



The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Regulations and Information Pack

MRC EM Primary Examination

Applicable from 1 August 2021

July 2021

Contents

1. [Introduction to the MRCEM and FRCEM Examination Structure](#)
2. [Examination Regulations](#)
3. [Introduction to the MRCEM Primary](#)
4. [MRCEM Primary Eligibility Criteria](#)
5. [Oversubscription Criteria](#)
6. [Data sharing](#)
7. [Exemption and Equivalent Examinations](#)
8. [Number of attempts and currency](#)
9. [Structure and Content of the MRCEM Primary](#)
10. [Standard Setting and Examination Results](#)
11. [Guidance for Candidates with Additional Requirements](#)

Introduction to the MRCEM and FRCEM Examination Structure – applicable from August 2021

In August 2021 the College will introduce the 2021 curriculum and the associated examinations which are mapped to the curriculum.

From August 2021, the Membership examination consists of the following components:

- MRCEM Primary examination
- MRCEM Intermediate SBA examination
- MRCEM OSCE

From August 2021, the Fellowship examination consists of the following components:

- FRCEM SBA examination
- FRCEM OSCE

For further information regarding the MRCEM Intermediate SBA, MRCEM OSCE or the FRCEM examinations, please refer to the relevant information pack, available on the [Exams Section](#) of our website.

Examination Regulations

1. Applications for each component of the MRCEM and FRCEM examination should be submitted via the online application system, available via the [Examinations Section](#) of the College Website.
2. Applications may only be submitted during a specified time period ('the application window'). The date on which the application window opens (opening date) and closes for receipt of applications (the closing date) is published on the Examinations Section of the College Website.
3. Candidates must be on the General Medical Council's Register with a license to practice, or registered with the statutory regulator in the country in which they practice, without limitation on their practice. Candidates must declare if they have had at any time (or have pending) any investigations, suspensions, limitations or removal of medical registration in any country.
4. Completed applications must be submitted by 17:00 (GMT) on the published closing date after which time the system automatically closes. Partially completed or late applications will not be accepted.
5. It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure they have all the information required to complete the entire application form prior to the application window closing on the advertised date at 17:00 (GMT).
6. Upon submission of a completed application, candidates will receive an automated email confirming receipt of the application. Once the application has been approved candidates will receive an automated email to confirm this. Candidates will be sent a further email confirming details of their examination registration and instructions for booking their test appointment with Pearson VUE.
7. Candidates wishing to withdraw or transfer their examination entry must notify the Examinations Department in writing by 17:00 (GMT) on the closing date. Fees cannot be transferred or refunded after this time.
8. Candidates must apply for any required entry visas in good time prior to the date of the examination. In exceptional circumstances, subject to receipt of written documentation confirming the refusal of a visa, the Head of Examinations will consider requests for candidates to transfer their examination entry.
9. Candidates who do not attend an examination will forfeit their examination fee. In exceptional circumstances, for matters beyond the candidate's control, the Head of Examinations will consider requests to refund a candidate's examination fee, subject to receipt of written documentation (e.g. a detailed medical certificate, a death certificate for a direct family member) within 20 working days from the date of the examination. Please note that insufficient preparation is not considered a sufficient reason to refund an examination entry.
10. Candidates will be informed of the date on which examination results will be published at the time their examination entry is confirmed. In very exceptional circumstances this may be amended by the College and due notice will be published on the College website.
11. Results will be published to candidates' College website accounts and result letters can be downloaded on demand. Examination results will not be issued or confirmed by telephone or email.

Introduction to the MRCEM Primary

The MRCEM Primary examination is mapped to the Emergency Medicine 2021 Curriculum with more detailed information provided in the **RCEM Basic Sciences Curriculum (June 2010)** which is available on the [RCEM website](#). All applicants for the MRCEM Primary examination are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with the Basic Sciences Curriculum in preparation for sitting the MRCEM Primary examination.

Candidates in the UK Foundation Programme may choose to sit the MRCEM Primary examination during Foundation Year 1. However, candidates sitting the MRCEM Primary examination before entry to a GMC approved Emergency Medicine training programme should note that a pass in this examination will not count towards CCT if it is taken out of training unless the candidate enters or re-enters the training programme within seven years of passing the examination.

MRCEM Primary Eligibility Criteria

A candidate will be eligible to enter the MRCEM Primary examination provided they holds a medical qualification approved by the General Medical Council (GMC) for the purposes of registration.

Candidates who are registered with the GMC should include their registration number in the appropriate place on the application form

Candidates registered with the Irish Medical Council (IMC) or an international medical council are required to upload a copy of their current medical registration document at the time of application.

Oversubscription Criteria

There is normally no restriction on the number of places available for the MRCEM Primary examination but candidates may not always be allocated their first choice of venue.

Data sharing

If you are registered or anticipate being registered with the GMC then your personal data, including your examination results, will be passed to the GMC for quality assurance and research purposes and to facilitate the awarding of certificates for completion of training (CCTs).

If you are a trainee in UK Emergency Medicine training programme, your personal data, including your examination results will be shared with your local Health Education England (HEE) office and/or your Head of School or Programme director.

Exemptions and equivalent examinations

FRCEM Primary

Candidates who have passed the FRCEM Primary between August 2016 and August 2021 are deemed to have passed an equivalent examination to the MRCEM Primary examination.

MRCEM Part A

MRCEM Part A passes obtained prior to August 2012 are deemed time expired. Candidates who sat the MRCEM Part A prior to August 2012 are therefore required to pass the MRCEM Primary examination in order to sit further MRCEM or FRCEM examinations.

Candidates who passed the MRCEM Part A examination after 1 August 2012 are deemed to have passed an equivalent examination to the MRCEM Primary examination.

MRCS or MRCSI

Trainees who are enrolled on the Defined Route of Entry into Emergency Medicine (DRE-EM) programme and obtained MRCS or MRCSI after 1 January 2012 are exempt from the MRCEM Primary examination. Such trainees are required to submit the FRCEM Primary Exemption form, available on request from exams@rcem.ac.uk, and a copy of their MRCS or MRCSI certificate to the Examination Department at least six weeks prior to applying for the MRCEM SBA examination in order to obtain exemption from the MRCEM Primary.

Number of attempts and currency

Candidates are permitted a maximum of six attempts in which to pass the MRCEM Primary Examination. Previous attempts at the FRCEM Primary examination after August 2016 will count towards the number of available attempts.

In exceptional circumstances candidates may apply for approval for an additional examination attempt. Such cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Dean, whose decision is final.

Candidates with a late diagnosis of a neurodiverse condition (such as dyslexia, ADD, ASD) and who have previously sat an examination component without agreed reasonable adjustments may apply to the Dean to expunge such attempts. Such cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Dean, whose decision is final.

A pass in the MRCEM Primary examination will remain current. If at some future date it becomes necessary to replace it, holders of the MRCEM Primary examination will be given a minimum of 24 months' notice of the date from which it will be deemed time expired.

Structure and Content of the MRCEM Primary

The MRCEM Primary examination consists of a 3 hour, multiple choice question (MCQ) paper of 180, single best answer questions (SBAQ).

RCEM delivers its written examinations electronically via computer-based testing company, Pearson VUE. <https://home.pearsonvue.com/rcem>

The examination is conducted in English and candidates are advised that IELTS Level 7 is the expected standard for completion of MRCEM and FRCEM examinations.

The blueprint for the MRCEM Primary Examination is as follows:

Category	Sub-Category	Questions
Anatomy	Upper limb Lower limb Thorax Abdomen Head and Neck Central Nervous System Cranial Nerve Lesions	60
Physiology	Basic cellular physiology Respiratory physiology Cardiovascular physiology Gastrointestinal physiology Renal physiology Endocrine physiology	60
Pharmacology	Gastrointestinal pharmacology Cardiovascular system Respiratory system Central Nervous System Infections Endocrine system Fluids and electrolytes Musculoskeletal system Immunological products and vaccines Anaesthesia	24
Microbiology	Principles of microbiology Pathogen groups	17
Pathology	Inflammatory responses Immune responses Infection Wound healing Haematology	9

Evidence Based Medicine	Statistics Study methodology Principles of critical appraisal	10
TOTAL		180

Standard Setting and Examination Results

The MRCEM Primary examination is standard set using the Angoff Method. The MRCEM Primary examination results will be published on a pre-advised day by 17:00, approximately five weeks after the date of the examination. Results will be released to candidates' College website accounts where results letters can be downloaded on demand. Examination results will not be issued or confirmed by telephone or email.

Guidance for Candidates with Additional Requirements

The College is committed to supporting candidates by providing fair opportunities when undertaking examinations. Candidates may submit a request for reasonable adjustments and should note that the responsibility for requesting adjustments lies with them.

Please refer to more detailed guidance [here](#).

¹ [Managing access arrangements for candidates requesting adjustments in high stakes assessments.](#)
AoMRC, May 2018