



FRCEM Exam Regulations

September 2024

This document sets out the regulations for and overview of all FRCEM exam components, leading to the award of Fellowship of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine by examination.

For detailed information about the structure and content of each exam, please see the respective Information Packs.

Amendment Log

Issue	Issue date	Additions / alterations
0.1	September 2024	Revised regulations for all 2025 exams

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Introduction to the FRCEM exam structure

In August 2021 the College introduced a revised [RCEM Curriculum](#) and associated updates to exam components for both Membership and Fellowship exams.

The Fellowship exams comprise of the following two components:

FRCEM SBA

180 single best answer questions delivered as two, two-hour papers with 90 single best answer questions per paper. There is a one-hour break between papers.

The FRCEM SBA is mapped to the [RCEM Curriculum](#).

FRCEM OSCE

An Objective Structured Clinical Exam involving 16, eight-minute stations. An additional one minute of reading time is provided between each station so that candidates can read the information about the respective station's scenario. In addition to the 16 eight-minute exam stations, there are two, eight-minute rest stations.

The FRCEM OSCE is mapped to the [RCEM Curriculum](#).

Fellowship by Examination (FRCEM) will be awarded to candidates who pass both exam components (or past equivalents detailed below).

Exam Equivalences

Candidates may have sat previous versions of FRCEM exam components which have been updated, replaced or, in some cases, removed from the program of assessment.

Table A below shows the accepted previous RCEM exam components, with details of their current exam equivalences:

Table A: Accepted Exam Equivalences

Current Exams	Equivalents from Past Curriculums	Notes
MRCEM Primary	FRCEM Primary	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2021</i>
	MCEM Part A	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2016</i>
MRCEM SBA	MCEM Part B	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2016</i>
	FRCEM Intermediate SAQ	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2021</i>
	MRCEM Intermediate SBA	
MRCEM OSCE	MCEM Part C	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2016</i>
FRCEM SBA	FRCEM Final Clinical SAQ	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2021</i>
FRCEM OSCE	FRCEM Final OSCE	<i>Equivalent if sat between 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2021</i>

Table B below shows previous RCEM exam components which have no recognised equivalence to current exams:

Table B: Past Exams with No Current Equivalence

Past Exams	Notes
MRCEM Intermediate SJP	<i>Accepted, when passed between 1 August 2016 and prior to 31 July 2021 with MRCEM Primary and MRCEM SBA, for entry to HST</i>
FRCEM Final Critical Appraisal	<i>Now assessed within the FRCEM OSCE</i>
FRCEM Final QIP	
Management Viva	
CTR Viva	

There are no exemptions from any FRCEM exams, and there are currently no recognised equivalents for any exams from other Medical Colleges or institutions.

Eligibility Criteria

The same eligibility criteria are used for both the FRCEM SBA and FRCEM OSCE. Candidates may choose to apply for the FRCEM SBA or FRCEM OSCE in either order, but must meet the following eligibility requirements at the point of application.

FRCEM SBA and FRCEM OSCE

All FRCEM SBA and FRCEM OSCE applicants must:

- Hold a [PMQ accepted by the General Medical Council](#)
- Have a current full medical registration with a license to practice
- Have completed MRCEM (or equivalent)

And, if a UK trainee, must:

- Have 12 months FTE Emergency Medicine experience at Higher Specialty Training level or equivalent

Or, if a non-trainee, must:

- Have 4 years FTE Emergency Medicine training, 1 of which must be at a higher specialty level

Exam Rules and Regulations

1. Applications

- i. Applications for each exam must be submitted via the online application portal during the respective application window. Applications can be made [here](#).
- ii. The application window for each exam can be found on the [Exam Calendar & Fees](#) page of the College website. In exceptional circumstances, application windows may be subject to change.
- iii. There is no advantage in applying early to any RCEM exams, but all applications must be completed and submitted before 16:00 (UK time) on the published closing date. Partially completed or late applications will not be accepted.
- iv. It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure they have submitted all the information and documentation required to complete the application before the respective application window closes. All applications are reviewed individually and if there is either incomplete or missing information, our Candidate Team may email applicants to request relevant details or documentation and a small extension in which to provide this.
- v. Once submitted, candidates will receive an automated email confirming receipt of the application. Candidates will receive another automated email once their application has been reviewed with an accept or reject outcome.

- vi. Approval of an application is not confirmation of an exam space or booking. Spaces are limited for OSCE exams and in the event of more applications than spaces available, candidates will be offered spaces using the agreed Oversubscription Criteria. There is no limit to the number of spaces available for theory exams and candidates will be sent a further email with instructions for booking an exam space at a Pearson VUE centre with relevant booking deadlines. Candidates who do not book a test centre space by the relevant deadline will not be able to appear in the exam.
- vii. Provisional applications to the FRCEM SBA or FRCEM OSCE (i.e. applications to subsequent exams pending results from a previous exam) will not be accepted.
- viii. Any applications found to contain deliberately false or misleading information will be rejected and may lead to a formal Misconduct Investigation.

2. Eligibility Requirements

- i. For all exams, all candidates must either be on the General Medical Council's (GMC) Register, or registered with the statutory regulator in the country in which they practice, without limitation on their practice.
- ii. Candidates must declare in writing if they have had (or have pending) any investigations, suspensions, limitations or removal of medical registration in any country. Any such declarations will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Examiner and Head of Exams. In cases of registrations in more than one country, the GMC's registration status will usually be considered first. However, any limitations in other registrations must still be declared.
- iii. Full details of eligibility requirements for each exam component can be found on page 3 of this document. For the avoidance of doubt, candidates must meet all eligibility criteria for the respective exam at the point of application, rather than the date of the exam.
- iv. There are no exemptions to eligibility requirements for FRCEM exam and there are currently no recognised equivalents for any exams from other institutions.
- v. Candidates must ensure that any supporting documentation submitted as part of an application, including medical registration documents, is submitted in English or submitted with an attested and stamped English translation.
- vi. All RCEM exams are conducted in English. Exams delivered internationally are written, developed and standard set in the same way as those delivered in the UK. Candidates applying to the FRCEM OSCE must have achieved at least International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7, OETs or equivalent, and may need to provide evidence of this when submitting an application.

3. Payments, Transfers and Refunds

- i. Applications to Theory exams are considered complete and final once submitted and payment has been received. Applications to OSCEs are considered complete and final once payment has been received within the specified timeframe following the

offer on an allocated space. All complete applications will be subject to our [Cancellation Policy](#).

- ii. Payments for Theory exams must be made when submitting an application. There are a limited number of spaces available for each OSCE exam, so candidates will only be asked to pay for an OSCE exam if they have been allocated a space.
- iii. Payment of exam fees should be made online wherever possible. Payments can also be made over the phone in case of technical difficulties or banking restrictions which may prevent candidates from paying online. In exceptional circumstances, with prior written agreement from the Exams Team, payments may also be made via BACS transfers. Payments made over the phone or via BACS transfer may take several days to appear on the candidate's account.
- iv. Exam fees are reviewed annually by the College Executive team and College Council.
- v. Those who are members of the College will benefit from discounted exam fees. Exam candidates must be paid-up members in good standing at the point of application to qualify for these discounted exam fees. If you would like to become a member to benefit from the discounts available [you will need to register for an account first here](#), or if you already have an account, [apply here](#).
- vi. Candidates unable to attend a theory exam due to certain exceptional circumstances, may have their application transferred to the next available exam as outlined in our Cancellation Policy. Transfers will only be made to the next exam diet and can only be transferred once. Our Cancellation Policy and all other regulations still apply to transferred applications.
- vii. Candidates unable to attend an OSCE exam due to certain exceptional circumstances may receive a refund, less an administrative fee, as outlined in our Cancellation Policy. Refunds will only be made to the original payment method, unless the payment card has expired, or the bank account has been closed. In such cases, refunds can only be made to accounts under the name of the candidate.

4. Number of Attempts and Exam Currency

- i. As standard, candidates are allowed a maximum of four attempts at each FRCEM exam component. Previous attempts at a previous exam equivalent after August 2016 (as outlined above) will count towards the number of attempts.
- ii. If a candidate does not attend an exam for any reason, it will not count towards the number of attempts.
- iii. After four failed attempts, candidates may apply for one additional attempt. Applications for an additional attempt should be made [via the online application form](#), candidates must explain how they will ensure any additional attempt is successful, and each request will be considered on a case by case basis by our Chief Examiner. All applications must be made through submission of the online form. Any requests sent directly to the Chief Examiner will not be considered. The Chief Examiner's decision is final.

- iv. A temporary derogation to the counting of attempts was agreed in 2020 in response to the change of exam formats during the Covid-19 pandemic. Between 1 July 2020 and 31 August 2021, a candidate's first attempt at an online exam format will not count towards the maximum number of attempts for that specific exam. This derogation is only applied once, to the first attempt at any online exam format during that period.
- v. Candidates who have exhausted all exam attempts are not permitted to restart their exam journey.
- vi. Candidates have a maximum of seven years to complete MRCEM exams from the date they pass the MRCEM Primary. After completing MRCEM exams, candidates will have a maximum of seven years to take and pass an FRCCEM exam component. After passing an FRCCEM exam, candidates will have a further 7 years to complete the outstanding FRCCEM exam component.
- vii. In line with Academy of Medical Royal Colleges best practice, candidates who have a new or previously undeclared diagnosis of a condition requiring reasonable adjustments and have failed previous attempts at exam components without reasonable adjustments, can apply to have additional attempts for that exam component. Requests should be made as outlined [on our website](#), and each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Examiner and Head of Exams.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

- i. The College will consider all requests for permanent, temporary or discretionary reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and our Reasonable Adjustments process, as outlined on our website. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ii. Requests for reasonable adjustments can be made during the application to any exam. Candidates can also upload a copy of relevant supporting documentation to their account at any point, or as part of an application to any exam. Supporting documentation must be submitted within five working days of making an application, documentation submitted after this point will not be considered unless specifically requested by the Exams Team.
- iii. The College may not be able accommodate requests for reasonable adjustments if there is insufficient time to make necessary adjustments, or if some or all of the request is deemed unreasonable.
- iv. It is a candidate's responsibility to specify which of the recommended adjustments outlined in their supporting documentation that they are requesting when submitting an application.
- v. Pregnant candidates may be eligible for certain temporary adjustments to support them during an exam and can find out more by emailing exams@rcem.ac.uk.

6. ID and Visas

- i. Candidates must present at least one form of government issued identification (ID) on exam days which must meet the ID requirements for that exam. Candidates arriving without ID, or with ID that does not meet the ID requirements, will be turned away and will not be eligible for a refund or transfer.
- ii. For theory exams delivered via Pearson VUE, the first and last name on your ID must exactly match those on your Pearson VUE account. Candidates will be sent reminders of [Pearson VUE's ID policy](#) before the exam and will be able to make reasonable changes to the name on their Pearson VUE account if necessary. Any requests for name changes less than 10 working days before an exam will not be processed.
- iii. For the purpose of visual identification, candidates may be asked to temporarily remove any clothing, headwear or items that cover some or all of the face. College staff and/or test centre staff will manage this sensitively and, in certain circumstances where possible, offer privacy to ensure the candidate's comfort.
- iv. Candidates allocated to OSCE exams will be provided with a visa support letter as standard once payment has been received. This visa support letter will be available to download from your RCEM account and will contain confirmation of the date and location of the exam. The Exams team will support, wherever reasonably possible, with any verification requests from visa/immigration officials.
- v. It is a candidate's responsibility to meet all visa and entry requirements of the country in which they plan to take the exam. Candidates unable to attend an exam due to visa related issues will be withdrawn in line with the [Cancellation Policy](#) for the respective exam.

7. Results and Feedback

- i. Results will be published to candidate's RCEM account and PDF copies of results letters can then be downloaded on demand. Exam results will not be issued or confirmed via email, telephone or any other means.
- ii. Results dates for all exams can be found on the College website. In very exceptional circumstances, results dates may be subject to change. In any such circumstance, affected candidates will be given details of the new results date along with reasons for the change.
- iii. Our results production process includes a significant number of quality assurance steps and a full sign-off process overseen by our Chief Examiner. As such, we do not offer remarks or revaluations of scores.
- iv. Pass marks for our theory exams are set using the internationally recognised Angoff Method. For the MRCEM SBA and FRCEM SBA exams, one standard error of measurement (SEM) is added to the Angoff score to determine the pass mark. Further information on theory exam standard setting can be found on our website. Both the Angoff score and SEM vary between exams and the pass mark will therefore differ between exam diets.

- v. The pass mark for OSCEs is set using borderline regression to set daily cut scores. Further information on OSCE standard setting can be found on our website.
- vi. As part of our post-exam adjudication processes, our Quality & Standards team and Lead Examiners may identify concerns with questions, such as wording or spelling of questions that could have affected how candidates responded. In the interest of fairness to candidates and depending on the impact of any such concerns, questions may be removed from results processing and the total marks available for exams may therefore differ between exam diets. In these cases, the pass mark will be recalculated after questions have been removed.
- vii. Candidates will be sent more detailed information and feedback about their performance via email. Feedback letters are typically sent within three working days of the results release date. The Exams team is unable to provide any further individual or more detailed feedback.
- viii. The College reserves the right to withhold exam results for some or all candidates from particular exam days or diets in the event of any serious concerns of widespread misconduct or disruption, pending formal investigations. In such cases, we will regularly write to affected candidates with relevant updates.

8. Appeals and Complaints

- i. Candidates have the right to appeal if they feel their performance in any exam was affected by a procedural irregularity and/or exceptional circumstances. Full details can be found in our [Appeal Regulations](#).
- ii. When attending an exam, candidates are declaring themselves fit and able to take that exam. Any candidates attending an exam when knowingly unwell will not be eligible to apply for an appeal, transfer or refund.
- iii. Candidates who have any concerns about any aspects of the service we provide, can complain orally or in writing, in line with the College's complaints policy. We value complaints for the insights they give us into how our services are being received and the opportunity they provide to improve the service we offer.
- iv. Candidates who have any concerns about any aspects of the service received from one of our third-party suppliers can complain in line with College's complaints policy and/or directly to that supplier. Any such complaints will be investigated with that supplier.

9. General Behaviour and Misconduct

- i. Candidates are expected to behave in a professional manner throughout their dealings with the College and conduct themselves as is appropriate for a Member or Fellow of The Royal College of Emergency Medicine. This includes behaviour during exams, and in all their contact with College staff, examiners, patients, invigilators and third party suppliers before, during and after the exam. Full details of our Candidate Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

- ii. Any allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or misconduct will be investigated in line with our [Misconduct Policy](#). Exam results may be withheld pending the outcome of any such investigations. If allegations are found to be proven, candidates may be banned from RCEM exams for a period of time, have results voided, and/or be reported to their regulator and/or educational supervisor.

10. Data Sharing and Copyright

- i. If candidates are registered with the GMC, their personal data, including exam results, will be shared with the GMC for quality assurance and research purposes, and to facilitate the awarding of certifications for completion of training (CCTs).
- ii. Candidates who are trainees in a UK Emergency Medicine training programme will have their data, including exam results, shared with the local Health Education England (HEE) office, Head of School and/or Training Programme Director (TPD)
- iii. OSCE exams may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes, or in the exceptionally rare event of there being an insufficient number of examiners available. Any recordings will only be used for marking stations, quality assurance, examiner training and/or reviewed for Exam Policy purposes. If used, recordings will only ever be securely shared with Examiners or Exam Policy panel members. Recordings cannot be shared with candidates to maintain exam security and confidentiality. Any such recordings will be held in line with the College's data retention policy.
- iv. Candidates are expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing or transmitting any exam material in any form or by any means. All MRCEM and FRCEM exam questions and scenarios, as well all RCEM Learning exam preparation materials, are under copyright of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine. Communicating any question or scenario to any other person or organisation would be a serious breach of copyright and of the Code of Conduct and Misconduct policies.