

Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations

13 May 2020

Statement by the JCIE on behalf of the surgical Royal Colleges

Following the Joint policy statement issued by the surgical Royal Colleges on 13 March 2020, work is progressing in the face of the continuing challenges posed by COVID-19 to determine the timing and feasibility of re-commencing JCIE examination activity. The initial Joint policy statement announced the postponement of all examination activity until 'at least the end of the summer'. While the JCIE had been hoping to stage Section 2 Examinations scheduled to take place from the beginning of September onwards, it has become increasingly apparent that this will not be possible in the face of the ongoing implications of the coronavirus pandemic. At the Joint Surgical Colleges Meeting on Tuesday 21 April, which is led by the four College Presidents, it was concluded that November 2020 was realistically the earliest that the JCIE should plan to resume examination activity but even then the likelihood is that there will need to be significant modifications to staging to allow for social distancing. This will impact on both Sections of JCIE examinations and will limit the number of candidates that can be accommodated.

The purpose of this communication is therefore to announce the following:

Section 1 Examinations

The timetable as currently published on the JCIE website from November 2020 remains in force. Capacity will be determined in due course.

Section 2 Examinations

These pose additional difficulties due to possible ongoing restrictions on gatherings and travel. Added to that COVID-19 has significant implications for the clinical component which is an integral part of all Section 2 Examinations bar one specialty. The JCIE therefore cannot plan to stage any of the 2020 Section 2 Examinations as originally advertised and has agreed with the four Royal College Presidents the following course of action.

- ALL Section 2 Examinations that were previously advertised to take place in September, October and November 2020 have been CANCELLED.
- The JCIE plans to replace these with revised Section 2 examinations at consolidated venues i.e. the examinations will not take place at the locations previously intimated. It is intended that examination formats remain the same, but necessity may dictate some changes to delivery. It is anticipated that these consolidated examinations will be held in November 2020.
- Examination staging will be modified to allow for social distancing and the lack of access to hospital environments.
- Contingency plans for remote delivery may be developed in the hope that these can be implemented if face-to-face examinations cannot proceed.

All of this will impact on the number of candidates that can be accommodated but as you will all appreciate the world is in uncharted territory and must keep the health and safety of candidates, examiners, assessors, JCIE staff, volunteer patients, examination helpers and many others to the forefront. The JCIE examinations are, of course, inexorably linked to ISCP training curricula and the JCIE is working very closely with the Joint Committee on Surgical Training (JCST) and the GMC to ensure that collectively we do everything we can to progress trainees to certification (CCT). The JCIE will therefore hope to accommodate all trainees eligible to enter Section 2 and who are nearing certification in the revised Section 2 examinations that we plan to schedule for November 2020. Resit possibilities will exist for unsuccessful candidates in the first half of 2021.

The JCIE does appreciate that this communication will come as a disappointment to many but please be assured that we are doing our best in difficult and unpredictable circumstances to re-commence examination activity at the earliest opportunity.

In summary, please disregard the previously published 2020 Section 2 Examination timetable. The JCIE is working on revised plans and will aim to issue an update around the middle of July. The JCIE hopes that the Section 1 timetable from November 2020 will proceed as advertised but capacity will need to be clarified in conjunction with our partner Pearson VUE in due course. In the meantime, can I ask that you refrain from contacting the JCIE offices to seek further information. We will ensure that all updates are made freely available to everyone at the earliest opportunity.

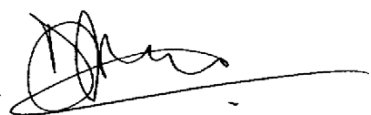
The JCIE apologises for the uncertainty but trusts that everyone understands the reasons for this course of action. In the meantime, we hope that everyone stays safe and well.



JOHN R MCGREGOR

CHAIR – JOINT COMMITTEE ON INTERCOLLEGIATE EXAMINATIONS

Endorsed by



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PRESIDENT

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