

Why has the MCAI OSCE –SOE moved online?

Current restrictions on gatherings and overseas travel may prevent us from running our MCAI OSCE exam in Ireland and our overseas centres for some time to come. Conducting our exams online with online invigilation or proctoring will prevent further cancellations and allows us to deliver the MCAI OSCE examination for our trainees and overseas exam candidates.

Is the exam style changing?

Yes, as the exam will be delivered online, the exam style will change to facilitate this. The OSCE examination will be an online written exam, which will be made up of CRQ's (Constructed Response Questions), and VSAQ's (Very Short Answer Questions). These questions may also include video and audio media.

The questions will focus on candidate's ability to demonstrate a what/when/how approach.

The SOE component of the exam will also become an online written exam and will also consist of CRQ's (Constructed Response Questions) and VSAQ's (Very Short Answer Questions).

How many questions will the MCAI/SOE exam have?

The OSCE component will have 15 written questions to answer, the SOE component will have 12 questions, 4 Pharmacology focused, 4 Physiology and biochemistry focused and 4 Physics, Clinical Measurement and Equipment focused.

What will be the timing of the MCAI OSCE/SOE exams?

The exam will be split into two sessions.

The first session of 15 questions will focus on OSCE. The exam will be 180 minutes and a break of 60 minutes will follow.

The second session of 12 questions will focus on the SOE. This part of the exam will also be 180 minutes.

What are CRQ's?

CRQ's are open-ended short answer questions with precise answer templates, which are most commonly used to measure knowledge, reasoning and application level cognitive skills. Your exam may include real world artefacts such as graphs, images, cases, scenarios. The sub sections of the question increase in difficulty and complexity as you progress through your question.

What are VSAQ's?

VSAQ's consist of a clinical vignette followed by a question (usually about a diagnosis or management) which candidates should be able to generate a short response. Candidates need to be able to demonstrate their knowledge.

Do I need extra documentation to sit a remote exam?

Yes. In preparation for our exams being administered online and being proctored/invigilated online, successful applicants must sign an Honour Pledge and a GDPR consent form.

Where can I get these forms?

These can be downloaded at the bottom of this page.

How do I apply to take my exam remotely?

Apply as normal using the link on the College Website according to application opening dates. If your application is successful, you will be guided through the process to take the exam remotely.

Can I take the exam using my iPad/tablet?

No.

What would I need to complete the exam online?

- Access to PC or laptop with audio and webcam – these should be checked beforehand
- Screen share working and tested
- Chrome browser installed and up to date – the exam software requires chrome.
- Chrome extension installed
- Stable internet/Wi-Fi connection.
- A photo ID

How will I know if my device is equipped to complete this?

Candidates are required to test their ability to participate in the exam remotely and are provided with guidelines on getting their device exam-ready. The Online Proctoring system sends a link to test your chosen device and connection.

How/When can I trial the system before exam day?

One week before the exam, candidates are required to complete a trial exam. At this candidates will get the opportunity to test that their intended device is compatible and be given some *sample* questions to answer to familiarise themselves with the system.

What is online invigilation or proctoring?

Online remote invigilation essentially recreates the exam hall experience online. Candidates sit the test online at a place of their choosing, such as the home or workplace, using their own hardware. Although some candidates may find the idea of being watched by a proctor unusual, the proctor is not visible to candidates. The Company behind the system have been carefully selected by the College as the provider for these examinations.

Who do I contact if I have technical issues on the test day?

For any issues that arise on the exam day, the ProctorExam system provides a live chat support facility. The exams teams will also be contactable at exams@coa.ie during your exam for any issues related to questions about the exam paper during the exam (for example, “Question 3 does not make sense, I think the symptom should be X and not Y”).

As the exam is online will I get my results immediately?

No. To ensure the test is fair, question performance is scrutinised by a group of examiners after each exam. Standard setting criteria is applied and the final results are signed off by the Chairperson of Examinations.

As I do not need to attend an exam centre, can I sit the exam on a day of my choice?

This is not possible. We need to maintain the security of the examination; therefore you are required to take the exam on a specified date.

Do I have to sit the exam at home? I have children and do not have access to a quiet environment?

Candidates sit the test online at a place of their choosing, such as the home or workplace, using their own hardware once the venue is a suitable test environment - a private room with a stable internet connection.

For detailed information on the structure and sample questions for the MCAI Part 2 please download the new MCAI Candidate guide from this section of the website.