

THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF HONG KONG
JOINT COMMITTEE ON SPECIALIST TRAINING SINGAPORE
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH

Regulations relating to the Conjoint Examination of
Joint Specialty Fellowship Examination in General Surgery – FRCSEd (Gen Surg)/FCSHK
and
Exit Examination in General Surgery (Clinical), Singapore

November 2023

(Adapted from previous regulations of the
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 2000
Revised October 2009
Revised July 2015
Revised October 2018)
(Revised November 2023 from Version September 2019
of Regulations of CSHK, JCST & RCSEd)



**ALL APPLICANTS MUST BE AWARE THAT THE REGULATIONS ARE UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW
AND IT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE CURRENT POSITION WITH THE EXAMINATIONS
SECTION OF THE RESPECTIVE COLLEGES/INSTITUTIONS.**

OVERVIEW

This is a conjoint exit examination in General Surgery for the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong (CSHK), the Joint Committee on Specialist Training (JCST) Singapore and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd).

CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

1. The examinations will be conducted in Hong Kong and Singapore with joint participation of examiners from the three parties.
2. The secretariat of the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong will be responsible for the conduct of the examinations in Hong Kong.
3. The secretariat of the Joint Committee on Specialist Training, Singapore will be responsible for the conduct of the examinations in Singapore.
4. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh will provide external validation and quality assurance for the conduct of the examinations.

ELIGIBILITY

1. The examination is open to candidates who are in the certified surgical training programmes in Hong Kong and Singapore as recognised by the CSHK and JCST respectively. Candidates not in the formal training programmes but have been certified to be eligible for the examination by either CSHK or JCST (as applicable) will also be eligible.
2. Candidates must have either completed their clinical training in a recognised higher surgical training programme in General Surgery to the satisfaction of the local training committee or be at a stage of higher surgical training acceptable to the local training committee (see Annex).
3. Candidates must hold an intermediate qualification acceptable to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the respective training committees of Hong Kong and Singapore (see Annex).
4. All candidates must provide certified evidence of satisfactory completion of the various posts in their higher surgical rotation and must provide certification that their performance in the posts has been satisfactory.
5. All candidates must keep a prospective log book of all their practical and academic activities during their training programme. This log book may be assessed during the course of the examination and must be signed off by each trainer. A consolidation summary of all operative experience must be submitted as outlined.
6. Candidates must declare any pre-existing medical conditions at the time of application. Candidates with special needs should advise the Secretariat at the time of application of the

nature of their needs and any assistance that they require. Requests on medical grounds should be supported by medical evidence (an educational psychologist's report is required for requests for extra time because of dyslexia). Any need for adjustment of the examinations will be determined by CSHK and JCST.

FORMAT OF EXAMINATION

Section I is a written test consisted of two Multiple Choice Question papers (Single Best Answer). Candidates must obtain a "pass" in Section I in order to gain eligibility to proceed to Section II. * A "pass" in Section I is valid for 2 years.

Paper 1 100 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 30 mins)
Paper 2 100 Single Best Answer [SBA] (2 hours 30 mins) #

** For Hong Kong candidates, Section I examinations held in 2024 are trial runs. Candidates must participate in Section I examination, but they can proceed to Section II irrespective of the results of Section I. This applies only for the 2 diets in 2024. Candidates who fail in Section II examinations held in 2024 are required to participate in both Section I and Section II examinations again if they pursue for another attempt.*

For Singapore candidates, Section I examinations are applicable only from 2026 onwards. Details will be announced in due course.

Section II consists of oral examinations and clinical examinations:

1. Oral Examinations

There will be three separate oral examinations sessions, each lasting 30 minutes.

A. Emergency Surgery/Trauma/Critical Care

This will cover the subjects of acute care, emergency and trauma surgery and the management of the critically ill, including relevant investigations, management and operative surgery.

B. General Surgery & Principles of Surgery

This will cover the principles of surgery and surgical conditions, including relevant investigations and management of these conditions.

C. Academic Oral & Surgical Anatomy

The Academic Oral will test the understanding of the candidates in critical appraisal of a published manuscript and will include an understanding of statistics and study design. Candidates will be given ONE paper to read for 30 minutes prior to the academic oral which will be for 15 minutes.

The Surgical Anatomy oral will test the candidate's knowledge of relevant anatomy to surgical practice and will include an understanding of common surgical procedures as outlined in the syllabus. This will be in the remaining 15 minutes of this session.

2. **Clinical Examination**

The clinical examination will cover the full range of general surgery and it will consist of two sessions, each lasting 30 minutes.

The components of each clinical session are as follows:

A. Medium-length case

Candidates will be given 15 minutes to take the history and perform physical examination on a patient prior to the session.

Candidates will be examined for 15 minutes regarding the clinical findings, investigations & management of that patient.

B. Short cases

Candidates will be examined for 15 minutes on at least 3 short cases.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

1. The Board of Examiners will comprise representatives from the three parties.
2. The Panel of Examiners will be convened from those approved from the respective parties.

APPLICATIONS

1. The dates of the examinations and the fees payable for admission are available in the website for CSHK and notified via email for JCST.
2. Alternatively, this is also set out in the online examinations calendar which is obtainable from the RCSEd website at www.rcsed.ac.uk.
3. Candidates shall give notice of their intention to present themselves for examination by the closing date indicated in the examinations calendar.
4. Applications for admission to an examination must be accompanied by the required documentation and the full amount of the fee payable for the examination.
5. NO ALLOWANCE WILL BE MADE FOR POSTAL OR OTHER DELAYS.
6. Candidates who submit an application form but are subsequently found to be ineligible to enter for the examination will have their fees returned less 20% of such fees as administrative charges.

WITHDRAWALS

1. Candidates withdrawing from an examination must do so in writing (letters or emails) to the respective College or Committee (CSHK for Hong Kong and Mainland China candidates and JCST for Singapore candidates) and the examination organizer concerned.
2. The Examination Withdrawal shall be adjudicated by CSHK/JCST. Request for refund of exit examination fee under withdrawals are subject to review and approval by the CSHK/JCST.
3. NO ALLOWANCE WILL BE MADE FOR POSTAL OR OTHER DELAYS.
4. A candidate who applies to withdraw an examination application and refund of the examination fee are subject to the terms and conditions stipulated as follows:

A. Withdrawal on or before the stipulated closing date of Application

- I. The withdrawal application must be received in writing (letters or emails) **on or before** the stipulated closing date for the Examination Application in order to be considered for refund of the Examination Fees.
- II. An administrative charge of 20% of the Examination Fee shall be deducted from the Examination Fee before any refund is made to the applicant.
- III. No Examination Fee will be allowed to be brought forward to future examinations.

B. Withdrawal after the stipulated closing date of Application

- I. Any withdrawal application approved under item II of this section must be received in writing (letters or emails) to CSHK/JCST Secretariat not less than **14 calendar days before the date of** the Examination.
- II. CSHK/JCST will not entertain requests for refund of examination fees, when withdrawal application are received after the stipulated closing date of applications for the examination, except for the following reasons which are subject to the approval from CSHK/JCST.
 - a. **Medical condition(s)** which include pregnancy-related problems or illness
The application must be accompanied by a valid medical certificate and/or an appropriate medical report.

CSHK/JCST handling the request of the withdrawal application may seek further clarification concerning the nature of the medical condition for which the medical certificate was issued and any further information provided will then be taken into account when considering the withdrawal application.

When a requested withdrawal is due to pregnancy, an appropriate medical report must be provided indicating:

- i.the candidate has any pregnancy-related problems or illness;
- ii.the candidate's confinement is due shortly before or around the date of the examination;
- iii.the candidate has sufficient discomfort for her to consider that it will have a

detrimental effect on her performance.

- b. **Compassionate reasons.** The application for withdrawal must be supported with official documentation proof.
- III. Upon approval of the withdrawal application, an administrative charge of 20% of the examination fee shall be deducted from the examination fee before any refund is made to the applicant.
- IV. No Examination Fee will be allowed to be brought forward to future examinations.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

1. No candidate may appeal against the results of the examination; however they may complain regarding the conduct of the examination.
2. Should a candidate wish to lodge a complaint, it must be done within 14 calendar days after the release of the examination results. Hong Kong and Mainland China candidates should lodge the complaint to the Censor-in-Chief of CSHK (Please refer to Examination Complaints and Appeals Procedures for Fellowship Examinations for details). Singapore candidates should lodge the complaint through their respective Programme Directors (PDs) via the secretariat of JCST to the Residency Advisory Committee (RAC) and JCST.
3. An administrative fee of half the amount of the examination fees for that examination forming the subject-matter of the appeal will be charged for every appeal filed.
4. The appeal must clearly specify the issues disputed or improprieties that are considered to adversely affect the examination outcome.
5. CSHK/JCST will make the final adjudication on the appeal. Should the appeal be allowed, 50% of the administrative fee charged for the appeal will be refunded.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Successful candidates of the examination will need to comply with the training framework of the respective college/committee to determine award and titling (see Annex).

INTERPRETATION

1. Unless the content otherwise requires, as used herein “CSHK/JCST” means the applicable one of CSHK or JCST in the content (as the case may be).
2. These Regulations shall be interpreted, administered and enforced by CSHK, JCST and RCSEd. Their decisions shall be conclusive and binding on the candidates. They may (but shall not be obliged) to issue practice notes and/or interpretation notes from time to time in relation to the interpretation, administration and enforcement of these Regulations.

Annex A – For candidates from Hong Kong and accredited Mainland China centres

ELIGIBILITY

1. The candidate must be a Higher Surgical Trainee or an Examination Eligible Candidate* registered with the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong and must have obtained the Membership of the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong.
2. Candidates must have completed 42 months of Higher Surgical Training in General Surgery with satisfactory training performance and fulfilment of training requirements as prescribed in the Higher Surgical Training Curriculum.
3. Candidates must have completed all the mandatory courses as prescribed by the General Surgery Board.
4. Candidates must have completed at least 2 research projects approved by the Research Committee, and must have presented at least once at the Annual Scientific Congress of the CSHK.
5. Candidates must not have their training interrupted within 6 months prior to examination.
6. The CSHK reserves the right to accept or refuse any application to sit for the Examination as it deems appropriate or in the public interest. In case of any dispute on this issue or the exercise of such right, the decision of the CSHK shall be final.

*Please refer to Rules & Regulations for Higher Surgical Trainees.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Successful candidates who have passed the Joint Specialty Fellowship Examination in General Surgery will also need to fulfil the following requirements before applying for the Fellowship of the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong:

1. Must be registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong, or, for Mainland China trainees, be registered trainees of Mainland China training centres accredited by CSHK (provided that they undergo such training at the time of or after the relevant accreditation).
2. Must complete 4 years of Higher Surgical Training in General Surgery with satisfactory training performance and fulfilment of training requirements as prescribed in the Higher Surgical Training Curriculum of CSHK.
3. Must fulfil the operation requirements stipulated by the General Surgery Board as prescribed in the Guideline on Major Operation for Higher Surgical Trainee.

Annex B – For candidates from Singapore

ELIGIBILITY

1. The candidate needs to be in the Residency Training Programme in General Surgery as administered by the Joint Committee of Specialist Training Singapore, or if training has completed, the candidate should be within the period of maximum candidacy as specified by JCST guidelines.
2. Candidates must have successfully completed the Final MMed.
3. All candidates must provide certified evidence of satisfactory completion of the various posts in their higher surgical rotation and must provide certification that their performance in the posts has been satisfactory.
4. All candidates must keep a prospective log book of all their practical and academic activities during their training programme. This log book may be assessed during the course of the examination and must be signed off by each trainer. A consolidation summary of all operative experience must be submitted as outlined.
5. Eligibility for examinations will be subject to RAC review and JCST approval.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

1. Successful candidates who have passed the Conjoint Joint Specialty Fellowship Examination and Exit Examination in General Surgery (Clinical) will be deemed to have passed the clinical examination requirement only.
2. Candidates will also need to fulfil the following before successful completion of training is recognised and the Joint Specialty Fellowship title awarded.
 - A. Passed the General Surgery Exit Examination (MCQ).
 - B. Successfully completed requirements for Residency as certified by the PD.
 - C. Met the Singapore country addendum for number of operations performed.
 - D. Achieved a successful review by the RAC.

Annex C – Rules & Regulations of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (the “College”)

1. The Diploma of the Joint Specialty Fellowship Examination in General Surgery (FRCSEd) may be granted to those who have completed a recognized training programme and have passed the Conjoint Examination of Joint Speciality Fellowship Examination in General Surgery.
2. Successful candidates shall lodge with the Secretary to the College a petition that their name be placed before the Council of the College for election as a Fellow together with the appropriate election fee. Any successful candidate who is already a Fellow, Associate Fellow or Member of the College shall pay an administration fee only.
3. All Fellows shall pay each year an annual subscription as determined by the Council of the College.
4. Petitions of candidates who have passed the examination shall be laid before the Council of the College and be voted on at the appropriate meeting. The petitions shall include the name and qualifications of each candidate, and the dates the latter were obtained. Those who by virtue of election to Joint Specialty Fellowship in General Surgery, become Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for the first time will ordinarily take their seat in the College at one of the Ceremonies for the Presentation of Diplomas. These are held in Edinburgh approximately six times a year and in Hong Kong annually in conjunction with the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong and biannually in Singapore. Fellows unable to attend a Ceremony may either receive their diploma by post or take their seat at any Annual Meeting of the College and shall indicate in writing to the Ceremonial Administrator their intention of so doing and comply with the necessary formalities for introduction to the Meeting.
5. Successful candidates other than those already Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh shall sign the following Declaration of Intrans::

“I hereby promise faithfully to maintain and defend all the rights, liberties and privileges of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and to promote the interest thereof to the utmost of my power. I also promise faithfully to obey all the Laws of the said Royal College.”

6. Every successful candidate shall then receive a Diploma bearing the Seal of the College and the Diploma shall state that such Fellow has been admitted after examination to the Joint Specialty Fellowship in General Surgery of the College. The form of the Diploma is as follows:

“The President and Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh hereby admit to the Fellowship of the College in the Specialty of General Surgery _____ who has completed the required form of training and passed the necessary examination in _____. He/she is hereby entitled to share all the honours and privileges enjoyed by the Fellows of said College.”