

ICBSE Regulation for Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 MRCS candidates and number of attempts

Who is this information for?

ICBSE, in collaboration with the four surgical royal colleges (UK and Ireland), have developed the below policy for candidates who had previously sat the MRCS Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 examinations, and who wish to reattempt the MRCS examinations in the updated format. The policy is specifically for candidates who have previously sat Part 1, 2 or 3.

Candidates who have sat Part A and B previously will need to discuss their attempt allowance with the relevant college.

Introduction

The MRCS Qualification prior to 2011 was comprised of three components:

- **Part 1 and Part 2** – two MCQ papers that were undertaken on separate dates.
- **Part 3** – this contained 3 components; Oral viva, Clinical and Communication assessments.

Candidates who sat the exam in the previous format were not subject to an attempt allowance and were able to sit each examination part with unlimited attempts.

Since 2011, the MRCS Qualification has been redeveloped and now comprises of two key components:

- **MRCS Part A Examination** – Single best answer (SBA) multiple-choice question (MCQ) based examination, delivered online.
- **MRCS Part B Examination** – Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) delivered in person.

In addition, candidates wishing to train in Otolaryngology are able to undertake the **MRCS (ENT)** examination instead of the MRCS Part B examination to obtain membership of their chosen royal college. Further information on the examinations can be [found on our website](#).

Number of examination attempts

The redevelopment of the examination has brought in a cap to the number of attempts allowed for candidates per each examination component. Attempts are capped as follows:

- **MRCS Part A** – 6 attempts allowed
- **MRCS Part B** – 4 attempts allowed
- **MRCS (ENT)** – 4 attempts allowed

One additional attempt may be permitted if supported by a recommendation from the candidates Educational Supervisor. Please refer to [ICBSE's additional attempts policy](#) for further information.

Process for Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 candidates and examination attempts

ICBSE stipulate that where a candidate has previously undertaken the previous iterations of the examination (Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3) without successfully passing all components, and who wish to then reattempt the MRCS examinations under the new structure, candidates will be awarded the full attempt allowance outlined above (**6 attempts** at MRCS Part A; **4 attempts** at MRCS Part B or MRCS (ENT)). ***Candidates will be expected to restart from Part A.***

Where candidates have previously passed one of the components, they will still be required to undertake MRCS Part A and Part B under the new structure with the maximum attempts allowed as listed above.

Colleges and ICBSE will keep a record of previous attempts undertaken.

For further information about the MRCS qualification, please visit [ICBSE's website](#).