by Council on the advice of the Examinations Committee.
- 3.2 The size of each Board shall be determined by Council on the advice of the Committee.

## 4. Appointment of new Examiners

- 4.1 Appointments are normally for an examinership of 10 years. Council reserve to right to change the term of examinership as required
- 4.2 New examiners shall be appointed to the Board of Primary Examiners. Appointments to the Board of Final Examiners shall normally be made from the Board of Primary Examiners.
- 4.3 **Advertising Vacancies:** Details of the selection process and vacancies for the following academic year shall be published

in the *Bulletin* and such other publications as the Committee may decide, in sufficient time for a list of nominations to be presented to Council by a date that it shall from time to time decide.

- 4.4 **Examiner specification:** Applicants shall be assessed against the FRCA Examiner Person Spec. as set out at Appendix A. In addition throughout their term of examinership, examiners are expected to adhere to the duties and responsibilities set out in the FRCA Examiner Job description which is at Appendix B.
- 4.5 **Selection Procedures:**
- 4.5.1 At the closing date for examiner applications, all applicants are allocated a specific 'examiner application number', application forms, less the personal information page and Equal opportunities form, are then circulated to the selection group. Initial scoring of application forms are carried out using the following scoring system:
- 10 – Meets essential criteria and excellent in ALL aspects.
  - 6 – Meets essential criteria and good/excellent in SOME aspects.
  - 2 – Meets essential criteria.
  - 0 – Fails to meet essential criteria.
- Applicants' scores are summed and ranked. The cut-off score depends on the expected number of vacancies.
- 4.5.2 Following short-listing, requests for references from the Clinical Director and Regional Advisor of each applicant are posted. These are considered at the Examination Committee meeting in mid-February where the final selections are decided upon.
- 4.5.3 At a subsequent meeting the Committee shall confirm how many new examiners must be appointed to bring the Boards up to strength for the following academic year. They are then to select on *merit* new examiners for recommendation to Council. The following factors will be considered:
- a. The application form, judged against the PS and the ability to carry out the JD. Applicants must meet all essential criteria as set out in the PS at the time of submission of their application form, with exception of 5 years as a consultant/SAS doctor which must be met by 1 July on year of appointment.
  - b. Reports from Clinical Directors and Regional Advisors.
  - c. In the selection process consideration may be given to an appropriate balance based on the following factors:
    - (i) Geographic distribution
    - (ii) Types of hospital
    - (iii) Special interests directly relevant to the FRCA examinations.
    - (iv) Clinical vs. academic
    - (v) Protected characteristics
- 4.5.4 The recommendations from the Examination Committee are considered by Council at their meeting in mid-March. Notification will follow by official letter. New examiners are appointed, subject to a probationary period, to the Board of Primary FRCA Examiners.
- 4.6 **Complaints policy:** Examiner applicants have a right to express their dissatisfaction with the way in which any part of the selection process has been done and feel confident that such a complaint is handled in a fair and consistent way. Applicants who consider they have grounds for complaint should use the policy set out at paragraphs 20-31 of the FRCA Examinations (Reviews and Appeals) Regulations.
- 4.7 **Examiner Training:** No examiner shall take up his/her appointment until he/she has successfully completed a period of training approved by Council. Mandatory training includes: Principles of assessment, taking part in mock exams and exam specific Equality and Diversity training. Before examining independently, the examiner elect must observe each relevant component of the examination and will therefore be invited to visit the Primary OSCE/SOE in advance of the training day or spend a day as an observer at their first exam week.
- 4.8 **Examiner update and quality assurance:** Established examiners will be given regular training through update sessions and sharing best practice meetings. All examiners are expected to undertake annual E&D training (see 12.1). All examiners will be subject to quality assurance of their performance. All examiners receive a full appraisal at the end of their probationary year. At year five of their examiner term and after their first year in a new examiner board (moving from Primary to Final) (see paragraph 6).

## 5. Appointment of Final Examiners

- 5.1 Final FRCA examiners shall normally be appointed from the Board of Primary Examiners.
- 5.2 Before the meeting to appoint new examiners the Chair of the Primary and Final Board of Examiners will announce which examiners intend to retire and which examiners wish to extend their term of examinership (subject to ETE Board approval) at the end of the current academic year. This will give an indication on how many examiners are required in each board to bring them up to strength for the next academic year. The Examinations Committee shall then select, either from volunteers or others, sufficient examiners to bring the Board of Final Examiners up to strength and how many new examiners need to be recruited to the Primary Board.

## 6. Examiner Review

- 6.1 **Probationary Year:** New examiners shall initially be appointed for a probationary year (including a minimum of two examinations) the Chair of the relevant board shall assess each examiner's performance and recommend to the Committee that the examiner should:
- be confirmed in appointment;
  - continue as a probationer for a specified period; or
  - not be confirmed in his/her appointment.
- 6.2 **Final Examiners:** At the end of their first year of examining in the Final FRCA examination the Chair of Final Examiners shall review the performance of examiners new to the Final FRCA and recommend to the Committee whether or not their appointment should be confirmed.
- 6.3 **Routine Review:** At the end of every academic year the Committee shall review the performance of all examiners. Examiners whose performance is considered to be unsatisfactory may be:
- reviewed again after a further period determined by the Committee, possibly with a requirement for further training;
  - asked to resign; or
  - dismissed in accordance with the *Regulations for the Removal of College Officer Holders*.

## 7. Stand Down

- 7.1 Before the meeting to appoint new examiners all existing examiners shall be asked if they wish to or are willing to stand down, a stand down period is normally for one academic year.
- 7.2 The Committee may approve requests to stand down, or ask examiners to stand down on the grounds of:
- managing the number of new examiners to be recruited whilst maintaining the Boards at their approved strength.
  - individual professional or personal circumstances.
- 7.3 **Extensions to examiners' terms:** Any examiner who is allowed/requested to stand down will automatically have their examinership term extended by one year. If an examiner is allowed/requested to stand down for a second or subsequent time, then normally they will be allowed to extend their examinership term again but the decision shall be made on a case by case basis by the Committee.
- 7.4 **In-year requests to stand down:** If an examiner asks to stand down during an academic year, the Chair of the relevant Board shall at his/her discretion allow the examiner to be absent from the rest of that academic year's examinations. If the examiner at the time or subsequently requests that his/her term of examinership should be extended the decision shall be made on a case by case basis by the Committee.

- 7.5 **Ill-health/Pregnancy:** If an examiner asks to stand down during an academic year through pregnancy or ill-health, the case shall be treated as described in paragraph 7.1 and 7.2 with the following proviso: if they subsequently request an extension to their examinership term it shall be automatically granted for one year. Further requests to extend their term of examinership, whether under the terms of this paragraph or paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4, shall be considered on a case by case basis by the Committee.

## 8. Adjustments to examining commitments

- 8.1 **Flexible working:** The RCoA are happy to consider applications from FRCA examiners who wish to work on a 'flexible' basis provided they have legitimate reasons to do so (see 8.1b). Applications to move to flexible working must normally be received by the Chair of the relevant examination, no later than October each year, with the intention to approve flexible working at the commencement of the following academic year. Newly appointed examiners cannot carry out flexible working during their first (probationary) year. However, they may make an application at the midway point of their first year to commence flexible working at the beginning of their second year.

- a. The minimum commitment for an examiner who has been approved flexible working is:

Primary: 3 x 3 day examining commitment per academic year (9 days)

Final: 2 x 3 day examining and 2 x SAQ/CRQ standard checking days (8 days)

- b. Flexible working applications should meet one or more of the following legitimate reasons; category 1 applicants will be given priority over category 2 applicants:

Category 1:

- Disability
- Ill health
- Responsibility for caring for children
- Primary carer for ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent

Category 2:

- Unique opportunities for own personal/professional development
- Short term extraordinary responsibility

Other well-founded reasons may be considered but will be dependent on the particular circumstances of the individual applicant.

- c. Flexible working is not an automatic right and may be declined by the chair. When considering applications the chair will take into account the operational requirements of the examination as a whole, the number of examiners already working a flexible routine and the individual circumstances of the applicant concerned. Flexible working will not extend the length of examinership. Flexible working appointments will be subject to annual review.

- 8.2 **Examining on a less than full-time basis:** The RCoA is currently trialling a 'flexible working' system, see section 8.1. In the majority of cases flexible working will meet the requirements of examiners who are experiencing commitment issues in respect to the legitimate reason categories listed at sub-paragraph 8.1b. However, it is acknowledged that some examiners who meet category 1 circumstances are still not able to meet the commitment of a flexible working examiner. Where this is the case, such examiners should discuss the details of their circumstances with the chair of the relevant examination. If the chair considers the circumstances warrant the consideration of reducing examiner commitment further than flexible working allows, then the matter will be forwarded to the examinations committee for their consideration. Each application will be judged on its own merit but the over-riding consideration will be the staffing requirements of the relevant examinations. Any changes agreed to the commitment required will not extend examinership. The terms of the reduced commitment agreed by the examinations committee will be reviewed annually.

## 9. Retirement and resignation

- 9.1 **Retirement:** Unless otherwise approved by the ETE Board, examiners must retire at the end of their appointed term or on ceasing to be active in clinical practice and in the education of trainees. Those who retire from clinical practice may continue to examine to the end of the academic year in which case they cease clinical practice.
- 9.2 **Resignation:**
- If an examiner wishes to resign it should normally take effect from the end of the academic year.
  - The ETE Board reserves the right, acting on the advice of the Committee, to ask an examiner to resign at any time.
  - An examiner who resigns may subsequently apply to be re-appointed for the balance of his term of office.

## 10. Extension and re-appointments

- 10.1 **Extensions:** On the advice of the Committee, Council may invite examiners who are about to retire from their examiner term to extend their term of examinership annually by one year to do a maximum of 12 years total examinership.
- 10.2 **Re-appointments:** On the advice of the Committee, the ETE Board may invite examiners who have retired to return as examiners for a specified number of years.

## 11. Confirmation of appointment

Examiners shall not be deemed to be appointed, re-appointed, extended, stood down, resigned or dismissed until motions to that effect have been formally approved by the ETE Board. Examiners elect must attend a Council inauguration ceremony to be formally accepted into the role of FRCA examiner.

## 12. Dismissal of Examiners

If an examiner's performance or conduct consistently fails to reach an acceptable standard the Committee may recommend to ETE Board that he/she should be asked to resign. If they refuse they should be dismissed. This procedure must be conducted in accordance with the *Regulations for the Dismissal of College Office Holders*.

## 13. Equality and diversity

- 13.1 **Aims:** The FRCA examinations aims to provide an environment for candidates that is free from discrimination and that no candidate receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of their protected characteristics. The College will only assess candidates on the basis of performance and demonstrated competency. To achieve this, the College will provide regular exam specific E&D training for examiners. Monitor examiner behaviour and review methods of assessment, exam policies and practices for fairness and relevance.
- 13.2 The College is committed to enforcing its policy<sup>†</sup> regarding equal opportunities for all and will not accept behavior from staff, examiners or candidates which constitutes an infringement to this policy or results in unlawful discrimination on any grounds.
- 13.3 **Data Collection:** Diversity information on trainees, examiners and examination candidates is collected at registration with the College, requests to confirm/update information will also be requested at application for examinership. By supplying this information, examiners, give their consent to its use for the following purposes:
- to allow quality control of examinations
  - to assist in the provision of equal opportunities to all

A summary of the data collected is used in conjunction with examination data in annual reports and examinations statistics.

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<sup>†</sup> Royal College of Anaesthetist; Equal Opportunities Policy, 2014



## Annex A

### FRCA Examiner – Person Specification

PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	Application and Selection	Examinership
<b>Essential</b>		
Fellow by examination, Fellow ad eundem or Fellow by election	✓	✓
Substantive Consultant/SAS grade Anaesthetist in the NHS	✓	✓
In good standing with the College	✓	✓
Holds full registration, without limitation, with the GMC	✓	✓
In active clinical practice in the NHS	✓	✓
Able to commit at least 12 days per academic year or part time equivalent and have the support of Trust to achieve this. May apply for less than full-time or flexible working on completion of first (probationary) year	✓	✓
Has the expectation of completing no less than 6 years and no more than 12 years as an examiner.	✓	
<b>Desirable</b>		
Able to demonstrate a special interest relevant to the balance of expertise required	✓	
<b>PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL AND OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING</b>	<b>Application and Selection</b>	<b>Examinership</b>
<b>Essential</b>		
Demonstrates commitment to ongoing assessment, training and development as an examiner/trainer	✓	✓
Attendance at Equality and Diversity Training*	✓	✓
Participates in revalidation, including annual appraisal in current post, and adherence to CPD requirements	✓	✓
Will have visited a Primary or Final FRCA Examination within the last five years at the time of being short-listed (February following recruitment round).	✓	
<b>Desirable</b>		
Able to demonstrate the involvement in written and electronic publications that are of particular relevance to training/education and basic sciences of anaesthesia	✓	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>Application and Selection</b>	<b>Examinership</b>
<b>Essential</b>		
At least three years-experience as a substantive Consultant/SAS grade in the NHS	✓	

Active involvement and commitment to the education and training of anaesthetic trainees	✓	✓
<b>Desirable</b>		
Has held or holds an official anaesthetic trainer post such as CT, RA or involvement in the organisation and delivery of a regional exam course	✓	
<b>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>Application and Selection</b>	<b>Examinership</b>
<b>Essential</b>		
Excellent written and verbal communications skills	✓	✓
Proven team player who sets and achieves high standards	✓	✓
<b>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>Application and Selection</b>	<b>Examinership</b>
<b>Essential</b>		
Demonstrates high professional standards as a trainer and/or examiner	✓	✓
Fully up to date with the requirements and practices of Anaesthesia	✓	✓
Demonstrates courtesy, fairness and non-discrimination towards all trainees/candidates	✓	✓
Demonstrates an understanding of the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes required of a candidate to pass FRCA Examination components	✓	✓
<b>PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>Application and Selection</b>	<b>Examinership</b>
<b>Essential</b>		
Highly self-motivated	✓	✓
Meticulous attention to detail	✓	✓
Ability to form excellent working relationships at all levels	✓	✓
Able to handle challenging people and situations with discretion, tact and diplomacy	✓	✓
Friendly and consultative attitude	✓	✓
Willingness to contribute to wider aims of training and assessment	✓	✓
*On application E&D training must have been carried out within the last 3 years. On acceptance of examinership, examiners are expected to undertake E&D training specific to examinations on an annual basis (this is arranged by the College).		

## Annex B

### FRCA Examiner – Job Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	FRCA Examiner
<b>Responsible to:</b>	The Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners
<b>Accountable to:</b>	The Chair of the Committee/The ETE Board/Council
<b>Liaison with:</b>	The Examinations department
<b>Reference:</b>	The Primary and Final FRCA Examinations (Selections and Appointment of Examiner) Regulations ( <i>the regulations</i> )

#### BACKGROUND

There are two parts, Primary and Final. The Primary OSCE/SOE examinations are conducted in November, January and May, the Final SOE examinations in December and June. In addition the Primary MCQ is held in September, November and March and the Final Written in September and March. Examiners are expected to commit to a minimum of 12 days per academic year and they must have the approval of their Trust at the time of application. Applications from applicants who wish to examine on a flexible or a less than full time (LTFT) basis will be considered, providing they are able to fulfil all other examiner commitments and requirements as set out in the PS and JD for this position. Further details are available in *the regulations*.

#### THE ROLE

An FRCA Examiner is one of a team of examiners responsible for assessing the performance of candidates taking part in FRCA examinations. Examiners are recruited to the Final and Primary exam as required; initial appointment is subject to a probationary year. Examiners will be expected to actively contribute to the continuous development of examination content, procedure and processes and will give the highest priority to the examination above all other commitments.

#### GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Full commitment to the College and the examination processes
- Assessment and guidance of candidates
- Attendance and contribution to Core Groups and Working Parties
- Participation in induction and ongoing training programmes
- To uphold all examination regulations, policies and principles
- To observe and maintain the confidentiality and integrity of all FRCA examinations

#### SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

##### 1. Full commitment to the College and its Examination processes

- To remain in good standing with the College and hold full registration with the GMC
- To have the expectancy of completing at least 10 years as an examiner
- Attendance at two exam diets per academic year or part-time equivalent
- Attendance and/or contribution to joint writing days where required
- Active contribution to the development and submission of questions
- To actively participate in ensuring the examinations are of the highest standards
- To contribute to questions and content for the e-LA project as required
- To take part in the appraisal process as required

## 2. Assessment and guidance of candidates

- To examine all candidates in accordance with the FRCA regulations, marking schemes and examiner guidance
- To complete all marking processes in accordance with guidelines and templates
- To give full and fair consideration where appropriate, to equality and diversity whilst ensuring the integrity and validity of the examination is upheld
- Attendance at call-over, examiner meetings and briefings
- Timely attendance at examinations stations as allocated
- To provide clear and concise feedback to candidates regarding poor performance
- To actively assist in the Guidance of candidates

## 3. Attendance and contribution to Core Groups and Working Parties

- To keep the Chair informed of relevant expertise and specific interests
- To attend meetings of Core Group/Working Party allocated, where possible
- To attend paper and standard checking days if a Final examiner
- Actively contribute to the duties of the Core Group/Working Party
- Regular submission of ideas and comments
- Participation in the standard setting and question setting processes
- To strive to take on a leadership role and provide assistance to others

## 4. Participation in induction and ongoing training programmes

- To attend the mandatory training programme as an examiner elect
- To undertake annual examiner Equality and Diversity training programmes
- To attend Sim-man training where possible
- To attend further training as required
- To seek involvement in the training of others

## 5. To uphold all examination regulations, policies and principles

- To be fully conversant with all FRCA examinations regulations
- To keep up to date with examination changes
- To actively apply and promote the policies and principles of the College
- To feedback examiner appraisal documents to departmental appraisers

## 6. To observe and maintain the confidentiality and integrity of all FRCA examinations

- To adhere to the terms and conditions of secure question banks and examiner websites
- To observe the confidentiality and copyright of examination content at all times
- To draw any matter causing concern to the attention of the relevant Chair

<b>Signed</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Date</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Print Name</b>	<input type="text"/>		

## Annex C

### Involvement in teaching, publishing, examination practice and revision courses: principles for examiners

Examiners for the FRCA are expected to adhere to the following principles when involved with local teaching examinations practice and courses, or in the writing of revision textbooks.<sup>†</sup> *The declaration that an examiner takes on appointment clearly states that they agree to give the highest priority to the examination above other commitments.* The core principles are:

- 1 Examiner should support their local trainees and others on courses, whenever possible by helping in local teaching and delivering courses for the examinations.
- 2 An examiner may help and advise other local 'examiners' in such activities as standard setting, appropriate behaviour, time keeping.
- 3 For local teaching or text book writing, examiners should only use questions in the public domain (for example those published by the College) or provided by the course organisers. It is inappropriate either to suggest topics or give more concrete examples of questions. This compromises both the FRCA examination and the integrity of the examiner concerned.
- 4 Examiners are expected to support the FRCA examination by developing questions for use in this examination. Such questions are to be kept strictly confidential and must under no circumstances be used in other situations/courses/books as such use would inevitably compromise the fairness and impartiality of the FRCA examination.
- 5 Examiners must be aware that there is a clear conflict of interest in being an examiner at the same time as managing or playing an equally significant role in a local examination preparation course or the writing of revision textbooks.
- 6 The examinations committee, as part of the annual re-appointment of examiners, will review any activity associated with local courses and take it into consideration when deciding on individual re-appointment.

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<sup>†</sup> Textbooks in this context includes electronic forms of publishing.

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**Information correct as at September 2018**