

Preparing for the MRCPPsych 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 session 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>

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

Eligibility (written papers)

- Check on website for guidance on application
- Paper A (£476)
 - any fully registered medical practitioner
- Paper B (£428)
 - on an approved training programme. College recommend you have 12 months' experience in psychiatry before attempting Paper B

MRCPsych Examinations

Eligibility (CASC)

- CASC (£984)
You have 24 months' whole time equivalent post foundation / internship experience in psychiatry

AND

A pass in Papers A and B (COVID changes!)

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.

Paper A

Health Education England

- Ideally CT1 – 2 to 3 months revision
- Written paper on the scientific and theoretical basis of Psychiatry
- Three hour exam worth 150 marks, comprised of 150 questions
- Two-thirds multiple choice questions (MCQ) and one-third extended matching item questions (EMI)

Paper A syllabus

- Behavioural Science and Sociocultural Psychiatry
- Human Development
- Basic Neurosciences
- Clinical Psychopharmacology
- Classification and Assessment in Psychiatry



trainees
online

Paper B

- CT2 – 2 to 3 months revision
- One third critical appraisal, two thirds clinical
- Three hour exam worth 150 marks, comprised of 150 questions
- Two-thirds multiple choice questions (MCQ) and one-third extended matching item questions (EMI)

Paper B syllabus

- 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**

- Start of CT3 – 3 months revision
- Format is like an OSCE
- Two circuits of eight individual stations which will test your clinical skills

CASC stations

Circuit 1

- 6 stations focused on Management
- 1 x station focused on Examination
- 1 x station focused on History Taking

Circuit 2

- 4 x stations focused on Examination
- 4 x stations focused on History Taking



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.

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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

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!

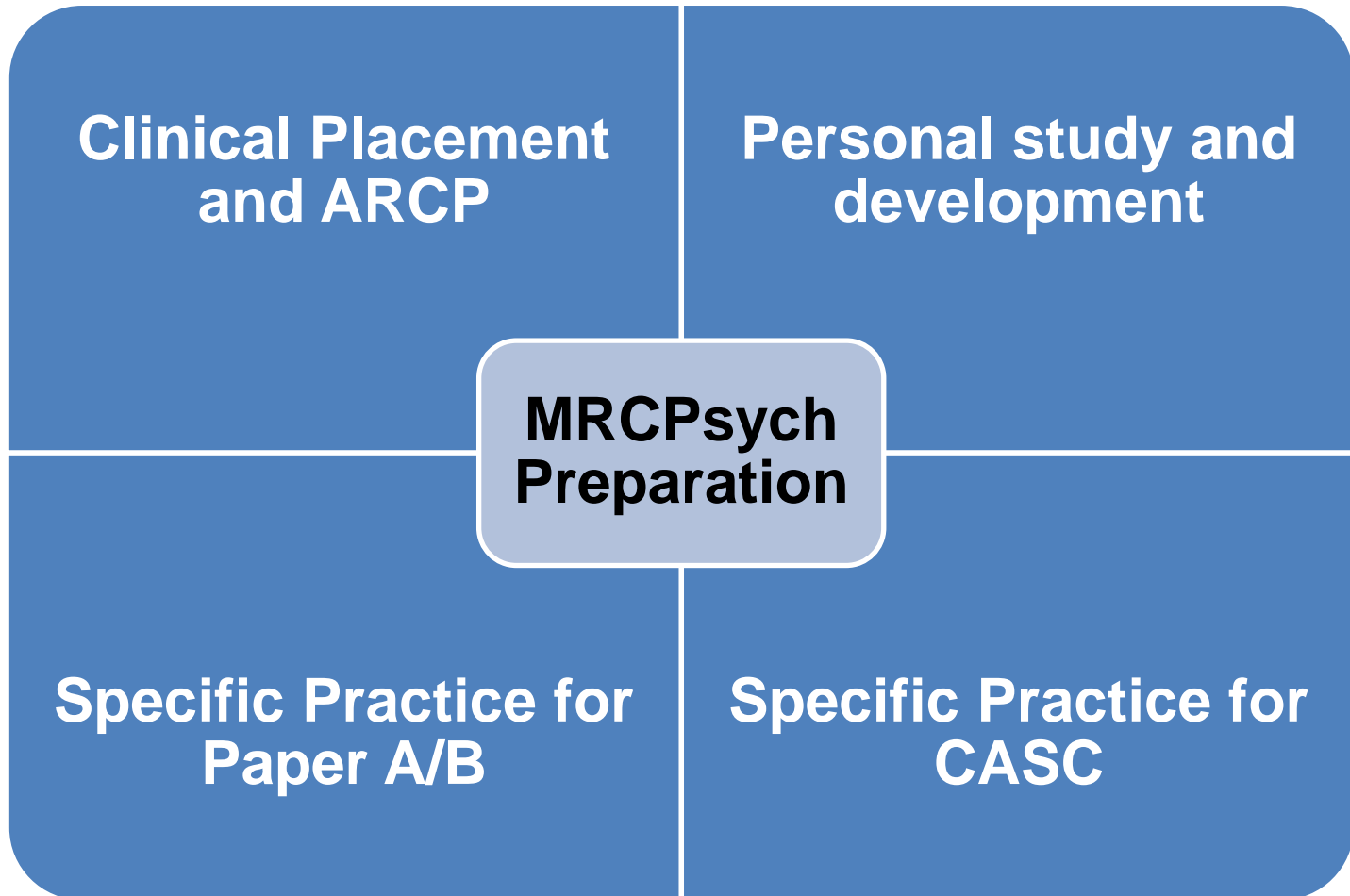


It's Time For A Break

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
 - Work Place Based Assessments focused on potential CASC scenarios
 - Align different objectives in your study (e.g. with presentations)



**Personal study and
development**

**MRCPsych
Preparation**

Exam Preparation

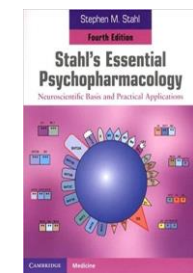
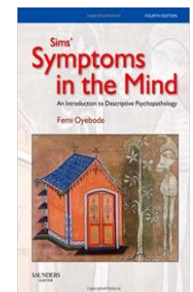
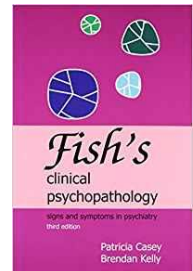
Self Study

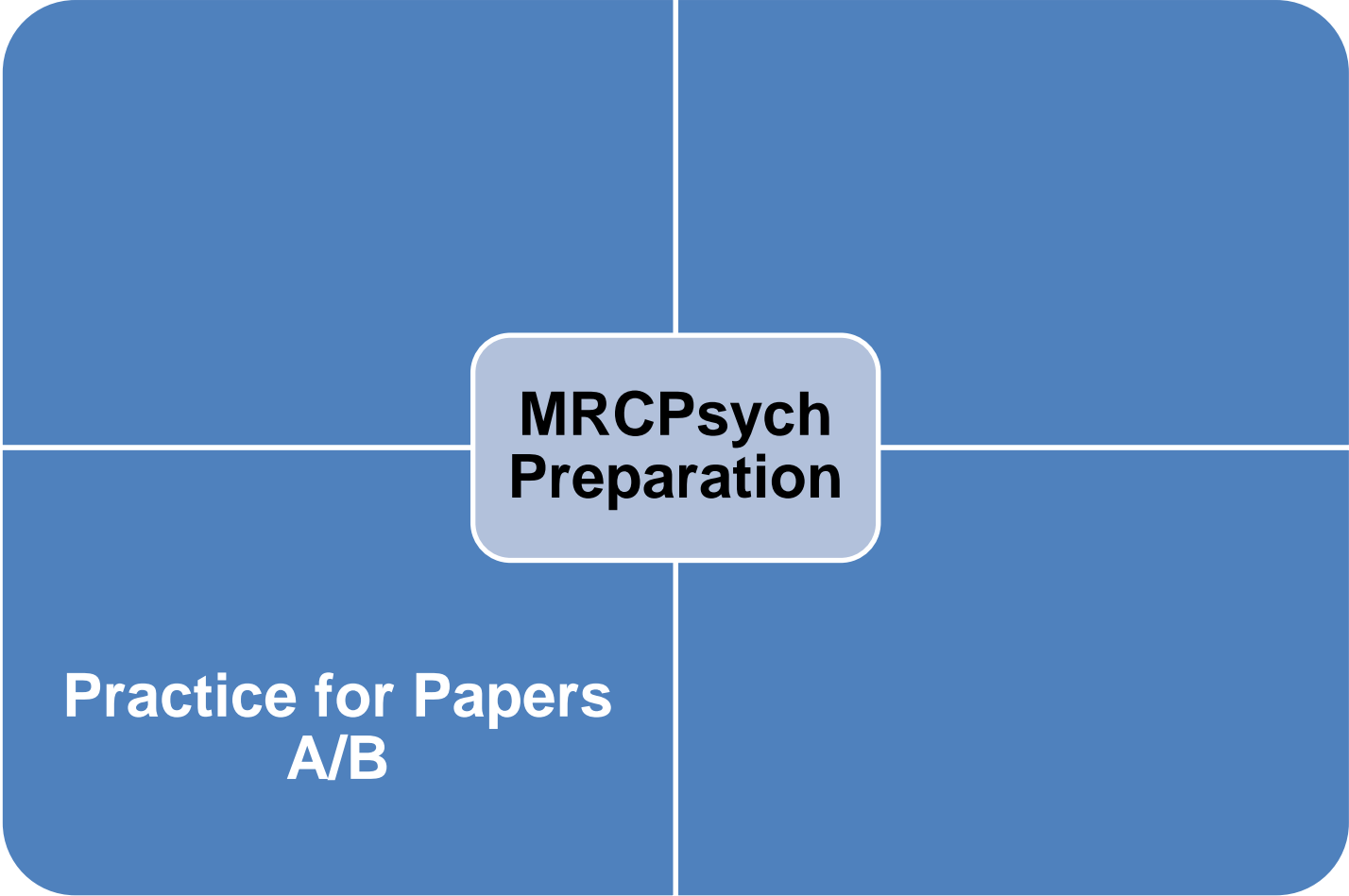
- Inevitable that lots of self study is required
- Familiarisation with the syllabus
- Papers and books.... in combination with exam practice and MCQs
- Trainees Online (TrOn) online modules for the basic sciences – with more developing in neurosciences
- Revision courses

Exam Preparation

Self Study

- Previous 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

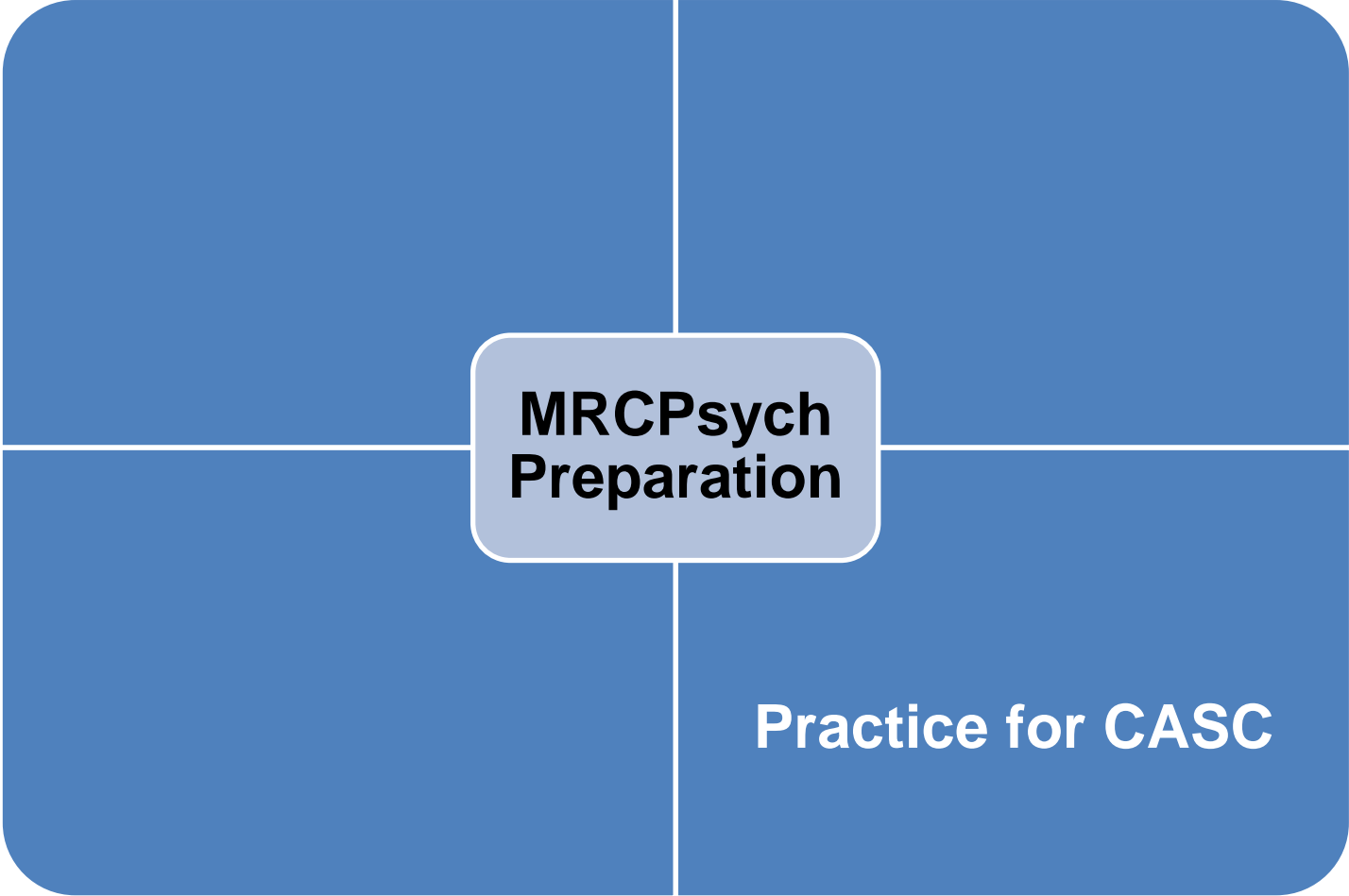
Practice for Written Papers

- 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

- The NW MRCPsych Course Website

www.schoolofpsychiatry.net



**MRCPsych
Preparation**

Practice for CASC

Exam Preparation

Practice for CASC

- Consultation skills in placement
- Monitor College developments
- ‘How to Pass the MRCPsych CASC’
- Study groups (include near peers and supervisors)
- MRCPsych Course Clinical Skills Test
- Trusts-organised CASC practice
- External courses

Consultation Skills

- 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)
- It is important to get familiar with the syllabus and available resources (including this course) in your MRCPsych exam preparation
- Review the RCPsych website and start planning!
- Talk about exams – to us, supervisors, senior colleagues, near peers and each other - to stay orientated to your goals

Questions?

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