

Final Examination for the Fellowship in Clinical Oncology (Part A)

Guidance Notes for Candidates

1 Examination Structure

The Final FRCR (Part A) examination comprises two papers of single best answer (SBA) questions. The examination is held twice a year: normally in February and September.

2 Entry Requirements

Applicants must have passed the First FRCR examination and have completed a period of three years supervised clinical oncology training covering the examination syllabus in order to enter. In exceptional circumstances, with support from the Training Programme Director (TPD) and at the discretion of the Warden of the Faculty of Clinical Oncology, this minimum training period may be reduced to two years and six months.

Candidates undergoing specialty training in the UK should obtain approval from their TPD prior to applying online.

No exemption is granted from the Final FRCR (Part A) examination on the basis of success in any other examination.

A pass in the Final FRCR (Part A) examination will remain valid, i.e. permit entry to the Part B examination, for three years, starting from the sitting at which the Part A examination is passed.

From Spring 2015 no candidate will automatically be permitted more than six attempts at any FRCR examination or examination module. In order to attempt an examination or examination module for a seventh, or further, time candidates will have to demonstrate additional educational experience. Any examination or examination module a candidate has previously taken counts towards his or her six attempts i.e. the rule is backdated to include previous attempts.

3 Venues

The examination is held at three UK venues (London, Edinburgh and Manchester) and three non-UK venues (Hong Kong, Singapore and India - Kolkata).

4 Content

Each of the two SBA papers comprises 120 questions on a wide range of areas of practice across the curriculum. The content of each paper is listed below.

Paper 1	Tumour type	Number of questions
	Respiratory	24
	Urology	24
	Head and Neck	24
	Skin	12
	CNS	12
	Gynaecology	24

Paper 2		
	Breast	24
	Lower Gastrointestinal	24
	Upper Gastrointestinal	12
	Haematology	12
	Miscellaneous	38
	Image-based	10

Candidates are given three hours to answer each of the papers. Candidates must write their candidate number in the space provided at the top of the front page of each question paper. Candidates must record their answers on the separate answer sheet provided using an HB pencil – answers recorded on the question paper will not be marked. Further instructions about completing the answer sheet are provided at examination venues.

Candidates must not attempt to copy any examination materials or remove either the question paper or the answer sheet from the examination room; both must be returned to the invigilator at the end of the examination.

Candidates are provided with a Candidate Reference Sheet for use during the examination. This gives information about the normal ranges for investigations, frequently used abbreviations and standard chemotherapy regimes.

Each SBA question comprises a stem (a question or a statement) and five items (answers) [labelled (a) to (e)]. Candidates are asked to decide which one of the five items represents the best answer to the question given in the stem.

The examination is not negatively marked and therefore candidates are encouraged to offer an answer to all of the questions.

Sample SBA questions and a copy of the Final FRCR (Part A) answer sheet are available to give candidates the opportunity to familiarise themselves with question styles and examination materials in advance of the examination.

5 Marking

The examination is marked by computer. The marking system shown below is used:

For each item correctly answered	+1 mark
For each item incorrectly answered	0 marks

The standard for success is determined at each sitting based on the difficulty of the questions (using a criterion-referenced standard setting technique) and so may vary between sittings.

6 Equipment Required for the Examination

Candidates are required to bring a HB pencil, pencil sharpener and eraser.

7 Personal Belongings and Items on Desks

Candidates must follow invigilators' instructions at examination venues regarding where to leave personal belongings. No personal belongings are permitted in the examination room. Neither the Royal College of Radiologists nor the examination venue is able to accept responsibility for the safety of any items of personal belongings.

Candidates must not bring any electronic equipment, e.g. laptop or palmtop computers, to the examination. All mobile telephones must be turned off for the duration of the examination and left in bags or coats. Candidates must turn off any alarm set on mobile telephones as these can operate even when the device is turned off; any timing device that emits an audible "beep" must have this facility disabled for the duration of the examination.

Candidates are permitted a still (non-carbonated) drink on their desks. Food items are not permitted in the examination room. Candidates with special medical needs requiring them to eat throughout the examination should advise the College of this prior to the examination date.

8 Candidate Identification

Candidates are required to bring their candidate timetable (which shows their candidate number and details of when/where they are sitting the examination) to the examination, together with a form of identification that bears the candidate's photograph, full name and signature. Candidates that are not registered with the General Medical Council must bring their passport. Details on identification documents must match those supplied when applying for the examination.

9 Examination Results

The list of successful candidates by candidate number only will be published on the College website. Results will not be available by telephone or fax. All candidates will be sent a letter confirming examination results (by first class or air mail) as soon as possible after the results have been published. Pass list publication dates can be found on the website - this information will also be included on individual candidate timetables that are sent out as soon as possible after the application closing date.

All candidates will receive details of scores achieved, the level of performance that was required to achieve success and details of their individual performance against that of the cohort as a whole. In addition, a further breakdown of percentage scores by site specific cancer topics will be supplied as feedback.

Candidates undertaking speciality training in the UK will have their results copied to the relevant TPD and Regional Education Adviser (RA) for information.

Successful candidates who have indicated their intention to attempt the Final FRCR Part B examination at the same sitting will be processed in the week following Part A results publication, payment taken and documents confirming the Part B schedule dispatched as soon as available.

10 Candidate Conduct

Candidates are expected to behave in a reasonable and respectful manner throughout all College examinations. Candidates must comply with the instructions and requirements of the examination invigilators, College staff and examiners at all times. Please note the following:

- Candidates attempting to make a copy of, or transmit, any examination materials will be disqualified.
- Candidates found with any electronic device during the examination will be disqualified.
- Candidates refusing to stop writing on or amending their answer sheets after the examination has ended will be disqualified.

11 Further Information

Queries arising from this document should be addressed to the College's Examinations Office, either by email to examinations@rcr.ac.uk or by telephone on 020 7406 5905.

Queries at the time of the examination should be raised with the invigilators or College staff present. Comments, feedback or complaints following the examination should be brought to the attention of the Examinations Manager, either by email to laura_mcgarry@rcr.ac.uk or by telephone on 020 7406 5947.