SET GENERIC SURGICAL SCIENCE EXAMINATION
AND SET CLINICAL EXAMINATION

CURRICULUM CONTEXT

SET 1 Surgical Science Curriculum

Knowledge of Anatomy, Pathology and Physiology is fundamental to safe and comprehensive surgical practice. SET Trainees consolidate knowledge, understanding and application of these basic sciences at the outset of their surgical training.

During SET1 Trainees gain an understanding of the basic sciences as they apply to the principles of surgery and acquire skills in basic surgery, clinical assessment and the use of diagnostic modalities.

Learning

SET 1 trainees gain knowledge and skills during clinical placements, by attending courses, by utilising online resources and through text-based study. SET Trainees are also required to participate in hospital resident training programs. The College provides a Recommended Reading List, Case Studies other online learning resources and examples of practice Multiple Choice Questions on the College website to assist trainees to learn the basic surgical sciences.

Online Resources have been developed by the College to provide a context for trainees to learn and apply the basic surgical sciences. Case studies, examples of practice multiple choice questions and discussion forums are presented on the College website, complementing trainees’ in-depth reading and study of basic sciences. Trainees are encouraged to use the College online resources as a flexible, self-directed learning resource to be accessed in any order at convenient times.

The Case Studies also provide opportunities for trainees to practise applying different kinds of knowledge to clinical situations – to use basic sciences, patient history and the results of physical examination and investigation to build judgement, make diagnoses, make clinical decisions and recommend treatment. Clinical scenarios are presented in a format that encourages trainees to apply their knowledge as they progress sequentially through a number of stages of unfolding information. Trainees are challenged at each stage with questions and discussion points.

Trainees can practise answering multiple choice questions online. Practice questions include answers and explanations, allowing trainees to self-correct their responses.

Assessment

SET trainees’ knowledge and skills are assessed through three formal examinations; the SET1 Generic Surgical Science Examination (SSE), the SET1 Specialty-specific Surgical Science Examination and the Clinical Examination. Other assessments are conducted in the workplace.

The SET1 Surgical Science Examinations test candidates’ knowledge, understanding and application of Anatomy, Pathology and Physiology, in health and disease as they apply to generic and specialty specific situations.

Every trainee must complete the Generic Surgical Science Examination, the Clinical Examination, and a Specialty-specific Surgical Science Examination in accordance with their specialty’s requirements. The Specialty-specific Surgical Science curricula are outlined by the nine surgical specialties and further information about these examinations is available from specialty websites.

- The generic component of the SSE presents 100 questions in Anatomy (a mix of 20 Spot Test Questions and 80 MCQs), and 60 MCQ questions each in the Physiology and Pathology disciplines.
- In the speciality specific SSE there is a variable balance between the three disciplines
Specialty-specific Surgical Science Examination

- From 2008, General Surgery and Urology will have a common ‘specialty-specific’ examination. Trainees in these specialties will all undertake the same Surgical Science Examination.
- Cardiothoracic Surgery, Neurosurgery, Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, and Vascular Surgery will have separate specialty-specific Surgical Science Examinations.
- Orthopaedic Surgery, Paediatric Surgery and Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery will continue with their current examination processes.

The SET Surgical Science Examinations relate to the College Competency of Medical Expertise.

SET Surgical Science Examination and Clinical Examination requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Format/Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generic Surgical Science Examination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>2 ½ hours written examination, 1 paper of 20 anatomy image based Spot Test questions, and 80 MCQ Anatomy Based questions (conducted on the first day) and 1 paper of 120 mixed Pathology and Physiology questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialty-specific Surgical Science Examination*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>2 ½ hours written examination, MCQ format, 120 questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Examination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 to 3 hours</td>
<td>Practical examination, OSCE format</td>
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Pass requirements and timing of the SET Surgical Science Examinations

- Once selected into a specialty training program a candidate may apply to present for the Generic Surgical Science Examination.
- The generic and specialty specific components of the examination will be considered separately.
- A candidate cannot carry forward a pass in a component i.e., anatomy, physiology or pathology from one attempt to a subsequent attempt (generic and specialty specific).
- Each specialty has established time limits for the successful completion of the different components of the examination.