

FFICM the exam: Expectations and Preparation

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FFICM

- Exam structure
- Type of topics
- Revision aids
- Myths

FFICM Structure

- Developed to be similar to ANZICS exam
- Primary exam (not yet developed)
 - MCQ- TF/ EMQ/ SBA
- Final exam
 - MCQ
 - SOE/ OSCE
- Optional for Joint ICM trainees
- Requirement for entry into Stage 3 training for Dual ICM trainees

Eligibility

- Registered with FICM as an ICM trainee

- Completed intermediate training (Stage 1 for dual trainees)

- Pass in prior 7 years:
 - Primary FFICM
 - MRCP (UK)
 - MCEM Parts A, B and C
 - Primary FRCA or FCAI

MCQ

- Test of knowledge breadth
- Covers basic sciences and clinical sciences
- Not a test of problem solving
- Stem focusing on a single topic followed by five options which may be TF
- SBA questions consist of a stem, single question and five options.
- NB: With SBA more than one answer may fit but one will be “best”

MCQ

- 90 Questions
 - 60 TF and 30 SBA
- Marking
 - One mark for TF questions
 - Four marks for SBA questions
 - No negative marking
- Pass mark determined by Angoff reference
- Sittings currently in January and July

MCQ revision

- Questions are a mix of those borrowed from FRCA and MRCP plus newly developed
- FICM example questions
 - 3/5 appeared in my exam
- Steve Benington MCQs in Intensive Care book
 - Aimed at EDIC but covers similar themes
 - Problem solving/ data interpretation does not feature in FFICM MCQ
- FFICM MCQ revision book due out January 2015
- Crit IQ website- MCQ question bank
- FRCA MCQs for basic sciences

SOE/ OSCE

- ❑ Must be passed within 3 years of passing the MCQ
- ❑ Sitting in March/ April and October
- ❑ SOE in the morning, OSCE in the afternoon
- ❑ You can carry a pass in one of the components (2 years)
- ❑ Most recent sitting:
 - ❑ 76% pass rate for OSCE
 - ❑ 75% pass rate for SOE
 - ❑ 63% candidates passed both parts

SOE

- 4 stations
- 2 examiners per station with a set of questions each
- 7 minutes per question
- 1 minute between stations
- Question topics displayed on door to station

SOE

- “Questions are those that might be asked during a ward round or teaching session”
- Candidates are all asked the same questions
- Same marking as per FRCA
 - Pass = 2
 - Borderline = 1
 - Fail = 0
- Pass mark 80 – 85%

SOE topics

- FICM example questions not particularly representative
 - Heliox
 - Principles of antimicrobial therapy

- My experience was combination of
 - Standard “bread and butter” ICM topics
 - Common medical conditions
 - Working through investigation/ differential
 - Obscure “How do I speak for 7 minutes on this?”

OSCE

- 13 stations
 - 12 “Live” and 1 test
- 7 minutes per station
- 1 minute between stations
- Aims to cover a number of ICM problems

OSCE topics

- Data interpretation
 - Largest component of the OSCE
 - Individual stations on ECG interpretation/ CXR interpretation/ acid base analysis
 - ABGs, blood results, ECGs, CXR and CT scans all feature during scenarios throughout

- Review patient history/ management
 - Clinical scenario with investigation results
 - Stroke/ evidence for decompressive craniectomy
 - Liver failure/ King's criteria
 - Head injury and neuroprotection
 - Burns

OSCE topics

- Perform examination
 - CAM ICU
 - Mannequin based

- Communication skills
 - Breaking bad news to a relative
 - Discuss misplaced NG tube with junior

OSCE topics

- Equipment
 - IABP
 - Minnesota gastric balloon
 - Pulmonary artery catheters

- Resuscitation station
 - Blocked tracheostomy/ CICV
 - PEA arrest

OSCE

- Pass mark determined using Angoff Referencing
- No killer stations
- Most challenging part of the exam
- Consistently weak stations are ECG and x-ray interpretation

Revision aids: Books

- Oh's Intensive Care Manual
 - Detailed and extensive
- Oxford desk reference
 - Concise overview of most topics
- Examination Intensive Care Medicine
 - Aimed at ANZICS CICM exam
 - Useful for OSCE and some SOE topics
 - CD with summary of ICU literature and overview of equipment

Revision aids: On line

- Crit IQ
 - Aimed at ANZICS CICM exam
 - Modules in ICM topics/ equipment
 - MCQ question bank
 - Data interpretation examples
 - Literature review
 - Expensive (£120/ year)

- PACT modules on line
 - ESICM patient-centred acute training resource
 - ICM modules with MCQs

- Ficm website
 - Examination report (Chairman's summary)

- Intensive Care Society guidelines (www.ics.ac.uk)

Revision aids: Apps

- ICU trials
 - Key points of landmark ICU trials
- ICU notes
 - Covers limited basic sciences in relation to ICU
 - Extensive DDX lists
 - Investigation/ Management plans
 - ICU drugs in detail
- ICU pearls
 - Random ICU facts and case studies
 - Not structured in any format

Revision aids: Other specialties

- MRCP revision books
 - Radiology for MRCP
 - CXR made easy
 - Rapid review of clinical medicine for MRCP part 2

- ECG made easy series

- FRCA revision books
 - West's Respiratory physiology/ pathophysiology

Courses available

- ICS FFICM course £170
 - London
 - Morning of lectures, afternoon of viva/ OSCE practice

- PINCER course £125
 - Portsmouth
 - Full day of practice OSCEs and SOEs

- Oxford FFICM course £75
 - Oxford
 - Full day practice OSCEs and SOEs

- National Intensive Care Exam Revision Course (Wales) £175
 - Cardiff
 - Lectures and viva practice

FFICM exam myths

- FFICM is an exit exam
- Detailed knowledge of historical ICU literature required
- FFICM is a UK exam
 - English Law e.g. Mental Capacity Act
 - ICNARC not SICSAAG

Summary

- Don't rely on ICU textbooks
- Raid hospital library for MRCP/ FRCA revision books
- Remember to cover English law/ practice in your revision
- Expect an obscure SOE topic and DON'T PANIC
- Best revision for this exam was experience