



The Royal College of Anaesthetists
**PRIMARY AND FINAL FRCA
EXAMINATION REGULATIONS**

November 2013

These Regulations apply to Examinations commencing
on or after 1 November 2013

Revisions from the August 2012 edition

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| Regulations 5F, 17(b)(i) and 19 | Validity of Primary/exemption qualification reduced from ten to seven years (this amendment was made with immediate effect under the recommendation of the GMC). |
| Regulation 36 | New sentence: 'The GMC will be notified in the event of a disqualification due to cheating'. |
| Appendix 6 | Electronic devices and mobile phone policy. |
| Appendix 7 | Misconduct Policy. |
| Section 13 | Amended to read Misconduct, electronic devices/mobile phones and dress code policies. |
| Paragraphs 36–38 | Amended to note above policies. |
| Section 12 | Amended to reflect Complaints Policy. |

Revisions from the August 2013 edition

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| Regulation 5(e) | Number of attempts at Primary MCQ, OSCE and SoE increased to six. Evidence of additional educational training required at sixth attempt (see regulation 8). |
| Regulation 7(c) | Evidence of additional educational training required at sixth attempt (see regulation 8). |
| Regulation 8 | Additional Educational Training requirements. |
| Regulation 34 | At the sixth attempt candidates must have attended a guidance interview. |
| Appendix 8 | Additional Educational Training Form – AET Form1. |

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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;
- procedures for making representations, complaints and appeals, disability 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.
- Standard provision for dyslexia.
- Prize criteria.
- Dress codes.
- Electronic devices and mobile phones.
- Misconduct.
- Additional Educational Training Form – AET Form1.

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 Anaesthesia, Acute Care Common Stem (ACCS) or Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) (single/dual) programmes which, if satisfactorily completed, may contribute to the award of a Certificate of Completion of Training in Anaesthesia/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) 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.
- (e) RCoA IP are doctors currently sponsored under the RCoA International Programme. IP applicants are only recognised for examination purposes whilst under sponsorship.

Section 2: Commencement and Revocation

- 2 (a) These Regulations shall come into force on 1 August 2013 and will apply to examinations commencing on or after that date.
- (b) These Examination Regulations made by the Council 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. Council 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: Basic 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 which may be awarded are described in Appendices 1, 2 and 4 of these Regulations.

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, 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. 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 two 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 Regulation 13. 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 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 Short Answer Question (SAQ) 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 two years 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 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 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
 - 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, MCQ practice etc)
- (c) Evidence of modules undertaken or planned to be taken in 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 2013 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 FRCA 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 IP.
 - (iii) Specialty/Staff and Associate Specialist (SAS) Grade Doctors who have previously been in a UK training programme.
- (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) former UK anaesthetic trainees;
 - (ii) ACCS/ICM trainees (Primary OSCE/SOE)
 - (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 be told as soon as possible, after the published closing date for applications, whether or not their applications have been accepted.
- 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.

Section 5: Eligibility for the Primary FRCA MCQ Examination

The College recommends that candidates should not sit the Primary FRCA MCQ paper until they have passed the Initial Assessment of Competency.

- 13 A person is eligible to enter the Primary FRCA MCQ paper who:
- (a) holds full registration 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 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

* 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.

- (ii) is currently registered as a trainee in Anaesthesia 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) will have successfully applied for Temporary Examination Eligibility (TEE) 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.

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 half way through their Basic Level training programme in Anaesthesia.

- 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 IP and has the written support of the College Tutor; 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.

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

[‡] A pass in the CARCSI Primary 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 Chairman 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 Examination until they are at least one third of the way through their intermediate level training programme in Anaesthesia.

- 17 A person is eligible to enter for the Final FRCA Examination who:
- (a)
 - (i) holds full registration with the General Medical Council (UK)[¶] 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 as a trainee in Anaesthesia with the College of Anaesthetists Ireland; or
 - (iv) 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
 - (v) 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
 - (vi) is currently sponsored under the RCoA IP; and been employed as an anaesthetist in a NHS post for six months immediately prior to the date of the examination applied for; or
 - (vii) 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 Basic Level Training Certificate an equivalent, or the Irish Certificate of Completion of Basic Specialist Training; or
 - (ii) if they are currently sponsored under the RCoA IP, has received at least one satisfactory supervisor's report at a standard equivalent to that of a Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) before the published closing date of the sitting applied for; or
 - (iii) if has not been in a UK or Irish Anaesthetic training programme in the last five years; and is not sponsored under IP; has received at least one satisfactory NHS Appraisal at a standard equivalent to that of a ARCP; and
 - (d) 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.

[¶] 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.

Exemptions

19 A candidate for the Final FRCA Examination shall be exempt from passing the Primary FRCA Examination 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 Council:

- (a) has passed:
 - (i) the Primary examination for the Fellowship of the Faculty or the College of Anaesthetists, Ireland (provided it was sat in the Republic of Ireland); 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) Master of Anaesthesia of the University of Khartoum, Sudan before December 2007;
 - (vi) Master of Medicine (Anaesthesia) of the National University of Singapore before October 2012;
 - (vii) Fellowship in Anaesthesiology of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan awarded in respect of success in the relevant examination before August 2011.**
 - (viii) Doctor of Medicine (Anaesthesia) University of the West Indies;
 - (ix) Fellowship of the College of Anaesthetists of South Africa;
 - (x) Certificate of the American Board of Anesthesiology;
 - (xi) Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada;
 - (xii) Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons
 - (xiii) Fellowship of the Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists.

** Due to advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office not to travel to Pakistan unless absolutely necessary, the RCoA is presently unable to give recognition to the Fellowship in Anaesthesiology of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan. The RCoA will continue to monitor the situation and will re-establish recognition as soon as travel restrictions are lifted.

Section 8: Application Procedures

Applications

- 20 The Examination Calendar and application forms are published by the College, copies of which may be downloaded from the [College website](#).
- 21 Applications for admission to an examination 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.
- 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 Council and published in the Examinations Calendar and should be paid by cheque made payable to **The Royal College of Anaesthetists** and drawn on a United Kingdom clearing bank, or by a sterling draft or postal order.

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, subject to a deduction for administrative expenses, provided the withdrawal is 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.

Section 9: Pregnancy and Disability

Pregnancy

- 26 Regulations 27 to 29 apply only to female 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. This special treatment in relation to female candidates is permitted under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- 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 attached to the appropriate application form.
- 28 A prospective candidate must submit an appropriate medical certificate which satisfies the College if:
 - (a) she has any pregnancy-related problems or illness; or
 - (b) her confinement is due shortly before or around the date of the examination; or
 - (c) her condition gives her sufficient discomfort for her to consider that it will have a detrimental effect upon her performance.

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).

- 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 upon submission of an appropriate medical certificate which satisfies the College, the candidate may withdraw from the examination and the fee will be refunded (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses).

Disability

- 30 **Dyslexia** The standard rules for accommodating dyslexic candidates are contained in Appendix 3.
- 31 All other requests for special consideration for dealing with any disability (which are not covered by Appendix 3) will be considered on an individual basis. Requests must include a written statement of support from the employer's occupational health department and/or College Tutor confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant special examination arrangements.

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:
- passed the appropriate examinations for Fellowship; and
 - 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 and 7, enter for the next or any subsequent sitting of that examination.

Guidance

- 34
- 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.
 - 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
 - Interviews are limited to one per examination component listed at 34(b).
 - 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. Non-attendance of a prearranged interview will normally count as an allowance under 34(c).
 - Requests should be made by email (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.
 - 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.

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 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 Examinations Manager. (see paragraph 4 and 5 of the Review Regs).
 - 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 Training and Examinations Director or Appeal Clerk as applicable in writing within two months of completing the relevant examination. In no circumstances may 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 Regs.

Section 13: Dress code, electronic devices/mobile phones and misconduct

Dress code for examinations

- 36 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 and mobile phones

- 37 The college will follow strict appliance of the rules set out at Appendix 6 of these regulations regarding the use of mobile phones and unauthorised electronic devices during FRCA examinations.

Misconduct

- 38 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.

Appendices

These appendices set out procedures and rules that are relevant to the conduct of the FRCA examinations and are subject to change by the GMC/RCoA. Dress codes, electronic devices/mobile phones and misconduct policies form part of the regulations as described at paragraphs 36 to 38.

Appendix 1: Structure of the Examinations

Primary FRCA Examination

There are three sections to the Examination; questions on data interpretation may appear in any section or sub-section. All Primary questions are mapped to the Basic Level Training Curriculum (Annex B). 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 of:

- 20 MTF questions in pharmacology;
- 20 MTF questions in physiology including related biochemistry and anatomy; and
- 20 MTF questions in physics, clinical measurement 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)

Up to 18 stations in approximately one hour 45 minutes (of which a maximum of 16 count towards the result) currently comprising of 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 X-rays. One or more of the stations may involve the use of a medium fidelity simulator.

Structured Oral Examination (SOE)

There are two sub-sections to the SOE section 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 in physics, clinical measurement, equipment and safety.

Final FRCA Examination

There are two sections to the examination.

All Final questions are mapped to the Intermediate Level Training Curriculum (Annex C). 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:
 - 20 T/F questions in medicine and surgery
 - 20 T/F questions in applied basic science (including clinical measurement)
 - 15 T/F questions in intensive care medicine
 - 5 T/F questions in pain management
 - 20 SBA questions in clinical anaesthesia
 - 5 SBA questions in intensive care medicine
 - 5 SBA questions in pain management

- (b) Short answer question (SAQ) paper: 12 compulsory questions in three hours normally on the principles and practice of clinical anaesthesia.

Structured Oral Examination (SOE)

There are two sub-sections to the SOE comprising:

- Clinical Anaesthesia: 50 minutes duration comprising ten minutes to view clinical material, 20 minutes devoted to three questions based on the clinical material and 20 minutes devoted to three questions on clinical anaesthesia unrelated to the clinical material; followed by:
- Clinical Science: 30 minutes duration consisting of four questions on the application of basic science to anaesthesia, intensive care medicine and pain management.

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 Chairman reserves the right to send a letter to a candidate's College Tutor/consultant where, in the opinion of the Exam Board, poor performance raises concern.

Primary FRCA

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 then reduced by one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) to give the pass mark. The 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 for each station being determined by the examiners before the examination, using modified Angoff referencing. The pass marks for each of the 16 stations are summed to obtain the pass mark for the whole examination.

Up to two additional 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 using a modified Rothman system.

Final FRCA

Final FRCA Written Section

The pass mark for the written section is the sum of the percentage pass marks of the MCQ and SAQ 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 then reduced by one SEM to give the pass mark.

SAQ 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 setting 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 then reduced by one SEM to give the pass mark.

SOE

Two examiners mark each part of the SOE. Both examiners independently mark every question. There are ten 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 40 marks. The pass mark is 32 which was determined using a modified Rothman system.

Appendix 3: Dyslexic Candidates

- 1 The following guidelines specify the standard procedure and provisions for dyslexic candidates. Please note that these provisions will only be allowed if the application and appropriate documentation is received by the closing date of the sitting applied for.
- 2 To qualify for the standard provisions set out at paragraph 4, candidates must supply:
 - (a) a written assessment from an educational psychologist which includes a statement confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant additional time arrangements and that such additional time has been required on previous occasions in similar circumstances; and
 - (b) a letter of support from their College Tutor or Regional Adviser (or supervising consultant of equivalent standing if applying from overseas).
 - (c) Alternative and/or additional arrangements may be requested at time of application in accordance with paragraph 30 of these Regulations.
- 3 Such an application will be considered by the Chairman of the relevant examination, who will bear in mind the occupational requirements of the specialty. If a candidate is not able to supply the above documents before the commencement of the examination, the candidate may choose to:
 - (a) withdraw without penalty as per the standard procedure, or
 - (b) proceed without special arrangements.

Provisions

- 4 The following provisions will be allowed for candidates who provide satisfactory documents listed in paragraphs 2a and 2b:
 - (a) MCQ Papers: 45 minutes (25%) additional time will be allowed for the Primary and Final FRCA MCQ examinations, i.e. three hours and 45 minutes in total.
 - (b) SAQ Papers: 45 minutes (25%) additional time will be allowed for the Final FRCA SAQ examination, i.e. three hours and 45 minutes in total.
 - (c) SOEs: No standard arrangements are given.
 - (d) OSCEs: No standard arrangements are given.
- 5 To facilitate the administration of the examination, dyslexic candidates who qualify for provisions 4a and 4b, may be required to sit the examination in a room separate from the main examination hall.

Appendix 4: Prizes

The following prizes may, at the discretion of Council, 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 >38 from a maximum of 40 marks. |

Candidates are not informed that their exam scores meet any of the above definitions of a distinction, unless they are 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.

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)⁸ 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 and mobile phone 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 and mobile phones during examinations:

- 1 Mobile Phones and other electronic devices have no place at examinations and should be left at home wherever possible. Mobile phones 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/electronic devices:

Written examinations (before sitting at exam desk):

- Switch off and stored in bag, which should be placed in designated area defined by Invigilator, or,
- If no bag then mobile phone/device should be switched off and handed to Invigilator. Invigilator will place in envelope and mark with candidate No. Returned in exchange for exam papers.

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

- Switch 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.

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 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 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 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; recording devices; MP3 players; Bleepers; Timing devices that make audible beeps.*
- 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. Watches that do not emit sound may be used.

Appendix 7: Misconduct 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. **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. Falsification or alteration of eligibility or identification documents.
- i. Impersonation of a candidate.
- j. 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.
- 2.4 Anonymous reports of misconduct will not be used to initiate a formal misconduct process.
- 2.5 The College acknowledges that any case of misconduct can have an adverse affect 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 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 Chairman 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 deems that there is sufficient evidence to prove a case of misconduct, the Director will inform the candidate of the allegations in writing. The candidate concerned will be allowed 10 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 10 working days a candidate admits in writing to the allegations made against them, then the matter will be forwarded to the relevant Examinations Chairman and Vice Chairman 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/Vice 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, 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 Chairman of the Examinations Committee (Chairman)
 - The Chairman of the Examination Board not involved in the incident
 - A nominated Patient Liaison Group (PLG) 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 5 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 Misconduct 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:

Relevant Exam component:

Name of College Tutor/Supervising Consultant:

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 Training and Examinations at the College address.

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