

A GUIDE TO THE FRCR

Nadir Khan, Fahd Haroon

Department of Radiology, Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan

PJR April - June 2010; 20(2): 100-101

The Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologist (FRCR) can be achieved by giving the fellowship examination. It consists of two parts FRCR part 1 and 2. FRCR part 2 is further divided into A and B.

FRCR Part 1:

The first FRCR examination consists of two modules, physics and anatomy. One module can be given at one time or both can be given together. If a candidate is declared successful in one of the two modules, then only the remaining one need to be given again.

The physics syllabus includes all modalities. Recently, MRI and Ultrasound have also been included. The primary book for physics preparation is Physics for Medical Imaging by R.F Farr commonly known as FARR. It is very concise and sometimes difficult to understand. Other books can be used for better understanding and concept building such as is Christensen's Physics of Diagnostic Radiology by Thomas S. Curry and Radiologic Science for Technologists by Stewart C. Bushong. Many single best answers (SBA) books are available as well free MCQ's on the internet in different websites.

Anatomy preparation includes all structures of the body such as organs, muscles, ligaments, tendons, vessels and nerves. Images from modalities such as plain film, ultrasound, angiography, CT and MRI will be shown. Normal variants are also asked in the exam. You also need to know details of structures passing through a foramen or groove. The best book for anatomy preparation is Abraham's atlas. The images of Ryan's anatomy are also helpful. Good reading material is present in Ryan as well.

The venues for the physics module are Birmingham,

Bristol, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Dublin, Hong Kong and Singapore. The venues for the anatomy module are London, Hong Kong, Singapore. The exam takes place three times a year in spring, summer and autumn. The physics paper is single best answer (SBA) format with no negative marking. Anatomy exam will be conducted on a computer. 20 images will be shown with five markings on each image.

FRCR Part 2A:

The FRCR part 2A can only be attempted after clearing the part 1. There are six following modules;

Module 1	Cardiothoracic and Vascular
Module 2	Musculoskeletal and Trauma
Module 3	Gastrointestinal (including liver, spleen, pancreas)
Module 4	Genitourinary, Adrenal, Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Breast
Module 5	Pediatric
Module 6	Central Nervous and Head and Neck (including spine, eyes, ENT, salivary glands and dental)

Each module consists of 75 SBA questions. There is no physics, however at this time there may be anatomy questions as no official exemption has been reported by the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR). The six modules can be given separately or all at once. They are held two times a year in Spring and Autumn. They can be given in Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The recommended books for part 2A are Radiology Review Manual by Wolfgang F. Dähnert. However, recently since the exam has become more clinical and needs less details as in the old format of FRCR part 2A, textbooks such as Grainger & Allison's Diagnostic Radiology and Textbook of Radiology and Imaging by David Sutton will also suffice.

Correspondence : Dr. Nadir Khan
Department of Radiology,
Aga Khan University Hospital,
Stadium Road, P.O. Box 3500, Karachi 74800
Pakistan. Tel. No: 34930051 - Ext. 2020
Email: khanadir@msn.com

FRCR Part 2B:

Once you have passed all the modules of FRCR part 2A and have three years of radiology training then you will be permitted to sit in the final FRCR part 2B examination. The FRCR part 2B consists of three components; a reporting session, a rapid reporting session and oral examination.

FRCR part 2B like the part 2A is also held twice a year in spring and autumn about a month after the part 2A. If one has problems getting visa or flying to the UK another option is to sit in the exam in Hong Kong in a Joint Final FRCR/FHKCR Part B Examination for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists and Hong Kong College of Radiologists. It takes place in Autumn and the details can be found out from the RCR website.

Although FRCR part 2B is the last step of the exam it need a lot of planning, financial support and hard work. The viva is different from the radiology board exams in Asia. Now films are read in the exam on digital flat screens. The style and focus is also different emphasizing on normal and abnormal radiographs. Differential diagnosis should be on the finger tips. The exam mainly focuses on radiographs, followed by fluoroscopy and if you manage to survive these, then you will face MRI and CT.

Recommended books for the part 2B include those that have differential diagnosis such as Aids to Radiological Differential Diagnosis by Stephen Chapman. Even better are those with radiology images such as Clinical Imaging: An Atlas of Differential Diagnosis by Ronald L. Eisenberg, Duke Radiology Case Review and Aunt Minnie's Atlas and Imaging-Specific Diagnosis by Thomas L. Pope.

As the exam is very different it is most important to get acquainted with the exam. There are many centers in UK that provide courses on FRCR 2B. They are usually held 1-2 months before the exam. However due to the high numbers of candidates appearing in the exam and few seats most of these courses fill up quickly, some a year before. Another option are courses in Dubai which are easier to reach. You will be able to easily search for them through search engines. Once you have decided to give the exam and are ready to send the form remember to send it as early

as possible as many people apply and the exam get full quickly. The forms are accepted on first come basis with priority to the UK based residents.

We hope that this gives you a sufficient perspective for the exam. Good luck.

Some important websites for the FRCR are;

www.rcr.ac.uk

www.thesrt.org.uk