



# The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

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## Changes to the RCEM Examination Structure – Transitional Arrangements

Further to previous notices I am pleased to confirm that the GMC have approved the changes to the College's examination structure, with effect from August 2016. The existing MRCEM and FRCEM examinations will therefore be replaced with a suite of examinations that will lead to the award of Fellowship of the College (FRCEM).

A number of these changes will be introduced with effect from August 2016 whilst others will be phased in over the next two years to permit trainees and other examination candidates the opportunity to complete the existing suite of examinations.

Further details are as follows:

### **FRCEM Primary replaces MRCEM Part A**

The MRCEM Part A will be replaced with the **FRCEM Primary** examination with effect from August 2016.

The method of assessment will change from a true/false multiple choice question paper to a single best answer question (SBAQ) paper of 180 questions in 3 hours. Previous passes in the MRCEM Part A examination remain valid. The examination will be standard set using the Angoff method.

From August 2016, there will be no restriction to the currency of a pass in the FRCEM Primary examination and the four year currency ruling for the MRCEM Part A will be discontinued. Candidates will be permitted a maximum of six attempts for the FRCEM Primary examination. Previous attempts at the MRCEM Part A examination will not be counted towards the number of available attempts for the FRCEM Primary examination.

### **FRCEM Intermediate Certificate replaces MRCEM Parts B and C for UK trainees**

The MRCEM Parts B and C will be replaced with the **FRCEM Intermediate Certificate** which consists of the following methods of assessment:

- Short Answer Question (SAQ) paper consisting of 60, 3 mark questions in 3 hours
- Situational Judgement Paper (SJP) consisting of 120 single best answer questions (SBAQ) in 2 hours

### **FRCEM Intermediate SAQ replaces MRCEM Part B (Short Answer Question Paper)**

The MRCEM Part B will be replaced with the **FRCEM Intermediate SAQ Paper** from August 2016. The subject matter and level of the examination remains unchanged to that of the current MRCEM Part B. Previous passes in the MRCEM Part B examination remain valid.

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The examination will be standard set using the Angoff method. One standard error of measurement will be added to the cut score identified using the Angoff method to calculate the final pass mark.

From August 2016, there will be no restriction to the currency of a pass in the FRCM Intermediate SAQ Paper. Candidates will be permitted a maximum of six attempts. Previous attempts at the MRCEM Part B examination will not be counted towards the number of available attempts for the FRCM Intermediate SAQ Paper.

### **FRCM Intermediate SJP replaces MRCEM Part C for UK trainees**

For candidates in a UK recognised training programme, the MRCEM Part C will remain a GMC approved qualification for the purposes of CCT if passed up to and prior to August 2018. After this time, all candidates will be required to pass the **FRCM Intermediate Certificate SJP** (plus the FRCM Primary and Intermediate Certificate SAQ) in order to be eligible to sit the FRCM Final examination components.

After August 2018, candidates who have passed the MRCEM Part A and B but not the Part C will be required to pass the FRCM Intermediate Certificate SJP in order to be eligible to sit the FRCM Final examination components.

### **FRCM Intermediate Certificate SJP**

The FRCM Intermediate Certificate SJP will be introduced from Autumn 2017. This component will be standard set using the Angoff method. One standard error of measurement will be added to the cut score identified using the Angoff method to calculate the final pass mark.

There will be no restriction to the currency of a pass in the FRCM Intermediate SJP. Candidates will be permitted a maximum of six attempts. Previous attempts at the MRCEM Part C examination will not be counted towards the number of available attempts for the FRCM Intermediate SJP.

### **MRCEM**

After August 2018 the College will continue to run the MRCEM OSCE (currently called MRCEM Part C) for non-trainees (UK and International) and interested UK trainees which will result in the award of Membership by examination and the post-nominals MRCEM.

Candidates will be required to pass the FRCM Primary (or have passed MRCEM Part A prior to August 2016), the FRCM Intermediate SAQ (or the MRCEM Part B prior to August 2016) and the MRCEM OSCE. Candidates will be permitted a maximum of six attempts for the MRCEM Part C/OSCE from August 2016. Attempts at the MRCEM Part C examination prior to August 2016 will not count towards the number of available attempts.

The MRCEM OSCE will be standard set using the Borderline Regression method. One standard error of measurement will be added to the cut score identified using the Borderline Regression Method to calculate the final pass mark.

### **Final FRCM Critical Appraisal**

The format of this component remains unchanged and can be sat from CT3/ST3. The standard setting will change from August 2016 to a domain based marking matrix. A copy of the marking matrix will be available on the College website in the New Year.

From August 2016, candidates will be permitted a maximum of four attempts for the FRCM Critical Appraisal. Attempts prior to August 2016 will not count towards the number of available attempts.

### **Final FRCM SAQ**

The format of the Final FRCM Short Answer Question (SAQ) paper is being updated to consist of 60, 3 mark questions in 3 hours. The subject matter and level of the examination remains unchanged. The change to the question format for this component permits the College to blueprint the FRCM SAQ and FRCM OSCE independently, thereby 'decoupling' the clinical components of the FRCM examination.

The FRCM SAQ will be standard set using the Angoff method. One standard error of measurement will be added to the cut score identified using the Angoff method to calculate the final pass mark. The updated blueprint and standard setting protocol will come into effect from August 2016.

From August 2016, candidates will be permitted a maximum of four attempts for the FRCM SAQ. Attempts prior to August 2016 will not count towards the number of available attempts. Candidates will be required to pass the FRCM OSCE within seven calendar years of the date they pass the FRCM SAQ. Candidates who do not successfully complete the FRCM OSCE within seven calendar years will be required to resit the FRCM SAQ, subject to at least one attempt remaining (from the original four permitted attempts).

### **Final FRCM OSCE**

The method of assessment for the Final FRCM OSCE is unchanged but to permit the 'decoupling' of the SAQ and OSCE components, the blueprint for the OSCE component has been revised. With effect from August 2016, candidates will no longer be required to pass the FRCM OSCE and FRCM SAQ in the same sitting. OSCE and SAQ results prior to August 2016 are excluded – candidates are required to pass both the SAQ and OSCE (independently) after August 2016.

The FRCM OSCE will be standard set using the Borderline Regression method. One standard error of measurement will be added to the cut score identified using the Borderline Regression Method to calculate the final pass mark.

From August 2016, candidates will be permitted a maximum of four attempts for the FRCM OSCE. Attempts prior to August 2016 will not count towards the number of available attempts. Candidates will be required to pass the FRCM SAQ within seven calendar years of the date they pass the FRCM OSCE. Candidates who do not successfully complete the FRCM SAQ within seven calendar years will be required to resit the FRCM OSCE, subject to at least one attempt remaining (from the original four permitted attempts).

### **Current FRCM Management Viva**

The existing FRCM Management Viva will remain part of the FRCM Final examinations until August 2018. All candidates sitting FRCM up to and including the Spring/Summer 2018 diet must sit this component. Non-trainees who have not passed the management viva by 2018 and wish to apply for specialist registration via CESR will be required to provide additional evidence of the competences currently tested within the management viva.

### **New Management Portfolio**

The Management Portfolio will be required for trainees in an approved UK training programme who started ST3 from August 2015 onwards. The Management Portfolio will be completed as a workplace based assessment (WPBA) and therefore assessed within the workplace. Completion of the Management Portfolio is a requirement for the completion of training and will be reviewed annually via the ARCP process.

Updated details on the requirements for the Management Portfolio will be available on our website in the New Year.

### **Current FRCEM Clinical Topic Review**

The existing FRCEM CTR will continue to run until Spring/Summer 2018 and all candidates sitting up to and including the Spring/Summer 2018 diet must sit this component (which includes a viva).

Therefore all existing trainees who are preparing a CTR (or permitted to submit a QIP to fulfil this requirement) will be required to submit their CTR and pass the viva by the Spring/Summer 2018 diet.

For candidates who have taken time out of training the College will facilitate the early submission of CTRs in 2017 to ensure such candidates have the opportunity to complete the CTR prior to the final sitting in Spring/Summer 2018. Candidates will continue to be permitted a maximum of five attempts for the FRCEM CTR up until August 2018.

### **New FRCEM Quality Improvement Project**

The FRCEM Quality Improvement Project will be introduced from August 2018 to permit sufficient time for candidates to complete their projects. Trainees who are at ST4 and below in August 2016 will therefore be required to submit a Quality Improvement Project. QIPs will be centrally assessed by the College using a domain-based marking scheme. From August 2018 candidates will no longer be required to attend for a viva.

Candidates sitting the current FRCEM Clinical Topic Review (or submitting a QIP to fulfil this requirement) prior to August 2018 are still required to attend for a viva (unless passed outright on their written work).

With effect from August 2016, candidates will be permitted a maximum of four attempts for the FRCEM Quality Improvement Project. Previous attempts at the FRCEM CTR will not be counted towards the number of available attempts for the FRCEM QIP.

### **Direct entry to FRCEM for Non-trainees/International Candidates**

The direct route for entry to the FRCEM examinations based on previous experience will be discontinued from August 2018. Existing and recently approved candidates permitted direct entry to the FRCEM examinations (without completion of MRCEM) are required to pass all components for the existing FRCEM (Critical Appraisal, Management Viva, Clinical Topic Review, Short Answer Paper and OSCE) **prior to August 2018**. Candidates who have not passed all the FRCEM examinations by this date will be required to complete the full suite of examinations, starting with the FRCEM Primary and including the FRCEM Intermediate Certificate and post-August 2018 FRCEM Final examinations, irrespective of previous successes.

If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact the Director of Education, Emily Beet ([Emily.Beet@rcem.ac.uk](mailto:Emily.Beet@rcem.ac.uk)).

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