

No. 1/2016

Date 09 November 2016

Timing of the FRCA Final examination

Background

The Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists [FRCA] examination is a two-part "high-stakes" national assessment, embedded in the CCT programme and approved by the GMC. Possession of the Primary FRCA is a mandatory requirement for entry into the ST3, as is the Final FRCA for entry into ST5.

The Final FRCA examination assesses the knowledge and understanding required for progression from Intermediate to Higher level training. Trainees who have not passed the Final FRCA examination cannot progress to Higher level training.

The FRCA Examinations Review Report published in March 2015 proposed a change to the block to trainees' career progression without possession of the Final FRCA examination, to move from the end of ST4 to the end of ST5. A submission was made to the General Medical Council for approval of this change, which was not approved.

The College has continued to work with the GMC on this matter and we have very recently agreed a compromise solution: with effect from 1st August 2016, the requirement to complete the Final FRCA exam in its entirety will move from the end of ST4 to the middle of ST5 (i.e. 30 months after commencing ST3).

Trainees should still attempt to clear the Final FRCA by the end of ST4 but should they be unable to pass in its entirety, they will be able to move to ST5 providing they have satisfactorily completed all intermediate level units of training. This extension in the block of progression without the Fellowship examination will allow trainees at least one further attempt at the Final SOE component whilst undertaking higher level training, and achieving higher competences for a period of 6 months.

Therefore with effect from, and subsequent to August 2016, all trainees commencing ST3 will be subject to this new regulation.

This change will not be applied retrospectively and all trainees who commenced intermediate training before August 2016 will be expected to complete their CCT under their original conditions.

Procedure

- With effect from, and subsequent to August 2016, all trainees commencing ST3 are subject to the new regulations and will not achieve an Intermediate Level Training Certificate (ILTC), or progress beyond the midway point of ST5 without completing the Final FRCA examination in its entirety.
- The ILTC will only be issued once a trainee has satisfactorily completed all intermediate level units of training *and* achieved success in the Final FRCA.
- It is still necessary for trainees to upload their ILTC to the library section of the e-Portfolio, or alternatively send a copy to the RCoA Training team.

- If a trainee has satisfactorily completed all intermediate level units of training, but has not yet achieved success in the Final FRCA, they may progress to ST5 and should be issued with an Intermediate Level Progress Report [ILPR]. The ILTC will be issued once the Final FRCA is passed.
- For trainees who do not pass the Final FRCA until mid-way through ST5, the ILPR must be uploaded to the library section of the e-Portfolio or sent to the RCoA Training Team at the end of ST4. The ILTC must then also be submitted once the Final FRCA has been achieved.
- Trainees must have passed the Final FRCA examination before progression to remainder of ST5.
- If the Final FRCA examination is not passed before mid-way through ST5, approval of additional training time as per the Gold Guide is at the discretion of the ARCP panel on a case-by-case basis.
- The Curriculum for a CCT in Anaesthetics document will be amended to reflect the updated change in timing of the Final examination, approved by the GMC.

Currently estimated completion dates are calculated using an indicative period of a further three years from the date the trainee commences ST5.

Once the new progression regulations are in effect, prospective completion dates will be calculated as set out in the table below.

Completion of intermediate level UOTs prior to ST5	Success in Final FRCA	Certificate awarded	Calculation of prospective CCT date
Yes	Yes, by end of ST4, prior to ST5	ILTC	ST5 entry date + 3yrs
Yes	Yes, by mid-way through ST5	ILPR and on award of FRCA, ILTC	ST5 entry date + 3yrs
Yes	By end of any ST5 remedial time	ILPR and on award of FRCA, ILTC	Final FRCA pass date + 3yrs minimum

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **I commenced ST4 training in August 2016. Do I have until mid-way through ST5 to pass the Final FRCA in its entirety?**

No. The new regulations only apply with effect from, and subsequent to August 2016, to all trainees commencing ST3. You are required to pass the Final FRCA in its entirety before progressing to ST5.
- **I am a ST5 who has so far failed to pass the FRCA Final examination. Am I eligible to apply for Out Of Programme Training?**

No. Trainees must have progressed to ST5 and passed the Final FRCA in its entirety before they can apply to undertake OOPT/R.
- **I have reached mid-way through ST5 and have so far failed to pass the FRCA Final examination. My ARCP panel have granted me 6 months additional training time. Can I continue to complete higher level competences?**

Technically no. You should aim to complete units/ areas of competence in the first 6 months of ST5, but thereafter you will be in a 'holding post' at the discretion of your Dean, and the time will not count towards training. Your prospective completion date will be calculated using your Final FRCA pass date plus a minimum of 3 years. In this instance, your completion date cannot be brought forward at a later date.
- **I have entered ST3 in August 2016 as a less than fulltime trainee. Do I have to pass the Final FRCA in its entirety within 30 months of entering speciality training?**

You must pass the FRCA in its entirety within 30 months *whole time equivalent*, of entering ST3 speciality training.
- Are there any other conditions which must be satisfied under these new regulations?

Trainees must have attempted at least the written part of the FRCA within ST3/4.

Commencement Date: Immediate effect

Review: N/A