



ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS AND  
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW



## Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations

### Intercollegiate Specialty Examination in General Surgery

#### Regulations 2015

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## **Regulations Relating to the Intercollegiate Specialty Examination in General Surgery (2015)**

(to be read in conjunction with appropriate Guidance Notes for Applicants)

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1. The applicant must hold a medical qualification recognised for registration by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom or the Medical Council of Ireland. The applicant must have been qualified for at least six years.
2. The applicant must provide evidence of having reached the standard of clinical competence defined in the Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum either for the award of the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) by the General Medical Council or for the award of Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) by the Irish Surgical Postgraduate Training Committee. The required standard may have been achieved through training or qualifications, and experience considered together. The passing of the Intercollegiate Specialty Examination alone does not imply that the CCT, CCST (Ireland) or placement on the Specialist Register will be automatic; the Examination will form only part of the evidence required.
3. This evidence must consist of three structured references in the format prescribed by the Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations (JCIE). These references must be completed by the appropriate senior colleagues with direct experience of the applicant's current clinical practice in the appropriate specialty as defined in the Guidance Notes for Referees.
4. Candidates will have up to a maximum of 7 years to complete the examination process as follows:

Section 1: Candidates will have a two year period from their 1<sup>st</sup> attempt with a maximum of 4 attempts with no re-entry.

Candidates who have achieved the required standard in Section 1 and have been granted eligibility to proceed to Section 2 the following will apply:

Section 2: Candidates will have a maximum of 4 attempts with no re-entry.

Candidates will have a maximum of 4 attempts in totality at each Section across both the Intercollegiate Specialty Examinations and the Joint Surgical Colleges Fellowship Examinations i.e. the total of 4 attempts applies to the Intercollegiate Specialty Examinations and the Joint Surgical Colleges Fellowship Examinations alone or any combination of the two.

All previous Regulations will be rescinded.

## Intercollegiate Specialty Examination in General Surgery

### Guide to the Scope and Format of the Examination

**Section 1** is a written test\*\* composed of two Single Best Answer papers. These papers are carefully prepared to cover the curriculum content which can be best assessed in this way. A process of standard setting is performed by trained and experienced examiners to set the eligibility to proceed mark. Section 1 examinations are delivered via computer-based testing at Pearson VUE Test Centres in the UK and Ireland.

Candidates must meet the required standard in Section 1 in order to gain eligibility to proceed to Section 2.

**Paper 1** 120 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 15 mins)

**Paper 2** 120 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 15 mins)

\*\* Case, S.M. & Swanson, D.B. (2001). Constructing written test questions for basic and clinical sciences. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn. National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), Philadelphia, USA.  
[www.nbme.org/PDF/ItemWriting\\_2003/2003IWGwhole.pdf](http://www.nbme.org/PDF/ItemWriting_2003/2003IWGwhole.pdf) (retrieved on 15/12/2006).

**Section 2** is the clinical component of the examination. It will consist of a series of carefully designed and structured interviews on clinical topics – some being scenario based and some being centred around volunteers. Such volunteers will be past or present patients relevant to the specialty and recruited by the host examiner. The Section 2 examinations will be held in pre-selected UK/Ireland host centres.

### Examination format (from August 2022)

#### Clinical examinations

1 x General Surgery Clinical (2 x 10 minute Short Cases & 1 x 20 minute Long case)

1 x Special Interest Clinical (2 x 10 minute Short Cases & 1 x 20 minute Long case)

**Volunteers** are used for Long Cases. **Clinical Scenarios** are used for Short Cases.

#### Oral examinations

4 x 30 minute oral examinations as follows:

1. Emergency Surgery/Trauma/Critical Care Oral (clinical topics with discussion of published evidence supporting practice)
2. General Surgery Principles and Clinical Practice Oral (including applied anatomy, physiology and pathology)
3. Special Interest Surgery – Clinical Practice Oral (clinical topics with discussion of published evidence supporting practice)
4. Special Interest Surgery – Basic Principles (applied anatomy, physiology and pathology, 15 min) and Academic Foundation (15 min)\* Oral

(\*Academic Foundation: candidates will be given 30 minutes to read one generic paper relevant to the wider field of General Surgery).

Interpretation of radiographs may be included in any of the orals.

## Intercollegiate Specialty Examination in General Surgery

### Guide to the Scope and Format of the Examination

At the time of application candidates are required to select a special interest component from the list of options below, on which they will be assessed in Section 2.

For Section 2 examinations being held from August 2022 the options are:

Breast  
Colorectal  
Oesophago-gastric  
Hepatopancreaticobiliary  
Endocrine  
Trauma  
Renal Transplant  
Gastrointestinal Surgery & the Surgery of Childhood

The revised General Surgery curriculum dictates the level of knowledge, clinical and technical skills to be achieved in all components of general surgery. These levels are described in detail in the curriculum for ST4, ST6 and ST8 and the examination will reflect the knowledge required as shown in the curriculum:

	Section 1	Section 2 – General Surgery	Section 2- Special Interest
Area	All Candidates	All Candidates	Candidates will be examined to the level of a Day 1 Consultant (ST8) in their declared Special Interest
Elective General Surgery	ST8	ST8	
Emergency General Surgery	ST8	ST8	
General Upper GI	ST6	ST6	
Colorectal	ST6	ST6	
Transplant	ST4	ST4	
Breast	ST4	ST4	
Endocrine	ST4	ST4	
Vascular	ST4	ST4	

For further indication of the Examination Scope, candidates should consult the Curriculum as published by the SAC in General Surgery [[www.iscp.ac.uk](http://www.iscp.ac.uk)].

Please note that the Intercollegiate Specialty Board in General Surgery reserves the right to modify the format of the examination.

### The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland Medal

The above Medal is awarded at each diet of the examination, by the Board, to a candidate who achieves the highest mark in the examination at the first attempt. All awards are made at the discretion of the Board.

A candidate who is an existing Member of one of the four participating Royal Colleges (Edinburgh, England, Glasgow, Ireland) and who is successful in the Intercollegiate Specialty Examination will be promoted to the Fellowship of their college, unless they indicate another preference. **Only those who are subsequently accorded and maintain the Fellowship of a College are entitled to use that College's associated post-nominals.**

January 2023