

European Diploma in Radiology (EDiR), an RSP initiative in Pakistan; personal experience & exam guidance

Introduction: The European Diploma in Radiology (EDiR), an initiative of the European Society of Radiology (ESR) examines candidates on the knowledge outlined in the ESR's training curriculum. The EDiR is administered and issued by the European Board of Radiology (EBR) and consists of multiple computer-based modules. The first candidates took the exam at the European Congress of Radiology in Vienna in 2011. The examination was being held in different European countries including Spain, France, Austria and Turkey. Radiological Society of Pakistan took the great initiative in 2017 and managed to hold the examination in Islamabad, Pakistan, the 1st ever EDiR examination outside Europe. This provided the radiologists from Pakistan to achieve this qualification within the country. The 2nd EDiR examination in Pakistan is planned on 16th September 2018 at Islamabad.

The EDiR Examination: We are writing this article to provide the radiologists from Pakistan the detailed information about the EDiR examination, benefits to achieve this qualification, examination structure, eligibility criteria and the resources to prepare for the examination. The European Board of Radiology (EBR) is an organization dedicated to the investigation, development and implementation of certification and accreditation activities and programs, including examinations and other instruments of qualification certification for general and sub-specialized physicians, programmed evaluation and accreditation of continuing medical education activities, accreditation of training institutions and similar organizations, as well as monitoring and harmonizing qualification and training standards in the field of radiology, imaging diagnosis, and other medical specialties in Europe. The European Diploma in Radiology (EDiR) is a diploma available to radiologists certifying that the holder has a level of knowledge and competency in line with the European Training Curriculum for Radiology set by the European Society of Radiology (ESR).¹

The first EDiR examination took place in Vienna at European Congress of Radiology in 2011. There are multiple examinations being held in each year in different countries of Europe, the most important occasion to be the yearly European Congress of Radiology. The common European destinations for the examination are Austria, France, Spain and Turkey. In the recent years, very few radiologists from Pakistan were able to achieve this qualification due to less knowledge about the examination, poor guidance and most importantly high cost and visa difficulties of travelling abroad. The Radiological Society of Pakistan took the great initiative in 2017 and 1st EDiR examination outside Europe was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 17th September 2017. The examination was arranged at FAST-National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad. This year again the Radiological society of Pakistan has arranged 2nd EDiR examination providing all the radiologists of Pakistan an opportunity to achieve this qualification easily. Furthermore, the number of seats have been increased from 50 in 2017 to 100 candidates in 2018. This is the 4th examination announced by European Board of Radiology for the 2018 exam calendar till date. The other three include EDiR examination held at European Congress of Radiology in Vienna and two Exams at Barcelona.¹

We appeared in the 1st EDiR exam in Islamabad, where we were welcomed positively by the Medical Director of the European Board of Radiology, his supporting team and the officials of Radiological Society of Pakistan. We were given detailed exam instructions and chance to ask any question. Each candidate was provided with a separate computer connected to the main examination system and an EBR technical staff was there to help any candidate if some error in computer or examination system arises. There was a coffee break after every exam component. Overall the examination was very well managed.

Advantages of the EDiR Exam: The advantages are many. Taking the EDiR enhances the radiologist's career path and demonstrates a career profile of self-improvement through a voluntary self-assessment. The diploma provides the individual radiologist with the opportunity to compare his or her radiologic knowledge with that as set down by the EBR and based on the curriculum of the ESR. In the context of migration, it provides confirmation of an EBR provided and ESR/ European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) endorsed standard of knowledge in general radiology. The EDiR examination tests general radiology. It is the ESR view that sub-specialization in radiology should be built upon a good and adequate general radiology background. Thus the relationship between EDiR and subspecialty diplomas is viewed in the context of a step-wise progress from general to subspecialty radiology training. The next steps are geared to increasing the acceptance of EDiR as a robust, European standard of radiological knowledge with acceptance at national registration level, and a global influence as a radiologic qualification.²

Why we appeared for EDiR: We, both authors had completed our FCPS in Diagnostic Radiology, working as consultant radiologists in different institutes were looking to improve our radiological qualification and were preparing for FRCR exam when we came across the good opportunity of the EDiR exam in Pakistan and we immediately planned to appear for this. The standard and training set out in the curriculum of European Society of Radiology for EDiR Exam is obviously very extensive and they seem to be serious about providing an examination of high quality. There is very good opportunity that in the future it will be separate like the fellowship examination by Royal College of Radiology (FRCR). There are no well-known radiology board exams besides this in Europe and there is a high chance this may become the optimal standard. It may also help getting job opportunity in Europe.³

Eligibility criteria, required documents & fee structure: The examination is open to radiologists and radiology residents in their fifth year of training. Candidates must be fully certified board radiologists in practice from their national speciality program or at least be in their fifth year of national radiology training at the time of the examination. Candidates must be ESR full members, corresponding members or members in training in the year of the examination. The corresponding ESR membership can be get free from <https://www.myesr.org/about/membership>. A proof of training indicating the duration of radiology training and expected date of completion (if not completed) issued by the training institution. In case your training is complete, it is required that you send your certificate of completion of training. In cases where the duration of the training program is less than five years, a proof of experience as a supervised staff radiologist is required. A proof of active membership of national society of Radiology, being RSP in Pakistan (Radiological Society of Pakistan) is required. The candidate is asked to submit a scanned copy of the passport. The standard fee for the examination is 1100 euro. The radiological society of Pakistan has decided to charge additional 25000 PKR from this year as they have to pay for the venue arrangements, the refreshment for the candidates and travelling of examiners and society officials which is quite justifiable.

Exam structure and preparation guide: The examination tests knowledge, skills and competence in general radiology in three components: Multiple response questions (MRQs) consisting of 75 knowledge questions including some image related questions, Short cases (SCs) consisting of 24 images related short cases and Clinically Oriented Reasoning Evaluation (CORE) consisting 10 practical oriented cases. A candidate has to complete at least 8 CORE cases to be able to pass the examination.⁴ Each of the components is a computer-based examination and lasts for 90 minutes.

There is no oral based viva exam in the current system. Each examination is a mixture of free text questions, multi-response questions and annotated questions. Most of the examination was based on a general day to day radiology practice including the emergency conditions encountered in routine radiology practice.

At the time, we planned to appear in the examination we had a very limited number of resources and guidance. We went through our core radiology textbooks once and then few of the FRCR 2A MCQs books and FRCR 2B case review books and found this enough to pass the exam easily. Most of the exam questions and cases were to test the routine and emergency radiology practice. Few of the MRQs were regarding interventional radiology management, cross-sectional radiological anatomy and the radiological physics. There are currently two books available for EDiR. First is the DAMS Notebook for Radiology Multiple Response Questions. This Notebook is the first released preparation guide for European Diploma in Radiology. It contains high yield points from numerous MCQs guides in radiology. It also includes assisting MCQs of the same pattern as that of the EDiR examination. It mainly focuses on the important and critical points to be remembered to solve the type of question specifically designed for EDiR.⁵ Second book format resource is the Notes for the European Diploma in Radiology, initially written by Dr Marcin Czarniecki, a radiologist trained in Poland, USA, and the United Kingdom. The notes follow the format of the European Training Curriculum for Radiology, and aim to enable collaboration and communication of candidates, and ultimately help in passing the examination.⁶ The book can be downloaded for free from <http://edirnotes.eu>. We personally found the 2nd book more helpful and error free. For Short and long cases we suggest the candidate to go through few FRCR 2B books. It will help them to pass both the short cases and the CORE component. We recommend following books; Final FRCR 2B Viva: A Survival Guide (Cambridge Medicine) by Dr Kiat Tsong Tan, A Complete Guide to the Final FRCR 2B (MasterPass) by Deepak Subedi, Long Cases for the Final FRCR 2B (Oxford Specialty Training) by Rebecca Hanlon, Emergency Radiology COFFEE Case Book: Case-Oriented Fast Focused Effective Education by Bharti Khurana, Duke Radiology Case Review: Imaging, Differential Diagnosis and Discussion by James M. Provenzale MD, Rapid Review of Radiology by Shahid Hussain and Chapman & Nakielny's Aids to Radiological Differential Diagnosis by Stephen G.

We recommend the candidate to subscribe to Aunt Minnie's case of the day at www.auntminnie.com and ACR case in point at <https://cortex.acr.org/cip>. Many of the short cases and CORE cases were of the similar format, where we had to choose one answer related to the abnormality shown in the image or to mark it on the image with the help of cursor and then to move to the next image or question of the same case. We were able to move back to the previous image but not to change the answer, so we recommend the candidate to understand and answer the image correctly before moving next. Overall the examination system is well built and a radiologist is thoroughly tested for his grip on theory and day to day clinical radiology orientation.

Conclusion: Overall we found it great opportunity to appear and pass the EDiR examination. We believe that Radiological Society of Pakistan has helped us in providing the opportunity to achieve another Radiology certificate within our country. We were able to improve our knowledge and to test ourselves according to the standards set by European Society of Radiology. We believe this certificate will help us in our future academic career. This will help us to prepare ourselves according to the international radiology standards. We believe the Radiologists in Pakistan should avail this opportunity and try to achieve the EDiR certificate and we hope in the similar way other foreign radiology exams like FRCR will be conducted in Pakistan.

References:

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