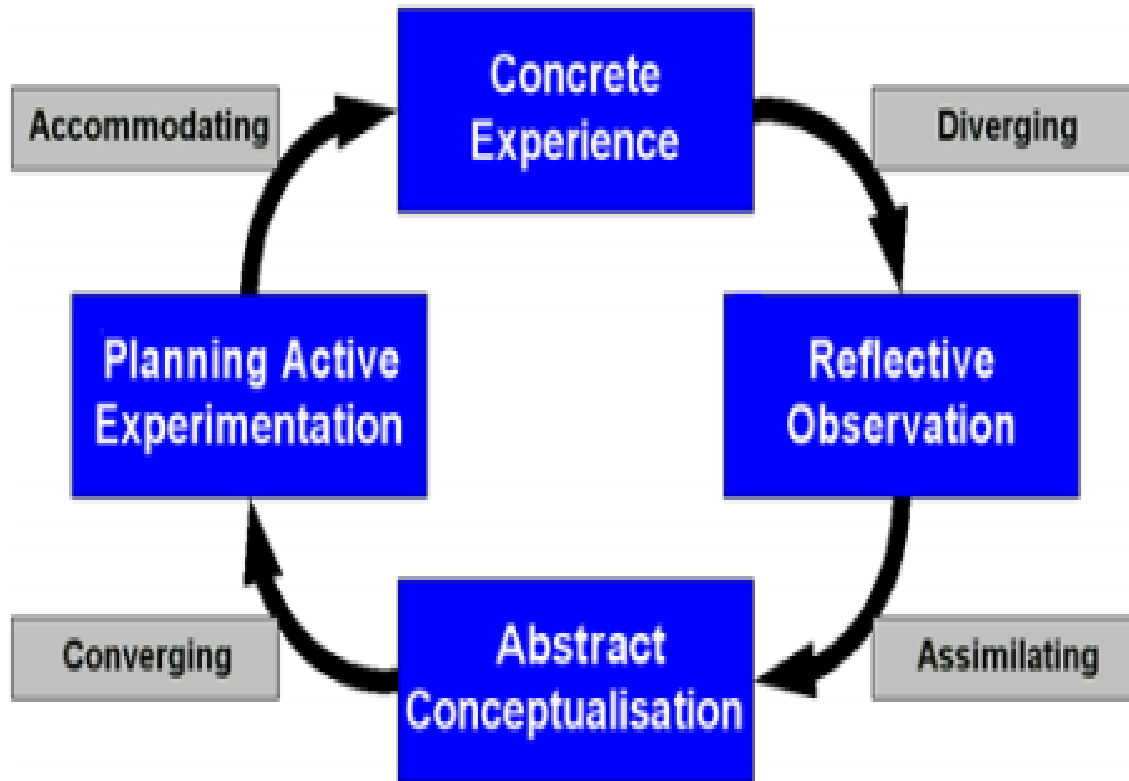


How to pass the MRCS

Klaire Exarchou
Naved Hossain
Ajay Sharma



Kolb's Learning Cycle



Structure of the exam

- Part A
 - Paper 1 Applied Basic Science 3 hours
 - Paper 2 Principles of Surgery in General 2 hours
 - No negative marking
 - Single best answer and extending matching
 - Pass mark about 67%-determined by process of standard setting
 - Total number of questions will increase from 270 to 300
 - Total time: increase from 240 minutes to 300 minutes
 - Applied Basic Science (ABS) and Principles of Surgery in General (PoSG), currently equal at 135 questions for each, will change to become 60% ABS (180 questions, an increase of 45) and 40% PoSG (120 questions, a decrease of 15)
 - The number of questions testing anatomy will increase from 45 to 75 (16.7% to 25% of Part A as a whole)
 - A minimum level of competence in each of the ABS and PoSG paper will be retained.

Part A

- Preparation
 - At least 3 months revision
- This is your “spare time”
- You will be working an average of 48 hours per week
- Roughly 1 weekend per month
- 1 week of nights per month
- On call approx 2-3 times per month

Remember

- MRCS is required to complete core surgical training
- You are spending your hard-earned money to take the exam
- Therefore it makes sense to prepare well and not have to waste time and money on re-sits
- The earlier you complete MRCS the more time you have to write papers and prepare for interview

Timetable

- Make a plan
- Don't procrastinate
- Focus on topic which are weakest
- Organise the questions under theme
- Use your spare time after work/eating/watching TV
- You can do 2-3 hours of revision per day like this
- Do lots of MCQs again and again
- Read through answers you got wrong and move on

Pro tip

- Suggestions
 - Bring your revision book to theatre
 - If you have some spare time on-call, do some questions
- Timing
 - Try and book MRCS A during an “easy” job
 - Good EWTD compliant jobs

How to revise

- Try to stick to revision plan
- Resources
 - Officially you should read anatomy, physiology and pathology texts. You should do this for preparation for CT1 teaching

Online

- www.onexamination.com
- www.past.co.uk

Books-loads out there

- Essential Revision Notes for Intercollegiate MRCS parts 1 & 2
- SBA MCQs and EMQs for the MRCS Part A Pack: 2 (Oxford Specialty Training: Revision Texts)
- MRCS Part A: 500 SBAs and EMQs by Pradip K Datta (Editor), Christopher JK Bulstrode (Editor),
- Ask colleagues, borrow from library

Question Banks

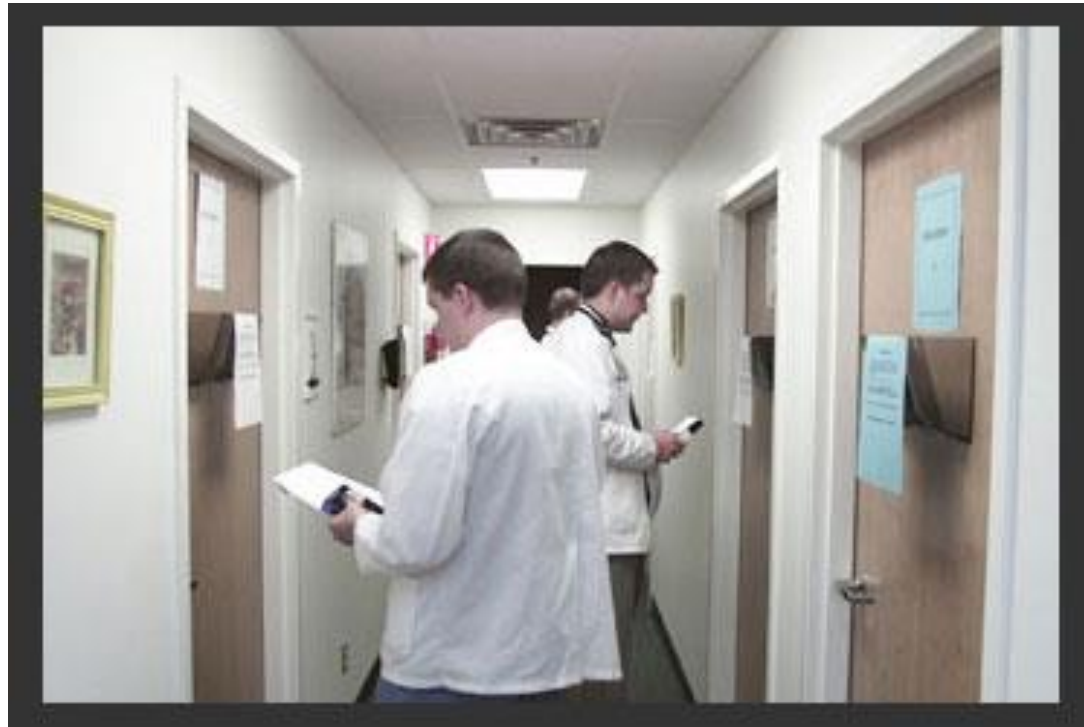
- Local 'Q banks'
- eMRCS.com
 - Cheap
 - Questions closely match MRCS
- Pastest and OnExamination
 - More expensive
- Useful to reinforce knowledge
- Highlights weak topics
- Should aim for about 70% or more

On the day

- Stay at nice hotel
- Reach there previous night
- Get some sleep
 - This makes a LOT of difference
- Try not to stress out too much

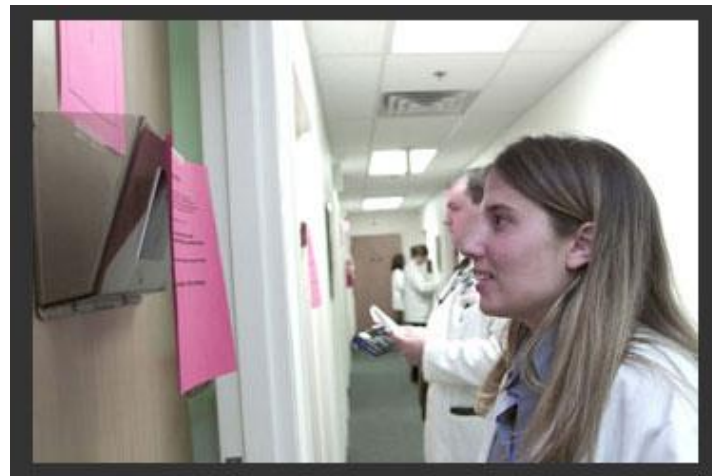
MRCSC Part B

- 18 Stations
- Three times a year
- It's just another OSCE

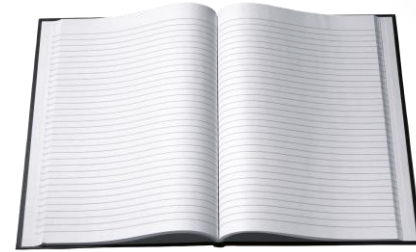


Two broad content areas

- Applied knowledge: 8 stations
 - Anatomy, pathology, critical care
- Applied skills: 10 stations
 - Procedures, History taking, Examinations, Communication skills, Reading
- Both broad content areas must be passed in order to achieve an overall “pass”

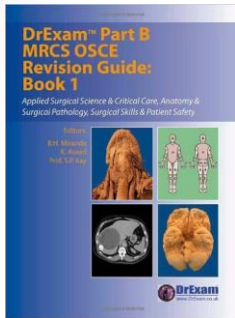


How to prepare

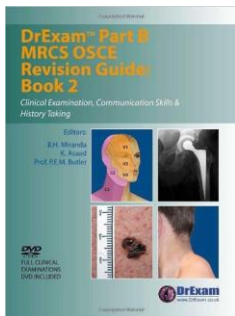


- Set aside at least 2-3 months
 - (The exam costs £930)
- Remember this will be in your spare time because you also have a job
 - Evenings
 - Weekends
- Get some **BOOKS**
- Useful to work in **groups** (almost essential)
 - Can test each other
 - Use each other to practice histories/examinations
 - Share the burden of pain and suffering
- Do a course (optional)
- Reinforce knowledge by doing all the past paper questions
- Sit exam

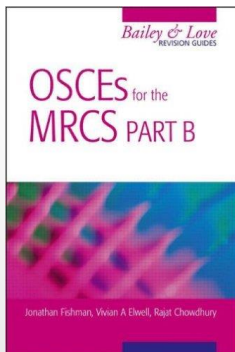
General Books



- **DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Applied Surgical Science and Critical Care, Anatomy and Surgical Pathology, Surgical Skills and Patient Safety Bk. 1** by B. H. Miranda, K. Asaad, S. P. Kay (Paperback)

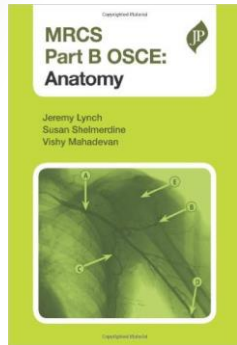


- **DrExam Part B MRCS OSCE Revision Guide: Clinical Examination, Communication Skills and History Taking Bk. 2** by B. H. Miranda, K. Asaad, P. E. M. Butler (Paperback)

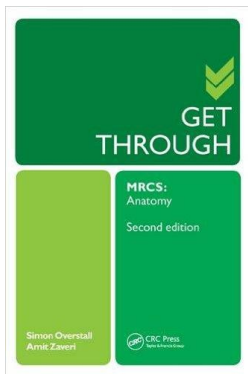


- **OSCEs for the MRCS Part B A Bailey & Love Revision Guide: A Bailey and Love Revision Guide: Pt. B** (Hodder Arnold Publication) by Jonathan Fishman, Vivian A Elwell, Rajat Chowdhury (Paperback)

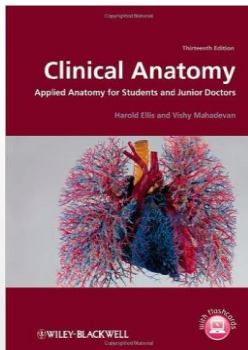
Anatomy Books



- **MRCS Part B OSCE: Anatomy** by Jeremy Lynch, Susan Shelmerdine, Vishy Mahadevan (Paperback)
- Excellent questions for anatomy viva practice. Good quality pictures and diagrams, with answers.

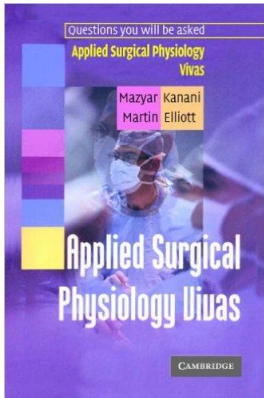


- **Get Through MRCS: Anatomy 2E (GTH)** by Simon Overstall, Amit Zaveri (Paperback)
- Excellent anatomy viva question book - covers most main areas, with good pictures and answers.

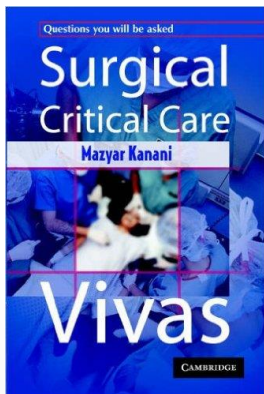


- **Clinical Anatomy: Applied Anatomy for Students and Junior Doctors** by Harold Ellis, Vishy Mahadevan

Physiology and Critical Care

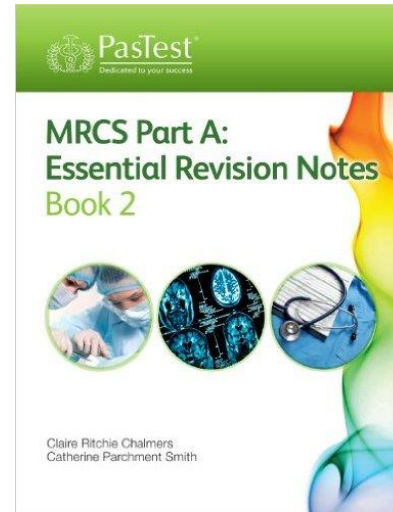
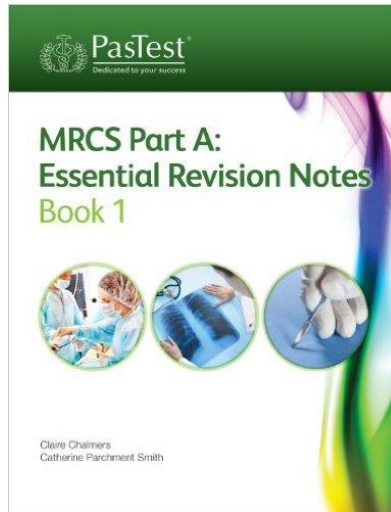


- Applied Surgical Physiology Vivas by Mazyar Kanani, Martin Elliott (Paperback)



- Surgical Critical Care Vivas by Mazyar Kanani (Paperback)

Books



- **Pastest Essential Revision Notes for Intercollegiate MRCS 1 & 2**
 - For stuff you don't understand/keep getting wrong/forgot/never learnt properly in the first place

- **Full list:**

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/registry/wishlist/AZK65U2KDCWO/>

Websites

- PassTheMRCSCo.uk
 - £120
 - Good bank of questions
 - Includes Aclands Anatomy subscription
 - Tip: If you have a flatmate also studying for MRCSC B you can split the cost
- Anatomy dissector (free)
 - <http://ect.downstate.edu/courseware/haonline/quiz/practice/u7/quiztop7.htm>
- Anatomy Zone (free)
 - <http://anatomyzone.com/>



Revision Courses

- MRCS: 2 days preparations in Liverpool 5th and 6th October 2017
Broadgreen Hospital
- Anatomy prosections: demonstration is useful for anatomy – recommended
- Waste of money if you haven't done much revision
- Lots of different courses
 - **Dr Exam - £549 per course (£999 for both)**
 - Bradford
 - <http://www.drexam.co.uk/book-online-now/>
 - **Doctor's Academy - £385**
 - Cardiff
 - <http://doctorsacademy.org/Course/SurgicalAnatomyandmockOSCE/Home.htm>
 - **RSM - £399 - £499**
 - London
 - <https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/events-listing/2014-2015/groups/rsm-professionals/rpf34-mrcs-part-b-revision-course.aspx>

Past Paper Questions

- Very important to use these for practice
- There are lots flying around the internet and from previous candidates
- **Questions get repeated**
- There are some less obvious topics which come up e.g:
 - TB
 - Giant Cell Arteritis
 - Rheumatic Fever and Infective endocarditis
 - Reactive post-op depression

Specifics



- Anatomy
 - Get a skull – very useful for vivas as cranial fossa is examined repeatedly
 - Get some bones – e.g. Femur, ulna, radius, vertebrae
- Critical care and Physiology
 - 7th September, whole day Ajay Sharma and possibly one more in January 2018
 - Ask a friendly anaesthetist if they would be willing to teach your group some topics
 - In the exam, anaesthetists often examine these stations
- Surgical procedures e.g. excision of skin naevus
 - Practice at work under exam conditions
 - Simulate at home and examine each other
 - Easy to fail if they haven't been practiced

Study leave

- **If your boss will let you**
- Ask if you can **attend clinics** for Orthopaedics, Breast/Endocrine, Vascular, Urology if you have not done these jobs before

- <https://www.passthemrcs.co.uk>

The Exam

- Check you have the right date!
- Don't miss your train!
- Get a nice hotel
- Get an early night



Practice

- At every opportunity
 - Seeing patients
 - Presenting to senior colleagues
 - Viva practice
- Deliberate practice
 - Listen to what you're saying and think(!)
- Study groups
 - Best way to practice
 - Feedback and learn from others
 - Revise and prepare specific scenarios

Turn it into a strength



- Communication skills assessed in all stations
- It may be obvious ...
- Or not so obvious ...
- Easy marks to gain and may 'sway' examiners
- Think, structure and respond
- Insight into clarity of thought, prioritisation, organisation of ideas, decision making
- Aim to have a subservient but confident and professional discussion with a senior colleague

Summary

- Don't underestimate the communication skills elements of the examination
- (Even if you think your communication skills are good)
- Make sure you know the game
- Deliberate practice at every opportunity
- Remember your communication skills are being continually assessed – use it to your advantage!