

FACULTY OF PAIN MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Anaesthetists

Report of Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine FPMRCA Examination

January/April 2018

The Twelfth sitting of the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine of the Royal College of Anaesthetists Examination has now occurred. The MCQ took place on 31 January 2018, 20 candidates attended this sitting of the exam; this is greater than the candidate cohorts for August and February 2017 which were 13 and 12 respectively. At this exam, the pass mark was 69.57%; equal to a raw score of 272 or above out of 391. The Core Group removed some questions from the total, before the pass mark was calculated, due to reasons of error or ambiguity in the question content. No candidates were disadvantaged in this process. After adjustment the maximum scores available were: 199 in MTF (1 stem removed), 96 in SBA (1 question removed) and 96 in EMQ (1 question removed). The pass mark was agreed by summing the Angoff-based individual sections using the same method as previously described; the candidate mean was particularly strong at 299.4/391 (76.57%) resulting in an excellent pass rate of 18/20 (90%) which is 31 percentage points higher than the August 2017 pass rate of 69%.

Prior to the SOE examination the court of examiners carried out a paper checking exercise to assess the relevance and difficulty of the questions in line with other exams and the examiners' expectations. The court of examiners assessed the question set used at the April SOE exam to be at an acceptable level of difficulty and relevance, similar in overall difficulty to previous examinations. The SOE examinations took place on Tuesday 17 April 2018; 21 candidates attended. 19/21 candidates passed the FPMRCA examinations giving a 90.5% pass rate which is significantly higher than the October and April 2017 pass rates which were 71% and 61% respectively. The excellent pass rates in both parts of the exam are a reflection of the high calibre of candidates attending the exams at these sittings.

As part of the standard setting process Borderline regression and Hofstee calculations were plotted against the exam data after the exam. The statistical analysis was discussed by the court of the FPM examiners and the data obtained were used as a starting point in agreeing the pass mark. The final pass mark of 32/40 was reached through a combination of statistical analysis and expert judgment and this is in line with pass marks set for previous exams. The range of candidate scores were 26 - 40, No candidates scored 32, one candidate scored 31, one scored 33. The performance of both borderline candidates were discussed at length by the court of examiners and it was agreed that their results should stand and the pass mark remained at 32. Of the 21 candidates who sat the exam, 18 were on their first attempt, two on their fourth attempt and one on their second attempt. Of the three on multiple attempts, two passed and one failed at their fourth attempt. 17/18 passed at their first attempt. This is an exceptional achievement by this cohort.

Four candidates scored a maximum score of 40/40 all were on their first attempt. Of the four, only one candidate was ranked in the top 10% of candidates in the MCQ component and therefore met the commendation criteria set by the Board. Dr Mahesh Kodivalasa, from Leicester General Hospital, was sent the Chair's commendation letter for outstanding performance at the April 2018 FPMRCA exam. No other candidate met the criteria for commendation/the prize for this academic year. Therefore, the court of examiners have recommended to the Faculty Board that;

Dr Kodivalasa, be awarded the FFPMRCA Prize for performing at the highest level of distinction, at his first attempt at all sections of the FFPMRCA examination for academic year 2017-2018.

Most examiners took part in this examination with those who were unable to attend giving good reason and sufficient notice regarding their non-attendance. Core Group meetings were held on the day of the exam with examiners writing new questions and setting exam papers for the autumn 2018 sitting.

The examination has been quality assured since its outset and this process is continually assessed and adjusted to meet best practice. Examiners were once again audited through video and feedback was given using the video footage collected. Examiner practice was found to be of a uniformly high standard, with feedback given to further improvement.

Three visitors attended on the day, Dr David Pang, Dr Saz Snidbongs and Dr Serg Nikolic. All three visitors felt the standard was set appropriately and gave positive feedback. All visitors sign a confidentiality agreement.

The Chair and Vice Chair would like to thank Graham Clissett and the examinations team for a polished and professional examination.

Dr Nick Plunkett,
Chair, FFPMRCA Examinations

Dr Tony Davies,
Vice- Chair, FFPMRCA Examinations

18 April 2018