Wessex Core Psychiatry Course 2015-16

Exam Practice Module Handbook (Part B1)

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1 Introduction

- Content

The Exam Practice module occurs each day of the Specialty Modules Part B course. Although it is an integral part of the Core Psychiatry course, it is not necessarily linked to the topics discussed in the earlier part of the day.

Trainees attending the Part B Core Psychiatry course may be preparing for any of MRCPsych papers A(i), A(ii), B or the CASC examination.

Feedback received from trainees who have taken part in the course is that rather than exam practice for the written papers it was thought that CASC practice would be more useful. It is harder to prepare for the CASC as it is a practical exam and requires practice and feedback on that practice. Trainees have asked for this practice to take place throughout the year. In this way it can be embedded in the course and where possible reflect the topic covered earlier in the day, though this may not always be the case.

In addition to these regular sessions, there will be opportunities to participate in Mock CASC exams. Trainees have found this to be very helpful in their preparation for the exam.

Written Papers
Preparation for the written papers will need to be done in trainees’ own time. Trainees may wish to do part of this study in study groups. Trainees should pay close attention to the RCPsych syllabic curriculum content (http://rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Syllabic%20Curriculum%20MRCPsych%20December%202013.pdf) and try to make links between their examination preparation and their clinical learning where possible. It is a common belief (myth) that examinations require the learning of a large volume of useless facts, but trainees are encouraged to consider that if a bit of context is applied, much of what is learnt through the examination process has clinical relevance.
• Examination Technique and Practical tips

Examination technique is important.

Tips:
- Don’t leave questions unanswered if papers are not negatively marked
- Don’t let frustration at an ambiguous or (in the reader’s mind) poor question cloud your judgement and thinking
- Don’t expect to definitively ‘know’ all the answers; anticipate having to apply some logic and problem solving
- If you don’t know the answer, don’t get anxious or frustrated; take a deep breath in and out, then think your way calmly through the possible answers – it is often possible to eliminate several wrong answers and then make an educated guess
- Do the basics: read the question very carefully, check your answers
- Practise under simulated exam conditions to develop a sense of how to pace yourself for the time allowed

If you have a specific learning difficulty or other issue that may impact on your ability to do yourself justice in an exam, please discuss this ASAP with your educational supervisor.

Whilst the module provides opportunities for trainees to benefit from CASC preparation as a group, trainees should also bear in mind what they know about their own individual learning styles and needs – and make sure they plan their preparation accordingly. It is not possible to estimate how long the CASC requires in specific preparation and study – trainees will vary in the time required due to their own learning needs. Some people prefer to have a very intense short study period whereas others prefer to spread it over a longer period with time to consolidate that learning. Remember, however, it is always better to start too early than too late!

Tips for the CASC:
- Think of it as an outpatient appointment!
- Focus only on the station in hand. Once you have finished a station you MUST put it out of your mind – don’t let it contaminate the next station. You have to be really disciplined about this otherwise you will not be able to take in the instructions for the next station.
- Write the patient’s name on your pad so that you can refer to it. Write down salient facts. Write down the task.
- I found it helpful to write on my pad: past psychiatric history, past medical history, family history, drugs and alcohol, forensic history, risks. I could glance at these and decide which were relevant. If they weren’t written I would forget something.
- Go through past stations. Practise as much as you can.
- For all the scenarios that you have, think about how you would approach them – what you would cover.
- Know the diagnostic criteria.
- Remember to use your advanced communication skills to build rapport. Show your empathy. But you must be sincere otherwise it will look false.
- Have your agenda but don’t let it show.
- If you have time, summarise at the end, if it is appropriate.
Plan the practicalities:

- Think about setting up a revision group with colleagues in order to review revision material and do MCQs together
- Organise study leave / cross cover / on-call swaps in advance
- Organise travel and accommodation in advance, you don’t want to be worrying about this close to an exam, plus travel will often be cheaper if booked early
- Think about how to keep nerves at bay in the 24 hours before an exam (especially the CASC) – are you better with other people, or on your own? How can you ensure you get a good night’s sleep and have a clear mind on the day? Plan where you will have breakfast!
- Make sure you plan how you will be getting to the exam hall, you don’t want to turn up late and panicked
- Take adequate clothing – exams often involve standing waiting outside the venue for half an hour before the start, or sitting in cold large halls
- Take adequate snacks and drinks.
- Make sure you know what you’re allowed to take with you into exams
- Make sure you understand the exam format and know what to expect in terms of the answer sheet, having a candidate number etc

Two written papers plus the CASC over two years means the MRCPsych is a tough exam. Some mindsets / strategies are likely to help, others will hinder... Be open-minded to learning new things that may turn out to be interesting and useful (if you understand the context / background and don’t just learn the answers to specific questions – although some of that is needed). Keep your eye firmly on the goal – what will an exam pass mean to you? This will help you stay motivated and determined, and hopefully give you the willpower to open the books in the evening...

- **Delivery**

There will be two facilitators for each session. CASC stations will be provided by the facilitators though trainees are also welcome to bring CASC stations to discuss and role play if they wish. Trainees may wish to share resources but are reminded not do so in a way that breaches copyright.

- **Role of the Facilitator**

The facilitator will bring CASC stations relevant to the topic that was discussed earlier and facilitate discussion of the topic in relation to the station – how to approach that station, what should be covered, communication skills etc. The facilitator will encourage trainees to practise the station and then give and facilitate constructive feedback.
Module leads / contacts

Part A trainees
Dr Charlie Evans, ST4 Adult Mental Health
cvevans@doctors.net.uk

Part B trainees
CASC practice
Dr Ana Thomas, ST6 Learning Disability

CASC demos and mock exams
Dr Raghavendra Ramachandra, GAP Consultant
raghavendra.ramachandra@southernhealth.nhs.uk
Tel 023 8047 5292 / 023 8087 8040

Postgraduate Medical Education Coordinator
Sue Wilkins
Sue.Wilkins@southernhealth.nhs.uk
023 8047 5292
2 Aims

The aims of the module are in line with the overall aims of the Wessex Core Psychiatry Course, most importantly:

- To use your exam preparation as part of your overall education and training in order to become a well-rounded and competent psychiatrist.

Specifically, the module aims to:

- Highlight the College’s core training and exam curriculums and encourage you to base your learning on these;
- To practise and improve your CASC technique so that you present your knowledge and abilities in the MRCPsych exams to the best of your abilities;
- Provide some background / context to help you make links between your exam learning and clinical practice;
- Allow you to benefit from some CASC examination practice in a group setting;
- To facilitate and motivate you to study for the MRCPsych exams in a well-prepared, effective manner.

3 Objectives

In attending this course, you should have opportunities to:

- Work constructively and effectively in a group;
- Reflect on how to build CASC skills into your everyday clinical practice from an early stage;
- Take the initiative to discuss your exam learning needs with your educational supervisor, including how to consolidate exam learning in clinical practice, and how to use WPBAs to contribute to CASC preparation;
- Write a personal study plan, deciding how to complement the exam module with your own revision;
- Provide feedback after each CASC exam for the benefit of all trainees on the course;
- Make use of senior trainees, recently qualified consultants, college examiners and others with CASC exam experience to provide expert advice.
4 The Exams

MRCPsych Paper A - The Scientific and theoretical basis of Psychiatry

Paper A will be three hours long, containing 200 marks. The paper will comprise of approximately two-thirds MCQs and one-third EMIs. For an interim period, Paper A will be held in two halves of 90 minutes and 100 marks each. Each half will maintain the two-thirds/one-third MCQ/EMI split.

Paper A(i) will cover the following sections of the syllabus:

1) Behavioural Science and Sociocultural Psychiatry
2) Human Development
5) Classification and Assessment in Psychiatry

Paper A(ii) will cover the following sections of the syllabus:

3) Basic Neurosciences
4) Clinical Psychopharmacology

Pass marks and rates vary from sitting to sitting, see the Examinations section of the RCPsych website for the latest information.
MRCPsych Paper B - Critical review and the clinical topics in Psychiatry

Paper B will be three hours long, containing 200 marks. The paper will comprise of approximately two-thirds MCQs and one-third EMIs.

The critical review component will make up one-third of the paper, with the remaining two-thirds covering clinical topics (of which approximately 30% will be General Adult Psychiatry).

Paper B will cover the following sections of the syllabus:

6) Organisation and Delivery of Psychiatric Services
7) General Adult Psychiatry
8) Old Age Psychiatry
9) Psychotherapy
10) Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
11) Substance Misuse/Addictions
12) Forensic Psychiatry
13) Psychiatry of Learning Disability
14) Critical Review

Pass marks and rates vary from sitting to sitting, see the Examinations section of the RCPsych website for the latest information.

CASC

CASC circuit 1 (am)
4 pairs of linked stations (8 stations in total)
   Each station: 90 seconds preparation, 10 minutes in the station

CASC circuit 2 (pm)
8 stand alone stations
   Each station: 90 seconds preparation, 7 minutes in the station

Marking is complicated – you must pass at least 12 stations but if you achieve a ‘severe fail’ in 2 or more stations you may fail overall even if you do pass 12. Whether you pass an individual station or not is linked to how everyone does. If you are on the borderline (they benchmark to even out harsh and generous examiners) it can go either way (borderline fail to a pass and borderline pass to a fail).
(This means you will never know how you did until the results come in!)
5 Transitional Arrangements

For candidates who hold passes in some but not all of papers 1, 2 or 3 prior to the introduction of Paper A and B in 2015 there are transitional arrangements to take account of the papers that they have already passed. Please see the College website for these.

http://rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/examinations/changestowrittenpapers/faqs.aspx
# 6 Timetable

All sessions run from 15:00 – 17:00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator/s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03.09.15</td>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>Dr Ekta Mutta</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>8 – 11 September 2015 Exam – CASC</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.09.15</td>
<td>Bipolar Disorder (AMH)</td>
<td>Dr Ekta Mutta</td>
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<td>Dr Clare Roper</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.10.15</td>
<td>Depression (AMH)</td>
<td>Dr Rashid Khan</td>
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<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>6 October 2015 Exam – Paper B</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.10.15</td>
<td>Personality Disorders (AMH)</td>
<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>Other facilitator TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.11.15</td>
<td>Functional Illness (OPMH)</td>
<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>Other facilitator TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.11.15</td>
<td>Dementia (OPMH)</td>
<td>Dr Thelma Toni-Uebari (TBC)</td>
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<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>8 December 2015 Exam – Paper A</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.12.15</td>
<td>Alcohol Use Disorders (Substance Misuse)</td>
<td>Dr Charlie Evans</td>
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<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.01.16</td>
<td>Drug Use Problems (Substance Misuse)</td>
<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.01.16</td>
<td>Substance Misuse Module</td>
<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>3/03/16</td>
<td>Medical Psychotherapy Module</td>
<td>Dr Ana Thomas</td>
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<td>Other facilitator to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.03.16</td>
<td>Medical Psychotherapy Module</td>
<td>Facilitators to be confirmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.04.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.04.16</td>
<td>Forensic Psychiatry</td>
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<td>12.05.16</td>
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<td>26.05.16</td>
<td>Forensic Psychiatry</td>
<td>Facilitators to be confirmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.06.16</td>
<td>General CASC Practice</td>
<td>Facilitators to be confirmed.</td>
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7 Resources

Library and IT facilities

You will have access to Library facilities in your own local area and you will be able to use the library at the Tom Rudd Unit, Moorgreen on course days. There is a large projector screen plus laptops with internet access in the Education Room for use on course days. Teaching material may be made available to you after sessions, but please be mindful of intellectual property and do not reproduce without permission / acknowledging its source.

Useful Websites

Please refer to the Royal College’s website to check examination regulations/eligibility, content and calendar.

A Competency Based Curriculum for Specialist Training in Psychiatry (GMC Approved June 2010)
http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/curriculum2010.aspx

Royal College information about each Paper
http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/examinations.aspx

OP69. SPECIALIST TRAINING IN PSYCHIATRY: A Comprehensive guide to training and assessment in the UK for trainees and local educational providers
http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/files/pdfversion/OP69.pdf

TrOn
http://tron.rcpsych.ac.uk/

The course has its own website: http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/career/postgraduate-centre/ which contains electronic versions of this handbook and other documents relating to the course.

Exam resources, forums and courses (some are free, but many require subscription / payment)

www.trickcyclists.co.uk (free)
www.superego-cafe.com
www.spmmpsychiatrycourse.com
www.mrcpsychmentor.com
www.birminghamcourseonline.co.uk
www.manchestercourse.com
www.cambridgecourse.com
www.xamcram.com

This is not an exhaustive list – if trainees have others to contribute, please do so via the exam module lead. Thank you.
8 Feedback

We would like to remind you to fill in the feedback forms as we need to know from you what you felt worked well and perhaps more importantly what didn’t. The exam feedback form should be completed twice yearly, as guided by Sue Wilkins or facilitators.

If you wish to give additional feedback, please feel free to do so – ideally to the module lead.
Feedback for Core Psychiatry Course:
Exam Module 2015-2016

Name (optional)  
Date  |  Part A / Part B (please circle)

Which paper(s) are you currently studying for?

Please comment on the usefulness or relevance of the exam module to your learning needs

Which aspects of the teaching did you find particularly helpful?

Which aspects did not work so well?

Any suggestions for future development?

Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the exam module (please circle)

| 5 (high) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 (low) |