

# Preparing for the MRCPsych Exams

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Developing people

for health and

healthcare



# NW MRCPsych Course

## Introductions

- Exams are an important part of training
- As a trainee it is important to understand the course, resources available, and how to start preparing for exam
- Exam progression can be a rate limiting step in trainee progression

***BUT....***

- It is important to keep in mind the development of competency as a Psychiatrist, to inform your future practice as an ST and Consultant
- Guided by PDP, supervision and ARCP

# Today's Session

## Aims and Objectives

This session is to give an overview of the NW MRCPsych course and how to support trainees with their exams

By the end of the workshop participants should be able to:

- Have an overview of the structure of the MRCPsych exams
- Begin to access resources for the exams
- Feel confident to start planning and preparing for exams

# The MRCPsych Exams

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/exams>

# Review the RCPsych website

- Syllabus
- ‘Passing the MRCPsych guide – the insiders’ guide’
- Information on processes - updates likely
- Tron



# MRCPsych Examinations

Everything in the exams is in the syllabus

## PAPER A

Behavioural Science and Sociocultural  
Psychiatry

Human Development

Basic Neurosciences

Clinical Psychopharmacology

Classification and Assessment in  
Psychiatry

## PAPER B

Organisation and Delivery of Psychiatric Services

General Adult Psychiatry

Old Age Psychiatry

Psychotherapy

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Substance Misuse/Addictions

Forensic Psychiatry

Psychiatry of Learning Disability

Critical Review

# MRCPPsych Examinations

## The overall components required to pass

- The MRCPPsych Examinations consist of
  - Two written papers: Papers A and B
  - Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC)



# MRCPsych Examinations

## The written papers

- Paper A: 'The scientific and theoretical basis of psychiatry'
- Paper B: 'Critical review and the clinical topics in psychiatry'
  
- 3 hour papers with 150 questions

# MRCPsych Examinations

## CASC

### OSCE

- Morning: 8 single stations
  - 4 minutes to read the instructions and 7 minutes to complete the task.
- Afternoon: 8 single stations
  - 90 seconds to read and 7 minutes to undertake the task.
- The 16 CASC station exam comprises of
  - 5 stations focused on History Taking
  - 5 stations focused on Examination
  - 6 stations focused on Patient Management.

Achieve overall pass mark and at least 12 stations need to be passed  
(details of marking on RCPsych website)

# MRCPsych Examinations

## The CASC



# MRCPsych Examinations

## Eligibility (written papers)

- Check on website for guidance on application
- Paper A (£467)
  - any fully registered medical practitioner
- Paper B (£420)
  - on an approved training programme. College recommend you have 12 months' experience in psychiatry before attempting Paper B
  - OR you are in a post recognised by your hospital or trust as having contracted time and funding for educational training (with other specifications...).

# MRCPsych Examinations

## Eligibility (CASC)

- CASC (£965)

You have 24 months' whole time equivalent post foundation / internship experience in psychiatry

**AND**

A pass in Papers A and B, OR you comply with transitional arrangements

**AND**

You have sponsorship in place, and can demonstrate one of the following:

- If your post is within a programme of approved training, you have successfully completed the ARCP by the time you apply for CASC.
- for all other posts, you must have successfully completed an Assessment Portfolio (with other specifications)

# MRCPsych examinations

## Exam dates

- Published on website
- Application and results timeframes
- Multiple venues
- Need to plan sequence

# MRCPsych Examinations

## Paper A Example MCQ (example from RCPsych website)

During a cognitive assessment, you ask a 72-year-old woman who the Prime Minister is. Which type of memory is being assessed?

- a) Autobiographical
- b) Episodic
- c) Procedural
- d) Semantic
- e) Working

# MRCPsych examinations

## Paper A Example MCQ (example from RCPsych website)

- Which area of the brain is most closely associated with recognition of faces?
  - a) Amygdala
  - b) Fusiform gyrus
  - c) Left inferior frontal cortex
  - d) Nucleus accumbens
  - e) Prefrontal areas



# MRCPsych Examinations

## Example EMI

- A. Anankastic personality disorder EMI
- B. Anxious personality disorder
- C. Dependent personality disorder
- D. Dissocial personality disorder
- E. Emotionally unstable personality disorder borderline type
- F. Emotionally unstable personality disorder impulsive type
- G. Histrionic personality disorder
- H. Narcissistic personality disorder
- I. Paranoid personality disorder
- J. Schizoid personality disorder

For each of the clinical vignettes select the ONE most appropriate differential diagnosis from the option list. Each option might be used once, more than once, or not at all.

You are asked to see a 21-year-old graduate who is having difficulty coping with his new job as an administrative officer. He arrives for his appointment half an hour early because he wanted to make sure he was not late. He reports that he is finding his job very stressful because he is having problems at work. He has worked out a routine of how the mail needs to be managed and drawn up a flow chart to make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible but other members of staff are not following the flow chart. Choose ONE option

# MRCPsych examinations

## Paper B Example MCQ (example from RCPsych website)

Your consultant has asked you to gain consent from a depressed patient who is currently detained under mental health legislation. She has not responded to medication and is becoming very thin and dehydrated. You are asked to see if she is competent to consent to ECT. Which of the following is essential for the patient to have capacity?

- a) The patient must be able to communicate verbally what her decision is.
- b) She cannot change her mind over the course of the day.
- c) She must have an intact memory.
- d) She agrees to sign the consent form.
- e) She must understand the treatment.

# MRCPsych examinations

## Paper B Example MCQ (example from RCPsych website)

Select the least likely option regarding the efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

- a) CBT and relaxation training are equally effective in generalised anxiety disorder.
- b) CBT is effective in the treatment of delusions.
- c) CBT is more effective than waiting list control in patients with HIV and depression.
- d) In CBT for depression, cognitive changes generally precede behavioural changes.
- e) In CBT for relationship difficulties, patients who engage in homework make quicker, longer lasting and more generalised progress.

# MRCPsych Examinations

## The CASC

You are about to see Sarah Green, an eighteen year old student who has been brought to Accident and Emergency by her mother. It is suspected that she has ingested a recreational drug at a party just over 30 hours ago. Her mother describes her as being 'paranoid'.

- Examine the patient to establish what abnormal beliefs she holds.
- Establish whether any other psychopathology is present.
- You are not expected to take a drug and/or alcohol history.

- <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/exams/preparing-for-exams/casc-guide-for-trainees/casc-videos>

# MRCPsych Examinations

## Updates

- Neurosciences mostly
  - Syllabus revised
  - All neuroscience questions checked, outdated ones removed
  - New questions written since Dec 2017 sitting

# MRCPsych Examinations

## Future directions

- Refining question bank
- Neuroscience implementation
- Development of Tron
- New core curriculum (updates next year)
- Changes to balance/marking in CASC stations?
- Short answer questions (writing the answer)

# MRCPsych Examinations

## Next steps

- Familiarise yourself with the RCPsych website
- Download the exam syllabus for reference
- Know what will be covered in each exam
  
- Start planning your path to Membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists!



**Any questions about the structure of  
the exams?**

## Exercise for 5-10 minutes...

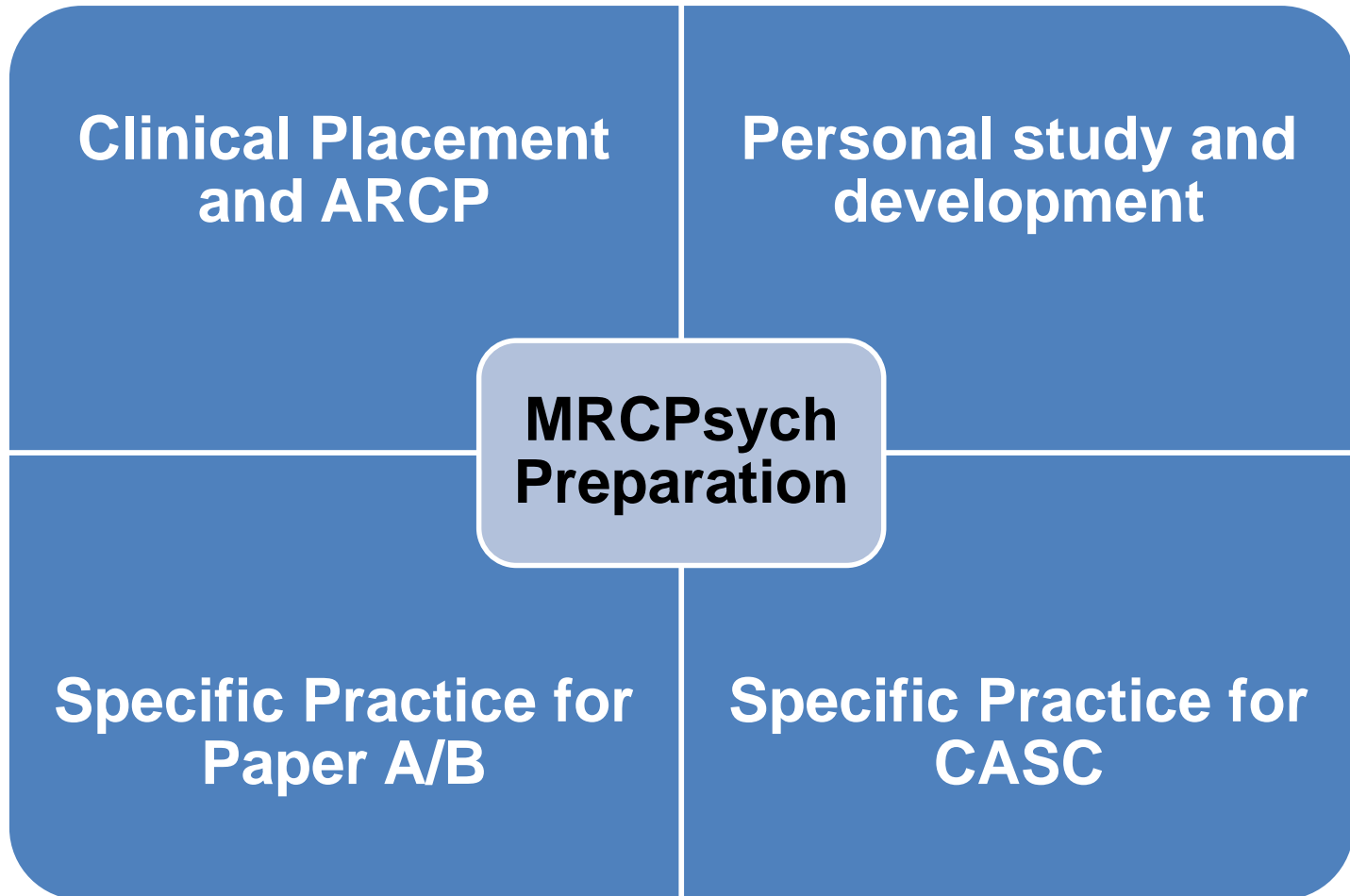
- In your next supervision, your overly enthusiastic supervisor asks you about exams and how you plan to prepare for the exams...
  - What are you going to say?



# Exam Preparation

# Holistic planning

- Start your preparations today
- Work/life planning – balancing commitments
- Leave
- Costs (exams and preparation)
- Applications
- Social groups
- Creating and protecting time is a worthwhile investment..



**Clinical Placement  
and ARCP**

**MRCPsych  
Preparation**

# Exam Preparation

## Clinical Placements

- Using the '1-hour protected supervision' to the trainees advantage
  - Talk about the exams
  - Get support for CP, JC and 555s
  - Align different objectives in your study
  - Work Place Based Assessments focussed on potential CASC scenarios



**Personal study and  
development**

**MRCPsych  
Preparation**



# Exam Preparation

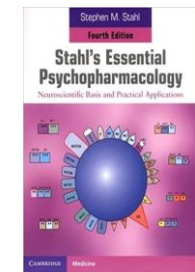
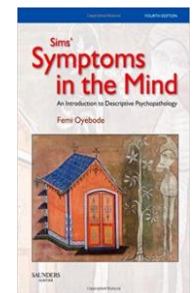
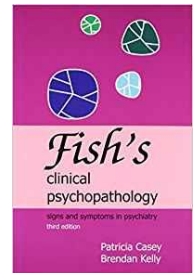
## Self Study

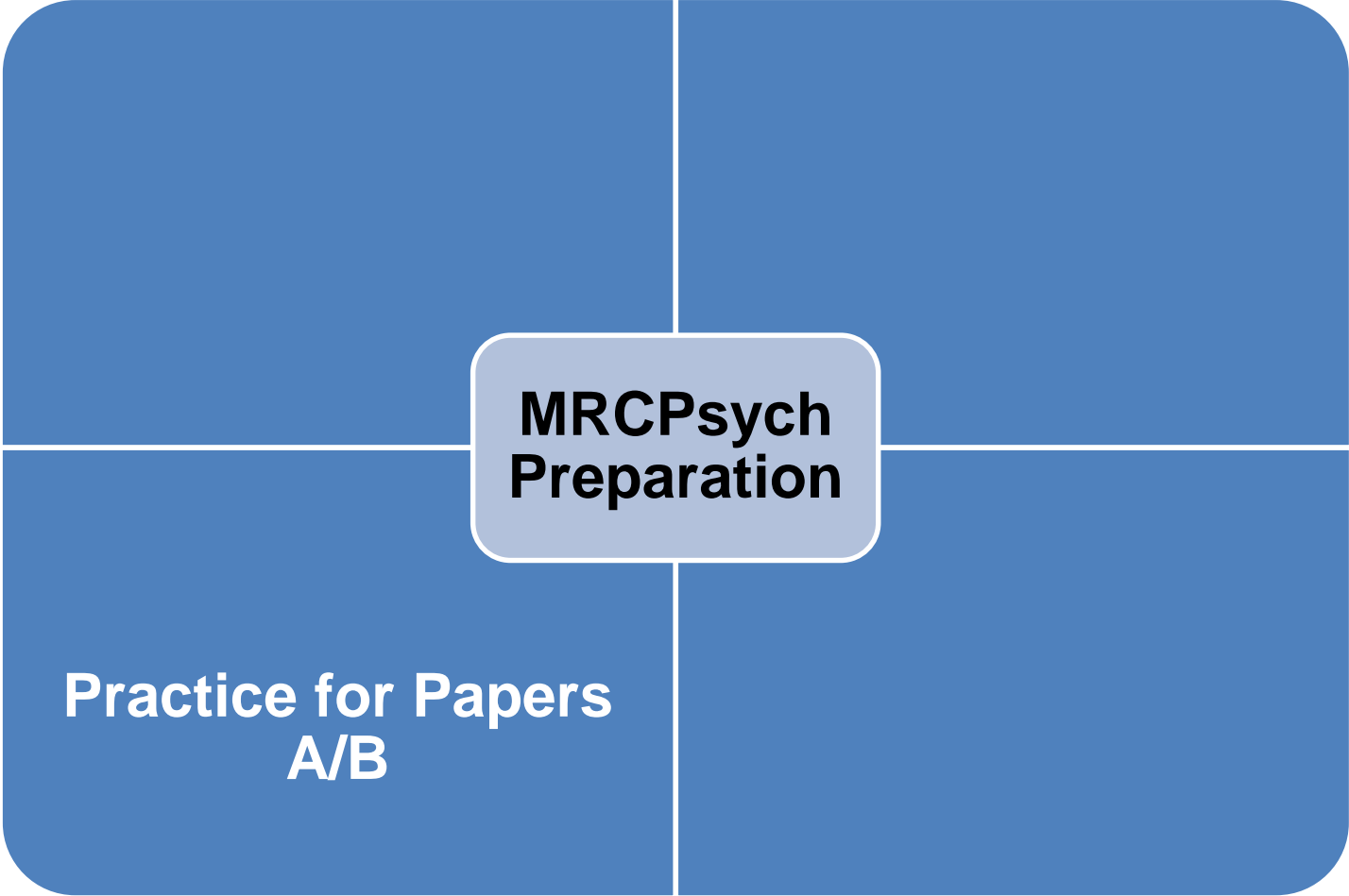
- Inevitable that lots of self study is required
- Familiarisation with the syllabus
- Papers and books.... in combination with exam practice and MCQs
- NW MRCPsych Course material online
- Trainees Online (TrOn) online modules for the basic sciences – with more developing in neurosciences
- Revision courses

# Exam Preparation

## Self Study

- Recommendations include:
  - Symptoms in the Mind (Sims)
  - Fish's Clinical Psychopathology (Casey/Kelly)
  - Neuroanatomy (Haines)
  - Essential Psychopharmacology (Stahl)
  - Psychology for the MRCPsych (Munafò)
  - A Doctor's Guide to Critical Appraisal (Gossall/Gossall)





**MRCPsych  
Preparation**

**Practice for Papers  
A/B**

# Exam Preparation

## Practice for Written Papers

- Questions Questions Questions
- Reading Reading Reading
- Tron and online courses
- NW MRCPsych course, there are approximately 1500 questions presented to the trainees in different formats
  - LAP/Academic Days
  - Additional question banks on the VLE

# Exam Preparation

## Self Study

- The NW MRCPsych Course Website

[www.schoolofpsychiatry.net](http://www.schoolofpsychiatry.net)

# Exam Preparation

## Practice for Written Papers

NW Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

[www.manchesterpsychiatry.net](http://www.manchesterpsychiatry.net)

- MRCPsych
- Participants
- Badges
- Competencies
- Grades
- MRCPsych Preparation Hints and Tips
- MRCPsych Mock Paper A and B
- Basic Sciences (Paper A)
- Clinical / Critical Appraisal (Paper B)

- Dashboard
- Site home

# The HEE(NW) MRCPsych Course

[Dashboard](#) / [My courses](#) / [MRCPsych](#)

## MRCPsych Preparation Hints and Tips

- 1. Introduction to exams and preparation

## MRCPsych Mock Paper A and B

Below are 2 Mock Exam Papers - one for Paper A and one for Paper B.

They have approximately 200 questions, with 2/3 single best answers and 1/3 extended matching items which is the same as the exam. Instant scoring is provided.

- NEW Paper A Practice Exam (2017)
- NEW Paper B Practice Exam (2017)

## Basic Sciences (Paper A)

### ACTIVITIES

- Quizzes
- Resources

- MRCPsych
- Participants
- Badges
- Competencies
- Grades
- MRCPsych Preparation Hints and Tips
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## Basic Sciences (Paper A)

### Paper A tests 1-5 of the syllabus (The Basic Sciences)

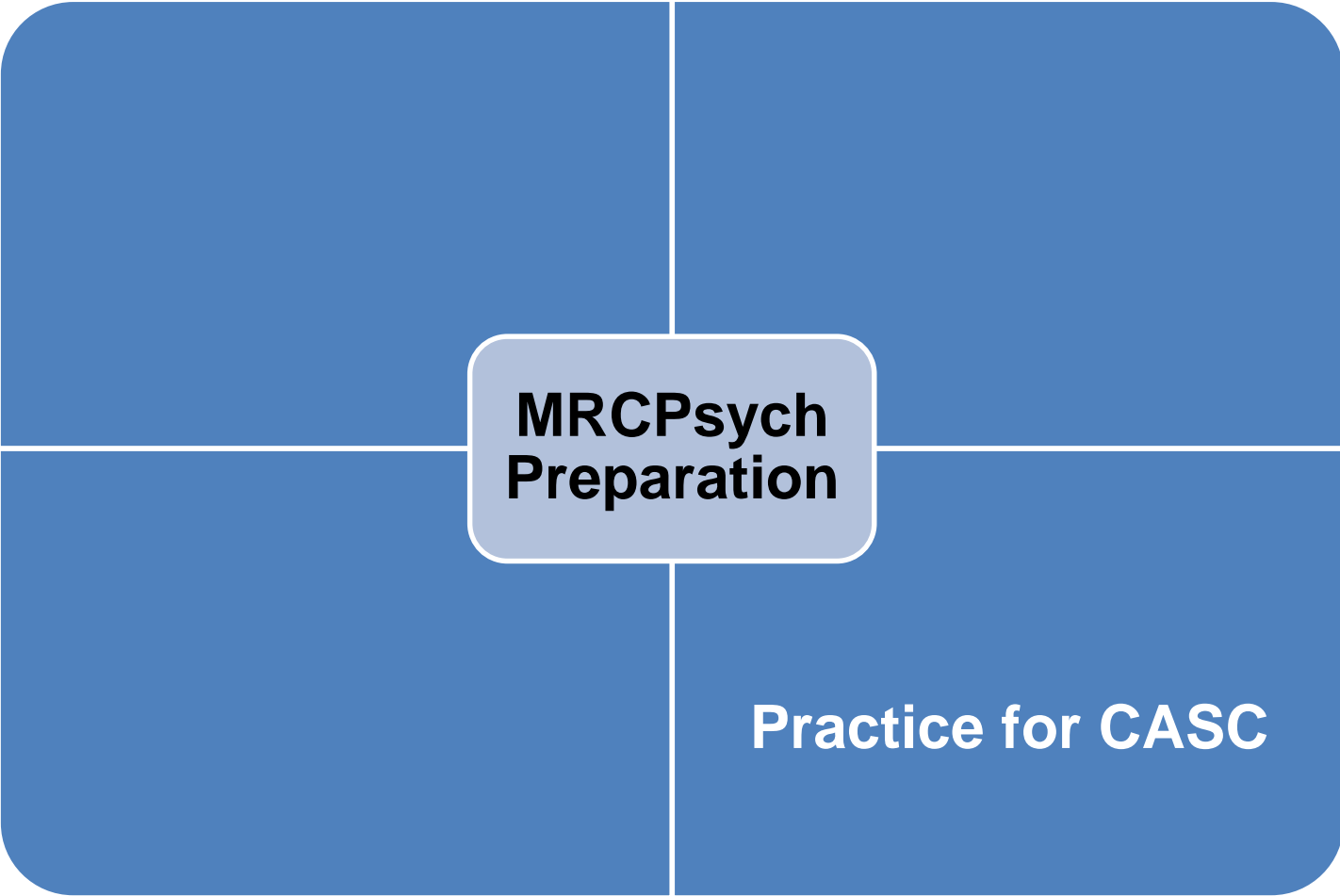
In this section, we will cover 1-5: Behavioural Science / Socio-cultural Psychiatry (1) and Human Development (2) - these are combined as there is so much overlap in the exam, Neurosciences (3), Psychopharmacology (4) and Assessment/Classification (5).

Below are short exam style quizzes. Each quiz has approx 15 single best answer questions and 3 extended matching items. They give instant feedback, explanation of the answer and a reference to the course so you can do some background reading from the HEE (NW) MRCPsych webpages. They are all novel questions reviewed by a trained question writer.

There is also a link to the RCPsych TrOn modules for Paper A.

-  [Link to Trainees Online \(TrOn\) learning modules for Paper A](#)
-  [Human Development, Behavioural Science and Sociocultural Psychiatry MCQs](#)
-  [Neurosciences MCQs](#)
-  [Clinical Psychopharmacology MCQs](#)
-  [Classification and Assessment MCQs](#)





**MRCPsych  
Preparation**

**Practice for CASC**

# Exam Preparation

## Practice for CASC

- ‘How to Pass the MRCPsych CASC’
- Talk about CASC and stations in specialties
- Use WPBAs during the placement – Mini-ACE
- Study groups (include near peers and supervisors)
- Local trusts have CASC practice
- External courses (££££)
- MRCPsych Course Progress Test

# Exam Preparation

## Practice for CASC

- Practical OSCE Progress Test:
  - Annual 8 single station OSCE
  - Scenarios similar to the CASC
  - Completed under exam conditions
  - Feedback given as mark sheets

# Exam Preparation

## Practice for CASC

- Focus on the task
- Empathic communication
- Keep to time
- Summarise at the end
- Feedback and reflection to fine tune clinical skills
- Confidence and resilience (through preparation)

# Exam Preparation

## Exam Technique – as part of the RAP

- CT1
  - Today to look at the course and exams
  - Practice questions and tests
  - Exam technique
- CT2
  - Practice questions
  - CASC preparation

# NW MRCPsych Course

## Summary

- Exams are an important part of training (but only part of what shapes your development)
- Review the RCPsych website (today!)
- It is important to get familiar with the syllabus and available resources (including this course) in your MRCPsych preparation
- Talk – to us, supervisors, senior colleagues, near peers and each other - about exams to stay orientated to your goals

# Questions?

Contacts for further advice:

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