**Part 2 FRCOphth Written candidate tips**

**What is Part 2 FRCOphth Written?**

* Written examination
* Must pass before end of ST7
* Maximum of four attempts

**When and where can I sit the exam?**

* Two sittings per year, usually June/July and December

From December 2020, the Part 2 FRCOphth Written examination will be taken as an Online Proctored Examination, where the candidate will sit the exam at their home or their workplace, without the need to travel to a testing centre or examination venue. The examination will be taken online by being delivered over the internet to the candidate’s computer at a pre-agreed examination date and time.

Both Paper 1 (MCQ) and Paper 2 (MCQ) will take place on the same day with a one-hour lunch break in-between.

Please click [**here**](https://youtu.be/xsi0an49ISM)for an online demo video of how the Online Proctored Examination works and the set-up that is required.

**Candidate Application Process Steps:**

Candidates will apply for the Part 2 FRCOphth Written examination via the RCOphth website.

Once the closing date for entries has passed, the candidate will receive a confirmation email from the College which will contain the following information:

* Confirmation of their exam place
* Their candidate ID number
* Their exam date and time slot based on their location in the world
* ID requirements and computer requirements in order to take the exam
* A link to practice questions on the RCOphth exams website
* Notes on what candidates can expect on the examination day
* The examination rules and regulations

One week prior to the examination, another email will be sent to candidates with a link to complete a computer system check, as well as re-iterate the information from the previous confirmation email. The system check link will ensure a candidate’s audio and video work sufficiently, as well as making sure that their computer is suitable to run the software.

Up to 24 hours before the examination, candidates will be sent exam login details, this will include a keycode, which will be ready to use when the candidate logs in for the exam.

The exam will be available to the candidate, for as long as the available time specified.

**Structure**

* 180 multiple choice questions, single best answer from four
* Sat as two 90 question papers
* Two hours for each paper

**What to expect on the day**

Log in for your online exam at least 30 minutes before with photographic ID.  Registration, ID and system checks will begin up to 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled examination start time. There is an hour break between each paper.

**Candidate advice for success in the FRCOphth Part 2 Written Exam**

1. ***When shall I start preparing?***

Part 2 written and oral exams need adequate preparation, and must not be underestimated. A minimum of 3-4 months of revision is recommended for the Part 2 written exam, if not more. This is to give the candidate enough time to do adequate reading, followed by attempting questions to test and consolidate clinical knowledge. Do not assume that by being a senior trainee this exam will be a walk in the park. Recent exam reports have not shown that this is the case, and it may be linked to preparation.

1. ***Speak to 3-5 previous candidates early on***

Every candidate has something valuable to add to your revision inventory. Furthermore, every candidate has a slightly different method of revision. It is therefore recommended that you speak to at least 3-5 candidates who have sat the exam over the past 12 months. Valuable advice you pick up from here and there may make your studying more exam-focused and help you get the few extra marks you need to pass the exam.

1. ***Study hard but wisely***

The FRCOphth Part 2 written exam examines clinical knowledge, based on the OST curriculum. It is important to remember that you are sitting the exam to become a better doctor. Some candidates are so focused on starting revision early to cover important personal objectives (e.g. reading entire oxford handbook of ophthalmology several times) that they do not have time to adequately read other essential resources (e.g. RCOphth guidelines) which would have helped them to obtain the extra marks needed to pass the exam.

1. ***Questions, Questions, Questions!***

One bit of advice you may consistently hear from previous candidates is the importance of doing as many practice questions as possible. This advice is indeed extremely important for consolidating knowledge and self-assessment. However, to make this exercise more beneficial, it is advised to do solid background reading first. This means it is more likely when reading an answer to a question, that you are not reading a clinical information for the first time, and hence are more likely to remember it. Do leave plenty of time for going through questions from an online question bank (QB) or a question textbook.

In February 2016, the Examinations Committee agreed to release a sample MCQ questions from both the Part 1 and Part 2 FRCOphth question banks.  
[Part 2 FRCOphth Written – Sample MCQs](https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Part-2-FRCOphth-Written-Sample-MCQs-20160524.pdf)Questions (43 total) selected from across the examination blueprint.

1. ***How to use a question bank?***

Every person has a particular preferred method for using a question bank, and it is advised that you use the method that suits you best. It is important, however, to have a system. It may be best to attempt a few hours of answering a question bank before you develop a tailored system. Below is an example approach but is by no means the only way to do it

* Set up an exam on the question bank
* Specify a number of questions (e.g. 40) for the examination session
* Use the same number of questions for future examinations to make the marks more comparable.
* Read the answer provided by the question bank on for every question, even if you answered the question correctly. There may be valuable clinical information in the answer stem, which you are more likely to remember because it is linked to a clinical scenario.
* Type or write down important clinical points which you think you may forget in a document which you can later re-visit. Try not to leave reading this document to the day before the exam!
* On the more rare occasion in which you think the question and the majority of the answer is very important, it maybe more time-efficient to mark the question (available on most question banks) so you can re-visit the question and answer later.
* If you feel that the question tested a topic (e.g. ocular ischaemic syndrome) in which your knowledge is particularly weak, it may be an idea (in addition to reading the answer stem) to either 1) read the topic straight away in an Ophthalmology textbook, or 2) note down the topic and read it after finishing the QB examination (preferably on the same day).
* Look at you’re the percentage of correctly answered questions for each specialty at intervals (e.g. every 100 questions). You are likely to observe a trend (e.g. weak knowledge in oculoplastics) which can help direct your reading. This is one advantage of starting to answer QBs early.

As a general guide, try to dedicate at least one month for questions. Remember that question banks may omit important clinical topics (e.g. DVLA vision requirements for driving) if they are not tailored to the FRCOphth Part 2 exam. Also remember that question banks may be out of date. For example, the QB may cover DVLA vision requirements for driving, but they may no longer be applicable if the guidelines have recently changed.

1. ***Which online QB?***

It is best to ask previous candidates about which QB they found most helpful before you commit your money to a particular QB. The RCOphth does not recommend any particular QB. Currently available online QB’s include:

* <https://www.ophthoquestions.com/>

If you have ample revision time, then answering all of the Ophthalmology questions is highly recommended. If time is a limiting factor, then consider going through the ‘high yield’ and the ‘very high yield questions’. The high yield questions come as part of the standard package. The very high yield questions can be purchased as an extra add on. There is also an add on for the FRCOphth Part 2 exam.

* <https://www.eyedocs.co.uk/eyeq>

This questions bank contains more questions which are tailored to the FRCOphth Part 2 exam.

* <http://www.mrcophth.com/passingfinalMCQs.htm>

1. ***Which questions textbook?***

If you prefer to use a textbook rather an online question bank, the following are available:

* Review Question in Ophthlamology by Chern & Wright
* FRCOphth Part 2 MCQs by Tagal & Ling

1. ***Which textbook shall I use for main reading?***

Once again, it is very important to ask previous candidates for their experience with this. Essential reading includes:

* Oxford handbook of Ophthalmology, Denniston & Murray.

Excellent textbook offering concise information which covers a lot of what you need to know for the written and oral exams. However, do not expect to find all of what you need to know in this book. A major disadvantage is the rare use of images. Remember, however, that the majority of written part 2 exam questions do not use images.

* Clinical Ophthalmology: A Systematic Approach, Kanski & Bowling.

Once again an excellent textbook covering a lot of what you need to know. However, as you might expect no textbook covers everything you need to know. A major advantage of this textbook is its heavy use of images, making it particularly useful for the oral exam.

* Ophthalmology Secrets in Color, Gault & Vander.

If you prefer to read a textbook written in question and answer format, this may be the book for you.

Other textbooks which may provide expanded clinical information include:

* Basic and Clinical Science Course (AAO) books
* Ophthalmology, Yanoff & Duker.

1. ***What resources are useful for covering other aspects of the curriculum?***

To score well on the written exam, it is of paramount importance to go through the following:

* Royal College of Ophthalmologists Clinical Guidelines:

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/standards-publications-research/clinical-guidelines/>

* Royal College of Ophthalmologists Ophthalmic Services guidance:

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/standards-publications-research/ophthalmic-services-guidance-2/>

* National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines for topics relating to clinical ophthalmology:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/>

* Vision requirements for driving:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526635/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals.pdf> (p.87-93)

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Focus-Summer-2013.pdf>

1. ***Do I need to read certain research studies?***

Landmark clinical trials

This is much more frequently examined the Part 2 oral exam, however, questions do come up in the written exam. There is no single all you need to know resource. The following may be helpful:

* <https://www.eyedocs.co.uk/ophthalmology/journals>
* [http://www.eophtha.com/eophtha/studiesandtrials.html](http://www.eophtha.com/Must%20Know/studiesandtrials.html)
* <http://www.mrcophth.com/importanttrialsinophthalmology/mainpageimportanttrialsinophthalmology.html>

If you prefer reading a textbook:

* Handbook of Clinical Trials in Ophthalmology by Gupta, Aggarwal & Goel.

It is important to remember that the resources above summarise important clinical trials. They are not intended to be an all you need to know resource. Furthermore, the most accurate source of information re a clinical trial’s findings is the actual published peer-reviewed study.

1. ***Any other topics I should cover?***

You should have a read of the curriculum to ensure topics not in Ophthalmology textbooks are covered.

MAKE SURE you read STATISTICS. You may not need to read about linear regression or multivariate ANOVA, but you do need to know basic statistics. E.g. mean, median, mode, p-value, standard deviation, sensitivity, specificity, skewed deviation, predictive values and different levels of evidence. There is a small chapter in the Oxford handbook of Ophthalmology covering evidence-based ophthalmology, vision in context, etc. Candidates often leave these important topics until the end, giving them less time than they deserve.

Pay special attention to clinical presentations which can cause blindness or death if missed. E.g. granulomatosis with polyangitis. This can also help you choose which rare topics to read about if you are short of time (e.g. optic nerve hypoplasia as it is associated with hypopituitarism).

1. ***Any other useful resources?***

* <http://www.mrcophth.com/chua1.html>

common investigations

* <http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice.asp>
* <http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/case_studies.asp>

This present ethical guidance in clinical scenario format. I.e. more reader friendly.

1. ***Are there any courses I can attend for the Part 2 written exam?***

* <http://www.londoneyecourse.com/>

Three days of lectures covering clinical ophthalmology and important clinical trials and College guidelines. The lectures course is for candidates sitting the written or oral exam. This if followed by a one day OSCE/Viva course.

There are other courses available nationally for the FRCOphth Part 1 exam and the Part 2 oral exam. If you know of any other courses for the Part 2 written exam which are open to candidates in the UK please email [otg@rcophth.ac.uk](mailto:otg@rcophth.ac.uk) so that they can be added here.

1. ***Any other tips?***

In the last few days before the exam, make sure you have left enough time to read the notes you have made, or questions you have marked in question banks. Make sure you have system to follow in the exam re questions you are unsure about. For example, some candidates note that when they re-visit questions in the written exam, they often change their answer to the wrong answer. Other candidates find it helpful to re-visit questions. Try to identify what strategy you will implement in the exam, to minimize anxiety on the day.

Also workout how many minutes you can spend on each question. It is better to have a go at answering all questions than to run out of time by over-spending time on challenging questions.

Good sleep is essential, and more important than extra hours of study at the expense of good sleep.

More exam tips can be found at:

<https://www.ophthoquestions.com/posts/10-step-guide-to-the-frcophth-part-2-written-exam>

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