

# **Primary and Final FRCA Examinations** Regulations





### Revisions from the August 2015 edition

Regulation 13(iv)	Former trainee not currently practicing anaesthesia added.
Regulation 28(d)	Special arrangement in respect to exam adjustment for pregnancy related condition added.
Appendix 3	Normal exam adjustments for dyslexic candidates. Full re-write of appendix.

### Revisions from the September 2016 edition

Regulation 25	14 day rule for admin charges applied.
Appendix 4	Chair's commendation letter added.
Appendix 10	Curriculum feedback added the Primary MCQ Provisions in table 3.5
Appendix 3	Normal exam judgements for dyslexic candidates removed
Appendix 3	New policy: Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy added
Appendix 9	Disability Policy removed
Appendix 9	Moved from Appendix 10: Candidate Examination Feedback Policy.

### Revisions from the September 2017 edition

Regulation 17	ICM dual training programme (ICM/Anaesthetics) added to Final
Regulation 19	Fellowship in Anaesthesiology of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan, removed from the list of exemption qualifications
Section 13	New paragraph 37, Equality Analysis added
Appendix 1	New Final FRCA SOE structure added
Appendix 2	New Final FRCA SOE marking system added
Appendix 9	New Final FRCA SOE feedback added.

### Revisions from the September 2018 edition

Regulation 19	Master of Medicine (Anaesthesia) of the National University of Singapore, removed from the list of exemption qualifications
	Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons; 'before October 2019' added
Throughout	Short Answer Question (SAQ) replaced with 'Constructed Response Question (CRQ).

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# Introduction

The Regulations which govern the content and conduct of the examinations leading to the award of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, specify:

- eligibility requirements;
- application procedures;
- limitations on the number of attempts;
- the options for guidance in the event of failure;
- the College statements on Equality and Diversity and Equality Analysis.
- Procedures for making representations, complaints and appeals, reasonable adjustment and special arrangement requests; and
- the procedures used for dealing with misconduct.

These Regulations have been approved by Council of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. Regulations are subject to change by the General Medical Council/Royal College of Anaesthetists.

The list of Appendices cover:

- Exam structure and marking systems.
- Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy.
- Prize and commendation criteria.
- Dress codes.
- Electronic Devices, Mobile Phones and Smart Watches Policy.
- Misconduct and Copyright Policy.
- Additional Educational Training Form – AET Form1.
- Candidate Feedback Policy.

# Regulations

## Section 1: Training Definitions

- 1 (a) For the purpose of these Regulations a trainee is someone who has received ‘approved training’ in the UK and/or the Republic of Ireland.
- (b) For the purpose of these Regulations ‘approved training’ means training:
- (i) which is part of a UK GMC approved programme of training in Anaesthetics, Acute Care Common Stem (ACCS) or Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) (dual) programme which, if satisfactorily completed, may contribute to the award of a Certificate of Completion of Training in Anaesthetics/Certificate of Eligibility of Specialist Registration (Combined Programme) (CESR) (CP); or
  - (ii) which has been approved by the College of Anaesthetists, Ireland;
  - (iii) and which is appropriate to the part of the examination for which the candidate is applying.
  - (iv) Former UK trainees are doctors who have previously attended training as described above. Time restriction conditions may apply.
- (c) (i) Non-UK anaesthetic trainees are anaesthetic doctors who have not carried out approved training as described in paragraph 1(b). Non-UK anaesthetic trainee applicants will be required to meet comparable eligibility criteria to that met by a UK trainee.
- (ii) Non-UK anaesthetic trainee applicants applying for Final examinations must have been employed as an anaesthetist in a UK NHS post for at least 12 continuous months immediately prior to the date of the exam applied for. (This also applies to Former Irish Trainees who have been out of an Irish training programme for more than five years).
- (d) ICM (single) programme trainees are only eligible to apply for Primary FRCA exams.
- (e) Foundation trainees are trainees currently attending a UK Medical Foundation Programme (F1 and F2). Foundation trainees are eligible to apply for the Primary FRCA MCQ examination in order to provide further opportunity to build on experience gained in an anaesthetic placement.
- (f) RCoA MTI are doctors currently sponsored under the RCoA Medical Training Initiative (MTI) applicants, are normally only recognised for examination purposes whilst under sponsorship. However, if at the end of their sponsorship an MTI applicant has passed one or more exam components of an exam part (Primary or Final) but have further components to complete to pass the relevant exam part overall. Then they will be allowed further attempts at the outstanding component for a maximum period of one year from the end of sponsorship, providing they remain eligible in all other respects.
- (g) Exemption qualifications (paragraph 19), are qualifications that are considered acceptable by the Education, Training and Examinations (ETE) board in place of a pass in the Primary FRCA (conditions apply), as part eligibility towards the FRCA Final examinations only. Information regarding examinations which can be used for recruitment to or passage through anaesthetic training, can be found on the training section of the College website.

## Section 2: Commencement and Revocation

- 2 (a) These Regulations shall come into force on 1 December 2019 and will apply to examinations commencing on or after that date.
- (b) These Examination Regulations made by the ETE Board of the Royal College of Anaesthetists supersede any previous Regulations which are hereby revoked.

## Section 3: Examinations

- 3 (a) The examination for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (FRCA) will be in two parts. The first part will be known as the Primary FRCA Examination and the second part will be known as the Final FRCA Examination.
- (b) There will normally be three sittings of the Primary FRCA Examination and two sittings of the Final FRCA Examination in each academic year. The ETE Board may at any time decide, subject to notice, to alter the number of sittings of either or both parts in any year.
- (c) The subject matter of each part of the examination is specified in the relevant parts of The CCT in Anaesthetics; Annex B: Core Level Training, and Annex C: Intermediate Level Training ([available on the College website](#)).
- (d) The nature of each examination, together with details of the marking systems used and the prizes and commendations which may be awarded are described in Appendices 1, 2 and 4 of these Regulations.

- (e) All FRCA examinations are conducted in English. Where a candidate's first language is not English, an applicant's communication and written skills in English should be equivalent to a level which a doctor could successfully pass the PLAB test or at a level of approximately 7.5/9 across all bands of the IELTS.

## Primary FRCA

- 4 The Primary FRCA Examination is divided into three sections taken on two separate days subject to Regulation 5(c):
- a Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) paper;
  - an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE); and
  - a Structured Oral Examination (SOE).
- 5
- (a) Candidates must pass the MCQ paper before they can apply to sit the OSCE and SOE.
- (b) A pass in the MCQ paper will be valid for three years to the date of the sitting applied for, after which time if the whole examination has not been passed, the MCQ must be re-taken.
- (c) At the first attempt the OSCE and SOE sections must be taken together. Failure to attend at both sections, will result in that attempt being recorded as fail in both sections. If one section is failed, only that section must be retaken, subject to Regulations 5(b) and (d). If both sections are failed, then they must be retaken at the same sitting.
- (d) A pass in the OSCE or SOE will be valid for three years, after which time if the whole examination has not been passed, the relevant section(s) must be re-taken.
- (e) Candidates will be allowed six attempts at the MCQ, OSCE and SOE, subject to remaining eligible under Regulations 13 and 15. Candidates will be required to provide evidence of additional educational training for the sixth attempt at each component. Full details are set out at Regulation 8.
- (f) Under Regulation 17(b) (i) a pass in the whole Primary FRCA Examination is valid for seven years to the date of the sitting applied, for entry to the Final FRCA Examination.
- (g) A pass in the Primary FRCA Examination does not automatically entitle eligibility to apply for the Final FRCA. The eligibility for the Final FRCA Examination components are listed at Section 7.

## Final FRCA

- 6 The Final FRCA Examination is divided into two sections taken on two separate days:
- a written section consisting of: a Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) paper and a Constructed Response Question (CRQ) paper; and
  - a Structured Oral Examination (SOE).
- 7
- (a) Candidates must pass the written section before they can apply to sit the SOE.
- (b) A pass in the written section will be valid for three years to the date of the sitting applied for, after which time, if the whole examination has not been passed, the written section must be re-taken.
- (c) Candidates will be allowed six attempts at each section subject to remaining eligible under Regulation 17. Candidates will be required to provide evidence of additional educational training for the sixth attempt at each component. Full details are set out at regulation 8.

## Additional Educational Training

- 8 In addition to remaining eligible under Regulations 13, 15 or 17 as applicable, at the sixth attempt at any component of the Primary or Final FRCA, a candidate must provide evidence of additional educational experience/training as follows:
- (a) Prior to application for further attempts after the fifth attempt a candidate must:
- Discuss their final attempt and suitability for anaesthetic training with their College Tutor or equivalent. Their College Tutor or equivalent must support a further attempt in writing through the submission of the 'Additional Educational Training form; AET Form1' at Appendix 8.
- The form must be submitted to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations at least three months in advance of the date of the next intended sitting.
- (i) If a candidate has not already attended a guidance interview for this component then they must attend a guidance interview in accordance with Section 11 of the Regulations, a second guidance interview can also be arranged if required.
- (ii) Re-application must be made after a period of additional training which has been discussed and agreed by the College Tutor or Supervising Anaesthetic Consultant after consultation with the in-house anaesthetic training team. A full

training programme is mandatory and is set out on the form as follows:

- (a) Attendance/planned attendance at a recognised FRCA course either locally or nationally.
- (b) Details of examination practice for the relevant component (e.g. OSCE, SOE practice, or MCQ practice etc.).
- (c) Evidence of modules undertaken or planned to be taken in e-Learning Anaesthesia (e-LA), if applicable to the relevant examination component since failing at the fifth attempt.
- (d) Details of further clinical exposure and training as discussed with a College Tutor appropriate to the relevant examination component.

### Attempts under previous Regulations

- 9 All attempts at Primary and Final examinations taken under previous regulations count in full against attempts allowed under the current Regulations.

## Section 4: Prioritisation of Applications

- 10 There is no prioritisation for the Primary MCQ or Final written papers, but candidates may not always get their first choice of venue.
- 11 (a) Subject to eligibility in all other respects to sit the Primary OSCE/SOE or Final SOE priority will be given to applicants who are:
- (i) trainees currently in Deanery approved training posts on a GMC approved training programme in Anaesthetics (as defined in these Regulations);
  - (ii) trainees sponsored by the College under the MTI scheme
  - (iii) Specialty/Staff and Associate Specialist (SAS) grade doctors
- (b) The following applicants will be accepted, in the order listed, if the College has the capacity to examine them at the sitting applied for, in the Primary OSCE and/or SOE and Final SOE:
- (i) ACCS/ICM (single programme) trainees (Primary OSCE/SOE)
  - (ii) former UK anaesthetic trainees;
  - (iii) trainees currently in approved training posts in the Republic of Ireland; and
  - (iv) all other eligible categories not listed above.

Candidates in the above categories will automatically be booked on to exams on application. However, the College reserves the right to move candidates listed at 11(b) to a later sitting of the exam should there be insufficient capacity to examine them at the sitting applied for.

- 12 Specialists directed by the GMC to undergo an assessment of knowledge of Anaesthesia to support an application for entry to the Specialist Register under the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) route will be admitted to the appropriate examination(s) under special arrangements.

The College recommends that candidates should not sit the Primary MCQ until they have passed the Initial Assessment of Competency (IAC) in anaesthetics

## Section 5: Eligibility for the Primary FRCA MCQ Examination

- 13 A person is eligible to enter the Primary FRCA MCQ paper who:
- (a) holds full registration without limitation with the General Medical Council (United Kingdom), or holds equivalent national registration with an overseas Medical Council; and



- (b)
    - (i) is currently registered with the College or appropriate Faculty as a trainee in a Deanery approved training post on a GMC approved training programme in Anaesthetics, ACCS, ICM or the UK Foundation Programme;\* or
    - (ii) is currently registered as a trainee in Anaesthetics with the College of Anaesthetists, Ireland; or
    - (iii) is currently registered with the College in a recognised membership category (not an Affiliate grade) and presently working as a practising anaesthetist; or
    - (iv) is currently registered with the College in a recognised membership category (not Affiliate grade) and if not currently working as an anaesthetist, is a former UK or Irish anaesthetic trainee who left anaesthetic training no more than five years before the published start date of the sitting applied for; or
    - (v) will have successfully applied for Temporary Examination Eligibility (TEE) (which includes currently practicing as an anaesthetist) with the College three calendar months prior to the date of the examination applied for, and
  - (c) satisfies the requirements of these Regulations with regard to application procedures and other matters.
- 14 A person shall not be eligible to enter for the Primary MCQ paper who has already attempted and failed that paper six times. Or where a matter under review or appeal remains unresolved. See Regulation 35(d).

## Section 6: Eligibility for the Primary FRCA OSCE and SOE

The College strongly recommends that candidates should not sit the Primary FRCA OSCE and SOE until they are at least halfway through their Core level training programme in anaesthetics.

- 15 A person is eligible to enter the Primary FRCA OSCE and SOE who:
- (a) is eligible to enter the Primary FRCA MCQ paper as prescribed in Regulation 13, with the exception that Foundation Trainees are not eligible for this exam;†
  - (b) has passed the Primary FRCA MCQ paper‡ within three years before the published starting date of the sitting applied for and:
  - (c)
    - (i) has been awarded the Initial Assessment of Competency in Anaesthetics (IAC); or
    - (ii) has been awarded the College of Anaesthetists, Ireland equivalent of the IAC; or
    - (iii) a doctor practising anaesthesia in the UK in a non-UK training post who has not been awarded the IAC, may submit a satisfactory NHS appraisal at a standard equivalent to that of a Deanery ARCP; or
    - (iv) is currently sponsored under the RCoA MTI and has a written report from the College Tutor (see paragraph 1e); or
    - (v) has been awarded an overseas anaesthetic competency in anaesthetics which is comparable to the UK IAC;§ and
  - (d) satisfies the requirements of these Regulations with regard to application procedures and other matters.
- 16 A person shall not be eligible to enter for the Primary FRCA OSCE and/or SOE who has attempted and failed either the OSCE and/or SOE section of the Primary FRCA examination six times. Or where a matter under review or appeal remains unresolved.

\* On receipt of application, ACCS and Foundation trainees will be given temporary registration with the College for examination purposes. ICM trainees will be accepted under their Faculty registration.

† Foundation trainees are eligible for the Primary MCQ only (see paragraph 1(d)). ACCS and ICM (single programme) trainees are eligible for all Primary FRCA components.

‡ A pass in the CARCSI/CAI Primary/MCAI MCQ Examination does not give exemption from the FRCA Primary MCQ Examination.

§ Overseas anaesthetic competency certificates must be provided on application and prove clinical competency comparable to the UK Initial Assessment of Competency in Anaesthetics. Certificates must be accompanied by a letter of authentication in English from a senior anaesthetic consultant or notary. The final decision on comparability of overseas IAC certificates lies with the Chair of the Primary Examination.

## Section 7: Eligibility for the Final FRCA Examination and Exemption Qualifications

The College strongly recommends that candidates should not sit the Final FRCA examinations until they are at least one third of the way through their intermediate level training programme in anaesthetics.

- 17 A person is eligible to enter for the Final FRCA Examination who:
- (a)
    - (i) holds full registration without limitation with the General Medical Council (UK)<sup>¶</sup> and;
    - (ii) is currently registered with the College as a trainee in a Deanery approved training post on a GMC approved training programme in anaesthetics (as defined in these Regulations); or
    - (iii) is currently registered with the College/Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine as a trainee in a Deanery approved training post on a GMC training programme in anaesthetics and intensive care medicine, or
    - (iv) is currently registered as a trainee in Anaesthetics with the College of Anaesthetists Ireland; or
    - (v) is a member of their respective College; left an approved training post in the United Kingdom or Ireland no more than five years before the published starting date of the sitting applied for; or
    - (vi) is currently registered with the College in a recognised membership category (not an Affiliate grade); is a former UK trainee or a non-UK anaesthetic trainee applicant who has been employed continuously in a UK NHS post as a practising anaesthetist for at least 12 months immediately prior to the date of the exam applied for; or
    - (vii) is currently sponsored under the RCoA MTI; and been employed as an anaesthetist in a NHS post for six months immediately prior to the date of the examination applied for (see paragraph 1e); or
    - (viii) is a Specialty/SAS Grade Doctor who:
      - left approved training more than five years before the published start date of the sitting applied for;
      - is currently practising anaesthesia in the UK;
      - is a member of The College;
      - holds a satisfactory NHS appraisal, and:
  - (b)
    - (i) has passed the Primary FRCA examination or an exempting qualification listed at paragraph 19 within seven years before the published start date of the sitting applied for; or
    - (ii) satisfies the conditions stated in Regulation 19 even if they have failed any part of the Primary FRCA examination by the maximum number of attempts allowed, and:
  - (c)
    - (i) has been awarded the UK Core Level Training Certificate (CLTC) in anaesthetics, an equivalent, or the Irish Certificate of Completion of Core Specialist Training (CCCST); or
    - (ii) if they are currently sponsored under the RCoA MTI, has received at least one satisfactory supervisor's report at a standard equivalent to that of an Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) before the published closing date of the sitting applied for; or
    - (iii) if they have not been in a UK or Irish anaesthetic training programme in the last five years; and is not sponsored under MTI; has received at least one satisfactory NHS Appraisal at a standard equivalent to that of a ARCP; and
  - (c) If applying for the Final FRCA SOE has passed the Final FRCA written exam within 3 years of the date of the sitting applied for.
  - (e) satisfies the requirements of these Regulations with regard to application procedures and other matters.
- 18 A person shall not be eligible to enter either section of the Final FRCA examination who has attempted and failed either section of the Final FRCA examination six times.

<sup>¶</sup> Irish anaesthetic trainees and former Irish trainees (less than five years out of training) not registered with the GMC (UK), must be registered with the Medical Council of Ireland. Former Irish trainees who have been out of training more than five years must have worked in the NHS for 12 months, see 17(a)(v).

## Exemptions

- 19 A candidate for the Final FRCA examination shall be exempt from passing the Primary FRCA examination (see paragraph 1(f)) who, within the seven years preceding the published start date of the sitting applied for, and only in such years as are specified, and subject to annual renewal of approval by the ETE Board:
- (a) has passed:
    - (i) the Primary or Membership examination for the Fellowship of the Faculty or the College of Anaesthetists, Ireland (provided it was sat in the Republic of Ireland) before April 2015; or
  - (b) has obtained any of the following national qualifications:
    - (i) The Fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists;
    - (ii) The European Diploma in Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care of the European Academy of Anaesthesiology or the European Society of Anaesthesiology;
    - (iii) Fellowship of the Faculty or the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland;
    - (iv) Doctor of Medicine (Anaesthesiology) of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka;
    - (v) Doctor of Medicine (Anaesthesia) University of the West Indies before May 2014;
    - (vi) Fellowship of the College of Anaesthetists of South Africa;
    - (vii) Certificate of the American Board of Anaesthesiology;
    - (viii) Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada;
    - (ix) Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons, before October 2019;
    - (x) Fellowship of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists.

## Section 8: Application Procedures

### Applications

- 20 The examination calendar, details of online application and payment and paper application forms are available on the College website.
- 21 Applications for admission to an examination, online or via paper application, must be received by the College on or after the published opening date but not later than 5.00 pm on the published closing date of the sitting applied for, as shown in the examinations calendar. When applying online, candidates will receive an email confirming booking and payment. Candidates applying by paper application will receive an email confirming safe receipt of the application form. Applicants who submit a paper application, by post or email will be sent an electronic link to allow secure online payment.
- 22 Applications for admission to examinations and Temporary Examination Eligibility (TEE) must be accompanied by the fee and any certificates required to support the application form. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. TEE applications which arrive after published deadline dates will be held until the next active deadline date.
- 23 TEE applicants must have had their TEE approved by the College at least three months before the published start date of the examination applied for and issued with a TEE number which must be quoted on all applications.
- 24 The fees payable for admission to each part shall be those fixed by the Finance board and published in the examinations calendar.

## Withdrawals

- 25 A candidate withdrawing an application for admission to an examination before the closing date for applications may receive back the full amount of the fee paid, providing the withdrawal request is within 14 days of receipt of the application. If greater than 14 days then the refund is subject to a deduction for admin expense, (14 day rule), withdrawal requests must be received in writing. A candidate who withdraws in any other circumstances including non-issue of entry visas (with the exception of those described in Section 9) or who fails to appear for an examination, will not normally be entitled to any refund of fee. Candidates who are forced to withdraw from an examination after the closing date due to a situation beyond their control, such as illness, bereavement or other personal factors, may be entitled to a refund, less an admin charge (14 day rule applies). Fees cannot be deferred from one exam to another and candidates must prove their eligibility for each exam sitting they apply for.

## Section 9: Special Arrangements

### Pregnancy

- 26 Regulations 27 to 29 apply only to candidates whose pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness or condition renders them unable to attend the examination. These Regulations do not apply to any other situations (see paragraph 25). This special treatment in relation to pregnancy is permitted under the Equality Act 2010.
- 27 Any prospective candidate should notify the examinations department as soon as possible of the fact of their pregnancy and the expected week of confinement. Such details should, where possible, be provided to the exams department at the time of application.
- 28 A prospective candidate must advise the exams department on application or as soon as possible if:
- she has any pregnancy-related problems or illness; or
  - her confinement is due shortly before or around the date of the examination; or
  - her condition gives her sufficient discomfort for her to consider that it will have a detrimental effect upon her performance.
  - A special arrangement in respect to reasonable exam adjustment is requested, (see Appendix 3).

In such circumstances, should such a candidate be unable to sit for the examination, withdrawal will be permitted and the examination fee will be refunded (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses). In some circumstances, the College may be able to make an adjustment to account for pregnancy related conditions. Candidates should contact the Head of Examinations to discuss possible reasonable adjustments, (see Appendix 3).

- 29 A candidate who does not inform the examinations department of her pregnancy on application will not normally be allowed to withdraw her application after the closing date without forfeiting her examination fee. However, when the pregnancy is diagnosed after submitting an application but prior to the examination and the candidate is subsequently unable to attend for the examination due to pregnancy-related reasons, then the candidate may withdraw from the examination and the fee will be refunded (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses).

### Disability

- 30 The College is committed to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability in all FRCA examinations and will make reasonable adjustments to examination arrangements as appropriate for individual disabled candidates. The definition of 'disability' and 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act 2010 and the procedure to follow for candidates seeking examination adjustments are set out at Appendix 3 of these regulations.

### Temporary medical conditions

- 31 The College will consider special arrangements in the form of 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates who have a temporary, on- going or fluctuating medical condition that does not meet the definition of a disability as set out in the Equality Act 2010 but does affect a candidate's ability to take a planned sitting of an examination. The procedures to follow are set out at Appendix 3.

## Section 10: Fellowship by Examination

- 32 As stated in the Charter and Ordinances of The Royal College of Anaesthetists, a person shall be entitled to be admitted a fellow of the College if he or she has:
- (a) passed the appropriate examinations for Fellowship; and
  - (b) complied with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Council in the Regulations of the College.

## Section 11: Failures and Guidance

### Failures

- 33 A candidate who is unsuccessful in an examination may, subject to the provisions of Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 enter for the next or any subsequent sitting of that examination.

### Guidance

- 34 (a) There are no mandatory requirements for candidates to attend guidance interviews up to the fifth attempt for each component. At the sixth attempt candidates must have attended a guidance interview.
- (b) A candidate who has failed any of the following components more than once may request a guidance interview, subject to the limitation at 34(c):
- Primary OSCE and/or SOE
  - Final written
  - Final SOE
- (c) Interviews are normally limited to one per examination component listed at 34(b). A candidate shall be entitled to a second guidance interview at the sixth attempt if required.
- (d) No special consideration will be given in respect of refunds following guidance interviews. Non request/attendance of a guidance interview will not affect eligibility towards examinations.
- (e) Requests should be made by email ([exams@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rcoa.ac.uk)) or in writing, to the examinations department at the College address, normally within one calendar month of the date of the last failed component.
- (f) Interviews will be carried out by one or more FRCA Examiner(s) and arranged locally where possible. Attendance of a College Tutor is strongly encouraged.
- (g) In exceptional circumstances and under the recommendation of the College Tutor a candidate may be granted a guidance interview after failure at the first attempt.

## Section 12: Re-calculations, Reviews, Appeals and Complaints

- 35 All matters regarding re-calculations, reviews, appeals, and complaints are contained in the RCoA Primary and Final FRCA examinations (Review and Appeals) Regulations (The Review Regs) (see [College website](#)).
- (a) A candidate, after receipt of their official result letter, may request an additional calculation of his/her result. Re-calculation requests incur an administration charge. Re-calculation requests should be addressed to the head of examinations. (see paragraph 4 and 5 of the Review regulations).
  - (b) A candidate wishing to request a review with regard to the conduct of an examination or if on receipt of a review letter, remains dissatisfied and wishes to appeal against any result, must address such review or appeal to the Education, Training and Examinations Director in writing within two months of completing the relevant examination. Under no circumstances should such requests be addressed to an examiner.
  - (c) Candidates who consider they have grounds for complaint regarding the provision of service, provided at an FRCA examination, that does not amount to a request for a 'Review', should follow the procedure set out at paragraphs 20–30 of the Review Regulations.
  - (d) Candidates are not eligible to apply or sit for any FRCA examination whilst a matter for review or appeal remains unresolved between the candidate and the Education, Training and Examinations Director.

## Section 13: Equality and Diversity

### Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

36 In the exercising of its duties when carrying out examinations in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Section 149(1) (the Act), the Royal College of Anaesthetists gives due regard to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In its regard for these duties the College also aims to meet all areas of the [College Equal Opportunity Policy 2014](#) to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability and that no one is treated less favourably than another on grounds of race, disability, sex, transgender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or pregnancy and maternity.

To ensure compliance with the Act and as part of the [College Equal Opportunity Policy 2014](#), the College monitors exam results in relation to the candidate population.

All examiners and exams staff undertake regular exam specific equality and diversity training.

The College considers reasonable adjustments for exam candidates with disability as set out at Section 9 paragraph 30 and Appendix 3 of these Regulations. Special arrangements for pregnancy and temporary medical conditions are set out at Section 9 and Appendix 3 of these regulations.

### Equality Analysis (EA)

37 Equality analysis is an integral part of examination policy, content and practice development. The College carries out objective, evidence based equality analysis when making decisions relating to exam changes, policies, question writing and practices. This ensures that full consideration is given to the effect that such decisions may have on the fairness of the exam and aims to prevent discrimination, promote diversity and inclusivity for all groups of people.

## Section 14: Dress code, electronic devices/mobile phones, smart watches, misconduct and feedback

### Dress code for examinations

38 The College endorses the key recommendations of guidance on dress codes for postgraduate medical recruitment, training and assessment from the conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (CoPMeD). Full details are set out at Appendix 5 of these Regulations.

### Electronic devices including mobile phones and smart watches

39 The College will follow strict appliance of the rules set out at Appendix 6 of these regulations regarding the use of mobile phones, smart watches and unauthorised electronic devices during FRCA examinations.

### Misconduct

40 All aspects of misconduct at FRCA examinations will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the misconduct policy set out at Appendix 7 of these Regulations.

### Candidate Feedback

41 The College believes it is important to provide feedback to all exam candidates beyond a standard pass/fail result. The details of the feedback provided to candidates is set out at Appendix 9 of these Regulations.

# Appendices

These appendices set out procedures, rules and policies that are relevant to the conduct of the FRCA examinations and are subject to change by the GMC/AoMRC and the College. Dress codes, electronic devices/mobile phones/smart watches, misconduct, disability and reasonable adjustments and feedback policies form part of the Regulations as described at Section 9 and Section 14.

## Appendix 1: Structure of the Examinations

### Primary FRCA examination

There are three sections to the Primary Examination; MCQ, OSCE and SOE, questions on data interpretation may appear in any section or sub-section. All Primary questions are mapped to the Core Level Training Curriculum (Annex B). This includes ICM (Annex F). The units of training covered are set out in the examination blueprint.

#### *Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ)*

90 MCQs in three hours 60 x Multiple True/False (MTF) plus 30 x Single Best Answer (SBA) questions comprising approximately:

60 MTF questions:

- 20 questions in pharmacology;
- 20 questions in physiology including related biochemistry and anatomy; and
- 20 questions in physics, clinical measurement, statistical methods and data interpretation. 30

SBA questions in any of the categories listed above.

The MCQ section must be passed before the OSCE and SOE sections can be attempted.

#### *Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)*

Normally up to 18 stations in approximately one hour 45 minutes (of which a maximum of 16 count towards the result) currently comprising stations covering: resuscitation, technical skills, anatomy (general procedure), history taking, physical examination, communication skills, anaesthetic equipment, monitoring equipment, measuring equipment, anaesthetic hazards, and the interpretation of images. One or more of the stations may involve the use of a medium fidelity simulator.

#### *Structured Oral Examination (SOE)*

There are two subsections, comprising:

- 30 minutes consisting of three questions in pharmacology and three questions in physiology and biochemistry followed by;
- 30 minutes consisting of three questions on clinical topics including a critical incident and three questions on physics, clinical measurement, equipment and safety.

### Final FRCA examination

There are two sections to the Final Examination; written and SOE. All Final questions are mapped to the Core Level Training Curriculum (Annex B) and the Intermediate Level Training Curriculum (Annex C). This includes annex F as an essential unit. The units of training covered are set out in the examination blueprint.

#### *Written*

There are two sub-sections to the written examination comprising:

- (a) MCQ paper: 90 MCQs in three hours: 60 x Multiple True/False (MTF) plus 30 x Single Best Answer (SBA) questions in three hours, comprising approximately:

60 MTF questions:

- 20 Advanced sciences to underpin anaesthetic practise
- 20 General duties (essential units)
- 17 Specialist (essential units)
- 3 Optional units

30 SBA questions:

- 15 General duties (essential units)
- 15 Specialist (essential units/Optional units)

- (b) Constructed Response Question (CRQ) paper: 12 compulsory questions in three hours normally comprising:
- **Six questions from mandatory units:** anaesthetic practice relevant to neurosurgery, neuroradiology and neuro-critical care, cardiothoracic surgery, intensive care medicine, obstetrics, paediatrics and pain medicine.
  - **Six questions from the remaining part of the curriculum. This includes general duties** (airway management, day surgery, critical incidents, general/urology gynaecology surgery, ENT/maxillo-facial/dental surgery, management of respiratory and cardiac arrest, non-theatre duties, orthopaedic surgery, regional anaesthesia, sedation practice, transfer medicine, trauma and stabilization practice), **optional units** (ophthalmic surgery, plastics and burns surgery, vascular surgery), **advanced sciences** (anatomy, applied clinical pharmacology, applied physiology/biochemistry, physics/clinical measurement and statistical basis of clinical trial management) **and professionalism in medical practice. There will be a maximum of one question from the optional units.**

### **Structured Oral Examination (SOE)**

There are two subsections to the SOE comprising:

- SOE1 – Clinical anaesthesia with linked applied clinical science (normally am); consisting of four clinical short cases each with linked applied clinical science questions. The sequence is normally, clinical short case 1 followed by science question 1, clinical short case 2 followed by science question 2 etc. However, in some instances the linked science question will be covered before the clinical short case (e.g. science question 1 followed by clinical short case 1). This SOE will be in two parts, A and B, taken consecutively, with candidates moving exam floors to sit both parts. Each part is 26 minutes in duration, comprising of two clinical short cases with linked clinical science questions, as described above, with 13 minutes devoted to each pair of questions. Followed by:
- SOE2 – Clinical anaesthesia (normally pm); consisting of a two section clinical long case followed by two stand-alone clinical short cases taken in one sitting. This SOE is 36 minutes in duration, comprising of 10 minutes to view clinical material, 13 minutes devoted to a two section clinical long case and 13 minutes devoted to two questions on clinical anaesthesia unrelated to the clinical long case.

The SOE tests at least two topics from the general duties unit, at least four topics from four of the six essential units and may use up to one topic from optional units of the curriculum.

## **Appendix 2: The Marking Systems**

All sections have to be passed to pass the whole examination at Primary and Final levels.

In all sections of the examination the performance of borderline candidates is reviewed by the Board of Examiners before the final marks are awarded. The Board reserves the right to review a candidate who performs particularly badly in any sub-section. If, in the opinion of the examiners, a candidate's answers in the SOEs have been dangerous then the candidate's performance is reviewed by the Board of Examiners before the marks are confirmed. The Chair reserves the right to send a letter to the candidate where, in the opinion of the Board of Examiners, poor performance raises concern. Letters are designed to inform a candidate of ways to improve their performance and to offer College support.

### **Primary FRCA Examination**

#### **MCQ**

One mark will be awarded for each correct answer in the MTF section of the paper and four marks will be awarded for each correct question in the SBA section. Negative marking is not used. The marks for each section of the MCQ will be combined to produce the total mark. With 60 MTF and 30 SBA questions, the maximum mark obtainable for the MCQ paper is 420 marks. The pass mark is provisionally set by the examiners using assessment methods approved by the GMC. To allow for the examination's reliability this mark is subject to a Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) adjustment to give the final pass mark. The MCQ core group reserve the right to remove questions from the overall marks, where error or ambiguity is found. Candidates will not be disadvantaged where this occurs.

#### **OSCE**

Each station is marked out of 20 with the pass mark (the Angoff score) for each station/question being determined by the examiners before the examination, using modified Angoff referencing. The Angoff score for each of the 16 live stations are summed to obtain the pass mark for the whole examination.

Up to two additional (test) stations may be included in an examination to test new questions. Neither the candidates nor the examiners will know which stations these are and the marks will not contribute to the final result.

#### **SOE**

Two examiners mark each part of the SOE. Both examiners independently mark every question. There are 12 questions, 2 marks are given for a pass, 1 mark for a borderline performance and 0 marks for a fail, giving a maximum total score of 48 marks. The pass mark is 37 which was determined by analysing two years of data from the pre 2009 exams.



## Final FRCA Examination

### *Final FRCA Written Section*

The pass mark for the written section is the sum of the percentage pass marks of the MCQ and CRQ papers. The pass mark for each paper will be calculated as a percentage and rounded down to two decimal places. The resultant pass mark for each paper will be added together and the combined percentage score will be rounded down to one decimal place, which will be the published examination pass mark. Candidate combined scores will also be given to one decimal place, with scores rounded up.

### *MCQ*

One mark will be awarded for each correct answer in the Multiple True False (MTF) section of the paper and four marks will be awarded for each correct question in the Single Best Answer (SBA) section. There is only one scoring answer for each SBA question. Negative marking is not used. The marks for each section of the MCQ will be combined to produce the total mark. With 60 MTF and 30 SBA questions the maximum mark obtainable for the MCQ paper is 420 marks. The pass mark is provisionally set by the examiners using assessment methods approved by the GMC. To allow for the examination's reliability this mark is subject to a Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) adjustment to give the final pass mark. The MCQ core group reserve the right to remove questions from the overall marks where error or ambiguity is found, candidates will not be disadvantaged where this occurs.

### *CRQ paper*

All 12 questions must be attempted; candidates will fail the written section if one or more questions are not attempted.

If a candidate answers a question in the wrong answer book normally that answer will not be marked by the examiners (and the candidate will fail the written section).

Each question is marked out of 20 with the pass mark for each question being determined by the examiners collectively before the examination using modified Angoff referencing. Each set of answer papers are marked by six separate examiners using strict marking guides. Each examiner marks two questions. All examiners attend a paper checking and standard setting meeting which ensures the accuracy and consistency of marking is of a high standard. The pass marks for the 12 questions are summed to give a total mark for the whole paper. To allow for the examination's reliability this mark is subject to a Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) adjustment to give the final pass mark.

### *Structured Oral Examination (SOE)*

Two examiners are present for each subsection of the SOE. Each examiner marks every question independently. Linked clinical short cases and science questions are marked separately. Therefore, there are 12 questions/sections, four linked short cases, four linked science questions, two sections of a long case and two stand-alone short cases. Examiners can apply a score of 0, 1 or 2 for each question/section, giving a total of 48 marks for both subsections. The pass mark is determined using standard setting methods approved by the GMC.

## Appendix 3: Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

### **Reasonable adjustments at examinations – arrangements for disabled candidates**

This policy has been updated following the guidelines set out in the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) 'Reasonable Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities in High Stakes Assessments' document (July 2017), which was produced following collaborative work from medical colleges. This policy also takes account of the AoMRC document 'Managing access arrangements for candidates requesting adjustments in high stakes assessment (May 2018).

#### **1. Policy statement**

The College is committed to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability in all types of FRCA examination settings. To this aim, the College will make 'reasonable adjustments' to examination arrangements as appropriate for individual disabled candidates. The College will take account of a candidate's personal circumstances and any professional advice given in the corroborative evidence of the disability that has been supplied. Therefore adjustments are not merely based on the impairment(s) but how the impairment(s) would potentially impact on a candidate's performance.

#### **2. Definition of disability**

Disability is a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). The definition of disability under the Act is as follows: In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purpose of the Act, these words have the following meaning:

- ‘substantial’ means more than minor or trivial
- ‘long term’ means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months
- ‘normal day-to-day activities’ include everyday things such as eating, washing, walking, working and examinations.

Persons with certain conditions are deemed to be disabled for the purpose of the Act without having to satisfy the criteria set out above. Those conditions are:

- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis
- severe disfigurements (with the exception of unremoved piercings and tattoos)
- blindness, severe sight impairment, sight impairment and partial sightedness (provided this is certified by a consultant ophthalmologist)

### 3. Definition and provision of reasonable adjustment

- 3.1 ‘Reasonable adjustment’ is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a candidate at a substantial disadvantage in an examination situation.
- 3.2 The College will make reasonable adjustment for disabled candidates who undertake FRCA examinations, where any provision, criterion or practice and/or physical feature of the exam environment puts disabled candidates at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled. The College will provide or allow the use of auxiliary aids, where without one a disabled candidate will be put at a substantial disadvantage. See paragraph 6.
- 3.3 The College will also consider temporary (such as; broken arm, back pain), on-going or fluctuating medical conditions for the purpose of examination adjustment, where the condition affects a candidate’s ability to take a planned sitting of an examination. See Section 9 of these regulations regarding special arrangements for Pregnancy or short-term related conditions.
- 3.4 Reasonable adjustment to examination arrangements is provided to candidates with a disability in order to reduce the potential disadvantage they face compared to a non-disabled candidate. It is not designed to give any type of advantage to disabled candidates in the receiving of additional examination accommodations. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the examination and does not apply to the application of a competence standard.
- 3.5 FRCA examinations are in various formats, which require a number of different deliveries; computer based or optical mark recognition (MCQ), hand written (CRQ), Oral discussion (SOE) and practical application (OSCE). Each type of format/delivery may make different demands on the candidate and therefore may influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which can be put in place. The College recognises that it is not possible or appropriate to attempt to define a pre-determined set of reasonable adjustments and therefore any decisions will need to be made on a case- by-case basis.

### 4. Procedure for requesting reasonable adjustment

- 4.1 Any candidate who has a physical or mental disability, specific learning difficulty (SpLD) or on-going or fluctuating condition that they believe could affect their performance in an examination may be entitled to reasonable adjustments or special arrangements. All such candidates should initially inform the College of this at the time of application by completing the ‘I have a disability’ and the ‘I require exam adjustment’ boxes on the application form or by ticking the appropriate pop-up boxes during the online application process, this should also be carried out at all reapplications and repeat attempts at any component(s) of the examination. Candidates should not assume that they will be granted adjustments at forthcoming exams just because they were provided certain adjustments at previous attempts.
- 4.2 On completion of submitting their exam application and in addition to indicating they require adjustments during the application process, all candidates seeking reasonable adjustments must submit full written details of any adjustments they require to the head of examinations by emailing [exams@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rcoa.ac.uk). The subject heading of the email should include the name of the examination applied for and the wording ‘request for exam adjustments’. For example; “*Primary FRCA MCQ, September 2019 - request for exam adjustments*”. Again this process should be followed at all attempts. At the first request for any reasonable adjustment candidates must supply supporting evidence of their disability from an appropriate authority, such as; the candidate’s GP, their college tutor or supervising consultant. See paragraph 4.4 regarding the evidence required for candidates with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD).
- 4.3 Candidates whose need for reasonable adjustments or special arrangements (see Section 9 of these Regulations) arises after the submission of their application (due to an accident or sudden condition/illness) must contact the head of examinations [exams@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rcoa.ac.uk) as soon as practicable.

- 4.4 If a candidate is seeking reasonable adjustments for an SpLD then they must provide a report from an approved assessor\* when contacting the head of examinations. This assessment needs to have been obtained after the age of 16. The report must include recommendations in regard to exam adjustments. Reports will be held on file therefore they only need to be submitted at the first attempt. However the College reserves the right to request a further report or clarification of the recommendations made, if the adjustment(s) requested is different from that recommended in the report or if there is no precedent set for the recommendation(s) listed, see paragraphs 4.6 and 5.8. Candidates must contact the head of examinations at each attempt at all examinations to discuss and confirm exam accommodations as the reasonable adjustments required may change from sitting to sitting.

Where candidates are unclear if the person who completed their assessment is an ‘approved assessor’ they should contact the head of examinations for clarification.

\*Approved assessors include:

- Specialist teachers who hold a practicing certificate, such as Dyslexia Action, BDA or PATOSS. Candidates can check if an assessor holds the appropriate qualifications on the SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee) [website](#)
- A practicing chartered or educational psychologist who is registered with the Healthcare Professionals Council. A candidate can check if an assessor is registered on the [HCPC website](#).

Where candidates are unclear if the person who completed their assessment is an ‘approved assessor’ they should contact the head of examinations for clarification.

- 4.5 Many assessors may not be familiar with the range of assessments undertaken by candidates sitting the FRCA examinations and working towards a CCT in anaesthetics. Therefore to assist assessors in completing their reports, the College is happy to provide information to help them tailor their recommendations more effectively for specific examinations. Candidates should contact the head of examinations and provide the contact details of the assessor compiling the report.
- 4.6 If the rationale for reasonable adjustments in the evidence or report provided is unclear or it is felt that further explanation is required the College may seek consent from the candidate to approach the relevant GP, consultant or assessor/expert concerned for further clarification.
- 4.7 Candidates are advised that failure to contact the College promptly may mean that there will be insufficient time for some or all of the reasonable adjustments requested to be put in place. In such cases, candidates can either agree to sit the examination with no or some reasonable adjustment or withdraw and receive a full refund. They can then reapply for the next sitting of the examination, where a full and fair assessment of the reasonable adjustments required can be made,

## 5. Consideration of Reasonable adjustments

- 5.1 All decision makers will have received training in equality and diversity, reasonable adjustments and unconscious bias. The College is responsible for undertaking an evidence based evaluation of the entitlement to adjustments for disabled candidates, as defined by the Act and to those with conditions similar to those raised at paragraph 3.3. The College will undertake re- evaluations of entitlement for each exam application made by individual candidates requesting reasonable adjustments.
- 5.2 The head of examinations will be the primary contact for all requests for adjustments. Whilst it cannot be assumed that candidates with the same type of disability will all benefit from the same adjustments, where a precedent has already been set the head of examinations will use previously awarded adjustments as a starting point for their considerations and discussions. See paragraph 5.3 in regard to SpLDs.
- 5.3 Good practice in the support of candidates with SpLDs such as dyslexia is applied in offering a provision of extra time for written examinations, although this should be raised as a recommendation in the assessor’s report in order to be used as a starting point for reasonable adjustment considerations. Extra time accommodations for candidates with SpLDs will also be considered for other exam components where the reading of information is required. Additionally such candidates may have different or further requirements, such as the use of particular fonts, overlays or exam questions printed on coloured paper. Where this is the case

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\* Approved assessors include:

- Specialist teachers who hold a practising certificate, such as Dyslexia Action, BDA or PATOSS. Candidates can check if an assessor holds the appropriate qualifications on the SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee) [website](#).
- A practicing chartered or educational psychologist who is registered with the Healthcare Professionals Council. A candidate can check if an assessor is registered on the [HCPC website](#).

different and/or additional reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 5.4 Where the College has no precedent for an adjustment for a particular disability or special need or where the adjustment requested is more significant than any previous adjustment permitted, then the case may be referred to the examinations committee. If the examination date is before the next meeting of the committee. Then the request will be forwarded for their consideration using secure document collaboration software, to the chair of the examinations committee, the Director of Education, Training and Examinations and at least three members of the committee, which will include the chair/vice chair of the relevant examination and the lay committee representative. The head of examinations will coordinate and compile the response and keep the candidate advised throughout the process.
- 5.5 All candidates who have submitted written requests for reasonable adjustments will be notified in writing of the reasonable adjustments that have been permitted for their examinations.
- 5.6 If a candidate is diagnosed with a disability after failing an examination component, they should contact the head of examinations to discuss reasonable adjustments that can be provided for future attempts. However, all previous attempts taken prior to the diagnosis will still stand. Therefore, candidates are strongly advised that should they feel that their performance may have been impaired by an underlying disability they should seek advice after their initial failure rather than taking further attempts at the examination.
- 5.7 The FRCA OSCE and SOE examinations are regarded as competence tests, assessing understanding, cognitive skills and behaviour as well as clinical knowledge. As such the method of assessment is a crucial element of these examination components and any adjustments made must maintain the integrity and validity of these assessments and not affect the format of the examinations.

GMC guidance<sup>†</sup> indicates that while there is a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, in enabling the competence standards in Tomorrow's Doctors<sup>‡</sup> to be met, there is no requirement to make adjustments that would alter the standard of competency required.

- 5.8 In all cases the College reserves the right to take independent advice to ensure that any proposed adjustments are appropriate and in accordance with any applicable legislation.
- 5.9 Details and statistical information of requests for reasonable adjustment shall be regularly reported to the Examinations Committee for the purpose of monitoring and review.
- 5.10 Where a candidate does not believe the adjustments they have been granted are reasonable, they should refer to the Primary and Final FRCA examinations (Reviews and Appeals) regulations.

## 6 Examples of reasonable adjustments

The Act sets out three types of situations where the duty to make reasonable adjustments might arise. They are;

- where the College applies a provision, criterion or practice which substantially disadvantages a disabled person compared with a person who is not so disabled;
- where a disabled person is substantially disadvantaged (compared with a person who does not have that disability) as a result of a physical feature of the premises; or
- where, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, a disabled person would be placed at a substantial disadvantage (compared with a person who does not have that disability)

The following table gives examples of the reasonable adjustments that could be applied to each of the three situations above, they are included for guidance purposes only:

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<sup>†</sup> [http://www.gmc-uk.org/9\\_Health\\_and\\_Disability\\_in\\_Postgraduate\\_Medical\\_Education\\_and\\_Training.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/9_Health_and_Disability_in_Postgraduate_Medical_Education_and_Training.pdf) 46554398.pdf

<sup>‡</sup> [http://www.gmc-uk.org/Tomorrow\\_s\\_Doctors\\_1214.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/Tomorrow_s_Doctors_1214.pdf) 48905759.pdf

Element of exam requiring adjustment	Example reasonable adjustments
Provision, criterion or practice (for example; requiring the exam to be completed within a set period of time with no breaks and the exam paper being in a standard font on white paper)	Extra time for candidates with SpLD. Rest breaks for candidates with certain medical conditions or to allow medication to be taken. Exam papers in large fonts or specific colour.
Physical features	Adjusting exam cubicles to allow wheelchair access. Provision of access lifts, accessible toilets and staircase ramps.
Auxiliary aids	Hearing induction loop. Coloured overlays.

## Appendix 4: Prizes and Commendations

The following prizes may at the discretion of the relevant examinations review group, be awarded to candidates who perform at the level of 'distinction' in all the sections of the relevant examination at their first attempt.

A level of distinction is defined as follows:

Primary FRCA MCQ:	The top 5% of examination candidates.
Primary FRCA OSCE:	The top 5% of examination candidates.
Primary FRCA SOE:	A score of >46 from a maximum of 48 marks.
Final FRCA written section:	The top 5% of examination candidates.
Final FRCA SOE:	A score of >46 from a maximum of 48 marks.

Candidates are not informed that their exam scores meet any of the above definitions of a distinction, unless they are nominated for a commendation letter or awarded one of the following prizes:

### Nuffield Prize

Awarded for achieving the highest levels of distinction at the Primary FRCA examination.

### Macintosh Prize

Awarded for achieving the highest levels of distinction at the Final FRCA examination, whilst achieving an overall pass at the June sitting of the SOEs.

### Magill Prize

Awarded for achieving the highest levels of distinction at the Final FRCA Examination, whilst achieving an overall pass at the December sitting of the SOEs.

### Chair's commendation letter

Awarded to any candidate achieving all the levels of distinction at the Primary or Final examination but does not achieve the 'highest' levels of distinction at their sitting of the exam.

## Appendix 5: Dress Code for Examinations

The RCoA endorse the key recommendations of the 'Guidance on Dress Codes' for postgraduate medical recruitment, training and assessment from the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD). In particular, candidates are reminded that the same dress code should apply for professional examinations as it does for day to day clinical practice/contact with patients. This means that forms of dress should not constrain the candidate's ability to demonstrate recognised skills including effective communication with simulated patients or examiners, nor hinder easy verification of the candidate's identity.

Hence candidates are requested not to wear forms of dress that cover the face while attending any of the FRCA examinations. Candidates are also advised that there is no requirement to wear clinical/theatre clothing during any of the examinations.

## Appendix 6: Electronic devices mobile phone and smart watch policy

In response to the increased potential for cheating and the disturbance of other candidates, the College will follow the strict appliance of the following rules regarding the use of electronic devices, mobile phones and smart watches during examinations:

- 1 Mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic devices have no place at examinations and should be left at home wherever possible. Mobile phones, smart watches or electronic devices (see list of examples below), brought to examinations must be switched off and fully deactivated for the duration of the examination. Candidates should ensure the following action is taken regarding mobile phones/smart watches/electronic devices

**Written examinations** (before sitting at exam desk):

- Powered off and stored in bag, which should be placed in designated area defined by the invigilator, or,
- If no bag, then mobile phone/watch or device should be powered off, then handed to the invigilator. The invigilator will place in an envelope and mark it with the candidate number. Phones and devices will be returned in exchange for exam papers.

**SOE/OSCE examinations** (on arrival at main reception area):

- Powered off in front of the college officer at reception.
- Store in secure locker/luggage for duration of time in College. Or,
- Handed to college officer. College officer will place in envelope and mark with candidate No. Returned in exchange for candidate badge on leaving the College.

**Under no circumstances should mobile phones, or smart watches be taken to a briefing room or exam floor.**

## 2 Non-compliance

**Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to disqualification from the examination.**

- (a) The following constitutes non-compliance of the above rules:
- A mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device found in the possession of a candidate during an examination.
  - The ringing, vibrating or any audible ‘beep’ heard from a mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device whilst an examination is taking place.
- (b) In all cases of non-compliance an incident report form will be submitted to the misconduct group (see Appendix 7, paragraph 4.1) for their consideration. Candidates cited for non-compliance will be required to sign the incident report form before leaving the examination room and may be required to attend the College to give further information/evidence regarding the incident.
- (c) Examination results of candidates cited for non-compliance will be withheld until a decision has been reached by the misconduct group. Investigations will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and candidates will be kept informed of progress. Candidates will be informed of the outcome, in writing by the Director of Education, Training and Examinations on behalf of the misconduct group.
- (d) Where the misconduct group agree that non-compliance is proven they will consider the following, before a penalty is agreed:
- The need to preserve the integrity of the examination.
  - The disturbance caused to others.
  - consistency with previous penalties.
- (e) The misconduct group may consider awarding one of the following standard penalties or may give a more specific penalty where felt appropriate:
- No further action;
  - A written warning;
  - Result for an examination or part of an examination, to be declared void;
  - Candidate barred from applying for an exam for a specified period.

- 3 The following are some examples of ‘electronic devices’, it is not intended to be complete, if in doubt then candidates should ask the college officer/invigilator in attendance:

*Calculators, laptops, electronic tablet, smart watch\*, any recording device, internet enabled device, MP3 player, Bleeper, timing devices that make audible beeps.*

\* Smart watches should be treated in the same manner as a mobile phone; powered off, removed and stored away from the exam desk/exam floor.

- 4 If any type of electronic device is required as part of an examination test then it will be supplied by the College. Regular time checks are given by invigilators and therefore candidates will not need to use additional timing devices. Non-smart watches that do not emit sound may be used.

## Appendix 7: Misconduct and Copyright policy

The integrity of FRCA examinations is fundamental to the values promoted by the College. It is important that all candidates are judged on their ability, and no candidate be allowed to gain an advantage unfairly over others. By virtue of entering to sit an examination, candidates are deemed to have understood and agreed to abide and respect all examination regulations and policies. Any aspect of misconduct at FRCA examinations will be investigated and acted upon in accordance with the following Misconduct policy. With the exception that, where non-compliance of College regulations is cited due to the use of electronic devices or mobile phones, then these matters will proceed in accordance with the policy set out at Appendix 6 of these regulations.

### 1.1 Misconduct includes, but is not restricted to:

- (a) failure to abide by the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or college officer;
- (b) the introduction or/and use of any materials or documents other than those specifically permitted for the examination;
- (c) any attempt to gain access to or read the work of another candidate;
- (d) any attempt to communicate with another candidate;
- (e) unacceptable or disruptive behaviour during the examination;
- (f) removal by a candidate, of material or content from an examination, other than those documents specifically permitted.
- (g) the release of content from an examination to a third party without the expressed permission of a College Officer.
- (h) reproduction and/or distribution of exam material, by any means, including accurate reconstruction of questions through memory for release to a third party without the permission of the College.
- (i) falsification or alteration of eligibility or identification documents.
- (j) impersonation of a candidate.
- (k) any other form of cheating, deception, fraud or conduct that is likely to give an unfair advantage to a candidate or candidates.

### 2. Reporting misconduct:

- 2.1 Under normal examination conditions suspected misconduct should be reported to the College through the submission of ‘an Incident report form’ (Available on request through a college officer). Incident report forms can be completed by examiners, invigilators, college officers, examination candidates and any other such person, who becomes aware of any incident that may affect the examination processes or its regulations. Forms completed by exam candidates regarding suspected misconduct of another candidate must be countersigned by a witness such as a college official. All forms must be completed as soon as possible with full details of fact, they must be signed and dated and given to the duty college officer. Full instructions for completion of incident report forms are set out on the back of the form.
- 2.2 Any materials that are reasonably, believed by an invigilator or college officer not to be permitted as part of the exam will be confiscated. Electronic devices will be returned at the end of the exam with details logged on the incident report form. The candidate concerned will be asked to acknowledge agreement of the confiscation of other materials on the incident report form. All such materials will be included as part of the report.
- 2.3 Where misconduct is suspected after an examination or outside examination conditions, such as where a candidate is suspected of passing on or unauthorised use of examination content that has not been released into the public domain, then a written report of the incident should be submitted to the Director at the College address. Such reports should give full details of the person suspected of misconduct and the person submitting the report.

- 24 Anonymous reports of misconduct will not be used to initiate a formal misconduct process.
- 25 The College acknowledges that any case of misconduct can have an adverse effect on a candidate's reputation and career. Therefore all matters of the reporting and process of alleged misconduct will be kept strictly confidential. However, where the allegation of misconduct is proven, the College reserves the right to forward details of the case to the GMC/National Medical Council and in the case of UK trainees, their college tutor and regional advisor.

### **3 Review of alleged misconduct**

- 3.1 Incident report forms that allege misconduct and written reports received as described in paragraph 2.2 will be handed to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations who will carry out a review of the alleged misconduct to determine if there is sufficient evidence of a prima facie case to warrant the incident being passed to the relevant examinations chair and/or the examinations committee misconduct group (see paragraph 4).
- 3.2 Where, in the opinion of the Director, an incident is not deemed to be self-evident from the facts set out in the report or the incident is judged to be of a minor/technical issue, then the matter will not be processed and no further action will be taken. However, this will not preclude an official letter being issued to advise the candidate of the conduct of behaviour expected under examination conditions. Cases not processed beyond the Director's review will not be recorded on a candidate's personal records.
- 3.3 Where, following the review of a report and consultation with college staff/witnesses as necessary, the Director of Education, Training and Examinations deems that there is sufficient evidence to prove a case of misconduct, the Director of Education, Training and Examinations will inform the candidate of the allegations in writing. The candidate concerned will be allowed seven working days, from the date of the letter, to accept or challenge the case against them.
- 3.4 Examination results of candidates cited for alleged misconduct will not be processed until a decision has been reached. Investigations will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible and candidates will be kept informed of progress.
- 3.5 If, within seven working days a candidate admits in writing to the allegations made against them, then the matter will be forwarded to the relevant examinations chair and deputy chair for their formal consideration and the award of an appropriate penalty in accordance with paragraph 6. Where allegations are accepted by the candidate, they can submit a written statement with their response that may be taken into account by the examinations chair/deputy chair. A decision will be reached as soon as possible and normally within five working days of the date of the candidate letter.
- 3.6 If a candidate denies an allegation of misconduct in writing to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations, either in whole or in part, then the matter will be referred to the examinations committee misconduct group who will deal with the matter electronically.

### **4 Misconduct Group process**

- 4.1 The misconduct group (the Group) will consist of:
- The chair of the examinations committee (Chair)
  - The chair of the Board of Examiners not involved in the incident
  - A nominated lay committee representative
- 4.2 The duty of the Group will be to examine the facts of the case and to determine the strength and integrity of the evidence. Then make a decision based on the balance of probabilities, whether the allegation of misconduct is proven. Where to the satisfaction of the Group, a case is proven the Group will agree an appropriate penalty in accordance with paragraph 6. The outcome will be decided electronically/via telephone conference and therefore there will be no charge to the candidate.
- 4.3 The PA to the Director will act as the Group secretary. The purpose of the Group secretary is to:
- (a) advise all parties on the deadline for submission of further evidence and the date on which the Group will announce their decision.
  - (b) co-ordinate and prepare documentation/evidence for all parties.
  - (c) provide secretarial support to the Group as required.
  - (d) maintain communication with the candidate and provide advice as required.
  - (e) to produce and distribute the 'decision document' to all parties.
- 4.4 The Director will submit the case for the Board of examiners in writing to the Group, through the Group secretary.



- 4.5 The candidate has the right to submit written evidence for consideration by the Group up to the deadline given by the Group secretary.
- 4.7 The Group secretary will acknowledge receipt of all evidence submitted by the candidate and confirm the date scheduled for the Group to make its decision. This will not be more than one calendar month following the written confirmation of denial of the allegation of misconduct, see paragraph 3.6. All documents to be used along with a copy of this policy will be sent by email attachments to the candidate and the Group members no later than five working days before the date set for the decision to be announced. No documents may be presented in evidence to the Group, unless circulated by the Group secretary in the manner detailed above.
- 4.8 The validity of the process will not be affected if the candidate fails to submit further documentary evidence on their behalf prior to the deadline given by the Group secretary.
- 4.9 Following referral of alleged misconduct to the Group, a candidate has the right to reverse their answer to the allegations up to 48 hours prior to the date scheduled for the Group's decision. Where allegations are then accepted by the candidate, they can submit a written statement with their response that may be taken into account by the Group. A decision on the penalty to be awarded will be made on the date announced by the Group secretary.
- 4.10 Neither the Group nor the candidate will be given any information regarding the candidate's result or performance at the examination in question.
- 4.11 The decision of the Group is to be confirmed in writing to the candidate (the decision document) as soon as possible following the decision date. A copy will be provided to each member of the Group and a copy will be held on College files.

## **5 Appeals procedure**

- 5.1 Appeals must be carried out in accordance with The Royal College of Anaesthetists Primary and Final FRCA examinations (Reviews and Appeals) regulations, Paragraphs 14 – 19 and an Appeal Application (Appendix A) with the appropriate fee must be submitted within 7 working days of the date of the Groups decision. All subsequent procedures and hearings will be handled in accordance with Appendices B and C of the aforementioned regulations.
- 5.2 The Appeals panel will be advised that the Misconduct Group considered the case but will not be given details of the outcome.
- 5.3 The Appeal panel will have the power to confirm, amend or reverse the decision made by the Group.

## **6 Penalties**

- 6.1 Where the Misconduct Group or exam chairs (paragraph 3.5), agree that the case in whole or in part, is proven whether through admission by the candidate or the outcome of the Group's findings, then they will consider the following before a penalty is agreed:
- the need to preserve the integrity of the examination.
  - the severity of the infringement proven
  - consistency with previous penalties.
  - the evidence of remorse and the admission of the understanding of the seriousness of the case.
- 6.2 The Misconduct panel or the exam chairs (paragraph 3.5) may consider awarding one of the following standard penalties or may give a more specific penalty where appropriate:
- no further action
  - a written warning (see paragraph 6.3)
  - result of an examination or part of an examination, to be declared void
  - candidate barred from applying for an exam for a specified period
- 6.3 Where a written warning is agreed upon, the Group/exam chairs will reflect on the severity of the misconduct proven and reserve the right to forward details of the case to the GMC/National Medical Council and in the case of UK trainees, their college tutor and regional adviser.
- 6.4 Where a candidate's examination result is declared void, the attempt will be recorded against the candidate's exam history. Exam papers will not be processed.

## Appendix 8: Additional Educational Training Form – AET Form1

### Notes on completion of AET Form1:

1. To meet eligibility at the sixth (final) attempt at any FRCA examination, a candidate must provide the Board of Examiners with evidence of a plan of additional educational experience/training which is expected to be achieved before the next intended re-sit. Please note under normal circumstances the College would not recommend re-applying at the next sitting.
2. Additional educational training must be as follows: Attendance at a recognised FRCA course, either locally or nationally. Practice sessions at the relevant component. Evidence of modules undertaken/to be taken in e-LA (if applicable) (available in UK only). Further clinical exposure and anaesthetic training as appropriate, for the relevant examination component.
3. Proof should be provided by the submission of this form, which must be agreed and signed by a college tutor/supervising anaesthetic consultant and **received by the College at least three months** prior to the published date of the next intended examination.
4. Before completing this form the college tutor or supervising anaesthetic consultant, in consultation with other hospital anaesthetic trainers, must hold a discussion with the candidate and giving serious consideration to previous examination results and shortfalls, agree that following additional training, another attempt at the examination is recommended.
5. The college tutor or supervising consultant must agree to assist in the implementation of a realistic and achievable plan of additional training which must meet the criteria set out on this form.

AET Form 1 – Evidence of Additional Educational Training: (To be completed by CT or anaesthetic consultant)

**Name of candidate:**

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**Relevant exam component:**

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**Name of college tutor/supervising consultant:**

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Following discussion with the above candidate I confirm that, since their previous attempt, the following ‘Additional Educational Training’ plan has been agreed and put in place:

**Attendance at the following \*local / \*national FRCA course (provide date of course):**

**Examination practice for relevant component (provide dates and types of sessions):**

**e-LA modules identified as requiring to be completed before the next attempt (please mark N/A if not applicable):**

**Further clinical exposure and training (give full details of clinical and other training planned):**

**In order to complete the above plan of additional training I have recommended that the candidate re-sits the examination at the following sitting (please refer to the exams calendar):**

I recommend a further attempt at this exam component and agree to oversee the above Additional Educational Training.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\*college tutor/\*supervising consultant

I agree to follow the above plan under the supervision of my CT/supervising consultant. I understand that I must have attended a guidance interview for this component before my next attempt.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Current medical grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date form completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this form to the Director of Education, Training and Examinations at the College address.



## Appendix 9: Candidate Examination Feedback Policy

### 1. Definition of feedback

‘Specific information about the comparison between a candidate’s observed performance and a standard, given with the intention to assist with improving the candidate’s performance.’

- 1.1 The College believes it is important to provide feedback to candidates beyond a standard pass-fail result to assist them in understanding and interpreting their overall result. The College does not attempt to justify the overall result or the marks awarded, whether overall or for specific sections or skill domains. Marks are awarded using strict guidelines. Marks awarded by the Board of Examiners are final and therefore papers cannot be remarked.
- 1.2 Candidate feedback should not be confused with candidate guidance. Feedback is the provision of information relating to performance, whilst ‘guidance’ relates to the action taken in relation to certain information about performance. The rules regarding the provision of examinations guidance available to candidates, is set out at Section 11, paragraph 34 of these regulations.

### 2. Publishing results and providing feedback

- 2.1 Pass-fail lists are published on the exam pages of the College website from 2pm on the release of result date. The release of results date is set out on candidate ‘admission notices’ and published on the exam pages of the College website.
- 2.2 Candidates are identified on pass-fail lists by their candidate number only. Candidates can choose to ‘opt out’ of the pass-fail list by contacting the examination department at least 48 hours before the release of results date. If a candidate opts out of the pass-fail list, their details and result will not be published and they will receive their pass-fail result via their results letter. Pass-fail results cannot be provided to candidates by email or telephone.
- 2.3 The period between the exam date and the release of results date will vary for each exam component and depends on the standard setting and marking methods used to confirm results. At the Primary FRCA OSCE/SOE and the FRCA Final SOE, the pass-fail results are normally published on the website from 2pm on the Thursday following exam week. Written exams take longer to mark and standard set, however the College aims to publish pass-fail lists within six weeks of the date of the exam. At the Final FRCA pass-fail results are normally published within seven working days of the last examining day.
- 2.4 Feedback is provided to candidates in the form of a ‘results letter’, this will be sent by first class post, to the candidate’s home address held on the College database within seven working days of the ‘release of results date’. See paragraph 3, regarding the type of feedback provided.
- 2.5 Appendix 2 of these Regulations, give details on the marking systems and the methodology used to set pass standards used for FRCA examinations.

### 3. Type of feedback provided

- 3.1 The type of feedback given to candidates will vary according to the exam component attempted. However, the College has ensured that the feedback provided meets the AoRMC and GMCs standards and is in line with other medical colleges.
- 3.2 All candidates whether they pass or fail an examination will receive the same type of feedback through their results letter. This is because the College believes that the provision of numerical information about a candidate’s exam performance not only assists with improving a candidate’s performance at future examinations but also provides important information on which to base further continuing professional development.
- 3.3 The College is aware that doctors undergoing recruitment processes, may be asked to supply pass letters for the FRCA Primary or FRCA Final examinations. To avoid recruitment bodies using feedback information to rank candidates or as part of a recruitment decision, feedback for candidates who pass the Primary or Final FRCA examinations overall are provided as an enclosure to their results letter.
- 3.4 The following feedback is provided on all exam results letters/feedback enclosures:
  - confirmation of the candidate’s pass-fail result
  - confirmation of the number of attempts used/maximum number of attempts
  - the examination pass mark as a raw score in relation to the maximum achievable test score (e.g. 315/420) and/or the percentage value (e.g. 75%)
  - the candidate’s overall score as a raw score and/or as a percentage value

- 3.5 In addition to the feedback listed at paragraph 3.4, candidates are provided with the following information for each FRCA exam

component:

<b>FRCA Examination</b>	<b>Feedback provided, as paragraph 3.4 plus:</b>
Primary MCQ	Candidate raw scores in MTF and SBA Maximum score available in MTF and SBA Candidate's score as a percentage value in the three sections of MTF (see Appendix 1 of these regulations) Number of voids/unanswered questions A full breakdown of question performance against the areas of the curriculum tested in the exam.
Primary OSCE	Candidate scores for each live station Which stations were test stations and did not count towards the total mark Candidate overall mean score
Primary SOE	Candidate scores for each of the four sub-sections (see Appendix 1 of these Regulations)
Final written	The pass marks for the MCQ and CRQ sections Candidate scores for the MCQ and CRQ sections Candidate correct responses in MCQ MTF and SBA Candidate raw scores in MCQ MTF and SBA Maximum score available in MCQ MTF and SBA Number of voids/unanswered questions in MCQ A full breakdown of question performance against the areas of the curriculum covered in the MCQ section of the exam Candidate score for each question in the CRQ Candidate total raw score in the CRQ Candidate mean raw scores for MCQ and CRQ sections
Final SOE	Candidate scores for each part in SOE1 and overall score in SOE2. (see Appendix 1)

#### 4. Additional feedback (Examiners comments)

In addition to the feedback provided to candidates as set out at paragraph 3, examiner comments made on candidate performance at the Primary and Final SOE examinations are provided on request. On receipt of result letters, candidates can request a transcript of examiners comments by emailing [exams@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rcoa.ac.uk). There is no charge for this service. No comments are provided by examiners for candidates who sit the Primary OSCE examination.

#### 5. Who else will be provided with feedback

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (the GDPR), a candidate's examination result may be processed and passed to examiners, College Tutors, Postgraduate Dean, employer, etc. for legitimate purposes connected with their training. Candidates registered or who anticipate being registered with the GMC, will have their personal data, including data about their exam results, passed to the GMC for quality assurance and research purposes and to facilitate the awarding of certificates of completion of training (CCT). Candidates automatically agree to this when completing exam applications either in writing or online.

#### 6. Feedback in extraordinary circumstances

The College believes it is necessary to provide more detailed feedback to candidates and their trainers where a candidate's performance at OSCE and/or SOE examinations is poor or causes concern. This feedback, along with suggested additional educational support which could be provided, will be sent in the form of a letter to the candidate's College Tutor or senior anaesthetic consultant and copied to the candidate concerned. This letter is designed to bring the trainer and candidate together to discuss poor performance and areas of concern, in order to provide support and agree additional educational training that can be put in place before the next attempt. Letters are automatically despatched to trainers and candidates where a candidate's score is <20/48 in the Final and Primary SOE components and/or less than 180/320 in the Primary OSCE examination, and where the candidate's performance demonstrates a concern in regard to patient safety.

#### 7. Acting upon feedback

- 7.1 The primary responsibility for acting upon feedback from an examination lies with the candidate.
- 7.2 Where a candidate has failed an examination they should discuss their feedback with their College Tutor or trainer and undertake any specific exam preparation or additional educational training suggested in such a discussion before making any further attempt at the examination.

- 7.3 Where a candidate has passed an examination they should still review any feedback with their College Tutor or trainer in order to try and identify any weaker areas in clinical knowledge or performance which may benefit from further training or study as part of ongoing professional development.
- 7.4 Trainers should respond to requests from candidates to discuss their feedback, providing support and assistance in the provision of additional training and preparation for examinations, including advice on the timing of their next attempt.

**8. Further assistance available to examinations candidates**

- 8.1 In addition to the examination feedback provided, candidates may also find the Primary and Final Examinations chair annual exam summaries and the College's annual examinations statistical reports useful in the interpretation of their own performance in relation to the analysis of exams data set out in these documents. The chair's summary and the annual examination statistical reports are available on the College website.
- 8.2 The College also publishes the pass rates of each examination on the exam results, statistic and research pages of the website within five working days of the release of results date.
- 8.3 When putting in place preparation plans for examinations, candidates should be fully aware of the various candidate resources that are available; these can be found on the examinations pages of the College website.

**Royal College of Anaesthetists**  
Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG  
020 7092 1500 | [exams@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rcoa.ac.uk) | [www.rcoa.ac.uk/examinations](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/examinations)

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