Guidelines for trainees who have not passed the basic or intermediate assessment of knowledge

Background

Appendix 9 was added to the 2010 curriculum directly from the 2007 curriculum. Subsequent review has found that some of the guidance is contrary to the guidance provided by the Gold Guide.

In order to ensure that the guidance reflects that of the Gold Guide, appendix 9 will be updated in the curriculum version 1.4 which will be published in the last quarter of 2011. In the meantime, the revised version of appendix 9 guidance below should be used.

Revised guidance

Basic level assessment of knowledge

The Primary FRCA Examination [or a prospectively approved equivalent qualification] assesses the knowledge and understanding [and some of the attitudes and non-technical skills] required to inform and underpin the clinical practice of basic level training. The Primary examination is a mandatory milestone and one of the criteria for the award of the Basic Level Training Certificate [BLTC] without which a trainee will not be eligible for ST3 [see section 10.3]. Trainees are limited in the number of attempts they can have at the primary FRCA Examination [see Examination Regulations]. The following action is advised when managing such trainees who have reached the end of ST year 2 [CT2]:

- Providing that there are no outstanding concerns in the other GMP domains the ARCP panel may recommend “Outcome 3” allowing extra time. Any additional time is at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean and subject to the conditions defined in the Gold Guide.
- Reasons for the examination failure should be explored carefully with the trainee who should receive appropriate help, support and guidance to achieve the objective of passing the examination. This could include guidance sessions organised by The RCoA. If there is a health issue underlying the examination failure, advice from an Occupational Health Physician should be sought regarding both the training and the timing of future examination attempts.
- If at the end of the extension the trainee has still not passed the examination [or an approved equivalent], this will normally result in withdrawal from the training programme and loss of the training number.
- If the trainee subsequently passes the Primary FRCA Examination [or an approved equivalent] after having lost their NTN, the trainee will be eligible to apply for ST3 posts in open competition with other eligible applicants.

1 Royal College of Anaesthetists, Primary and Final FRCA Examination Regulations, Regulation 33
2 Gold Guide section 6.36
• If, in addition to having failed the assessment of knowledge, there are outstanding concerns about the trainee’s performance in the other GMP domains, it is for the Dean to decide if the trainee should be allowed to continue training in anaesthesia, following advice from the trainees TPD, RA and other appropriate trainers.

Intermediate level assessment of knowledge

The Final FRCA Examination [or a prospectively approved equivalent qualification] assesses the knowledge required for progression from the intermediate to higher level training. The Final FRCA is a mandatory milestone in the training programme and is one of the criteria for the award of the Intermediate Level Training Certificate [ILTC][see section 11.4]. Trainees who have not been able to pass the Final FRCA Examination will not be able to progress to higher level training. Trainees are limited to the number of attempts they can have at the Final FRCA Examination [See Examination Regulations]. The following action is advised when managing trainees who have not passed the Final FRCA Examination (or a prospectively approved equivalent) by the end of ST year 4.

- Providing there are no outstanding concerns in the other GMP domains, the ARCP panel may recommend “Outcome 3” allowing extra time. Any additional time is at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean and subject to the conditions defined in the Gold Guide.
- Reasons for the examination failure should be explored carefully with the trainee who should receive appropriate help, support and guidance to achieve the objective of passing the examination. This would normally include guidance sessions organised by The RCoA. If there is a health issue underlying the examination failure, advice from an Occupational Health Physician should be sought regarding both the training and the timing of future examination attempts.
- Failure to pass the assessment of knowledge at the end of an extension in training time may result in withdrawal from the training programme and loss of the training number. If the trainee subsequently passes the assessment of knowledge after having lost their NTN, the trainee will need to apply in open competition to return to a training programme. If in addition to having failed the Final FRCA Examination there are outstanding concerns about the trainee’s performance in the other GMP domains, it is for the Postgraduate Dean to decide if the trainee should be allowed to continue training in anaesthesia.

Commencement Date: With immediate effect
Review: Curriculum version 1.4

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3 Royal College of Anaesthetists, Primary and Final FRCA Examination Regulations, Regulation 33
4 Gold Guide section 6.36
5 Gold Guide section 6.39