

Change to LDS Examination Structure effective June 2022

Background

The structure of the LDS is changing. Up until the last examination run in January 2020, the examination had two parts: a Part 1 comprising two multiple-choice (single best answer and extended matching) question papers and a Part 2 examination +\: a Dental Manikin (DM); Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE); and Unseen Cases (USC) assessment. Candidates were required to pass all three components in the same diet in order to attain a pass in the Part 2. This meant that candidates often had to resit components that they have already passed in previous unsuccessful attempts at the examination.

Uncoupling of the Part 2

In order to ensure a fair and proportionate assessment requirement on the part of candidates, RCSEng can announce the decision to uncouple the OSCE and USC components from the DM component. With such a structure, a new-style OSCE along with the USC component would constitute the Part 2. The DM component would move to a separate Part 3 examination that would also assess some elements previously covered in the practical OSCE stations, to form a new Practical Clinical Skills (PCS) assessment. The Part 1 remains unchanged. The table below outlines the new structure of the exam and the cost of its component parts:

Previous Structure and Costs	New Structure and Costs
Part 1 (SBA/EMQ Paper 1 and 2) £850	Part 1 (SBA/EMQ Paper 1 and 2) £900
Part 2 (USC, OSCE, DM) £2940	Part 2 (USC, OSCE) £1575
	Part 3 (PCS) £1525

Candidates are still required to pass the Part 1 to enter the Part 2 (those passing the Part 1 previously will not need to resit this); likewise, candidates are required to have passed the Part 2 to enter the Part 3. Passes in either component can be 'banked' (as is currently the case with the Part 1), enabling candidates to sit subsequent components on multiple occasions if required on the condition that this is within the attempts limit and overall currency period identified (see section on attempts and currency below).

Benefits of the New Structure

The change in structure will serve four benefits to candidates by:

1. Minimising duplication of assessment for those who have previously passed the OSCE and USC components, but have to resit these if they previously failed the DM component.
2. Ensuring that candidates only have to pay to sit those components that they have yet to pass.
3. Enabling the RCSEng to offer more frequent diets of Part 3 (PCS) component, ensuring that candidates are able to be accommodated with the examination more efficiently.

- Facilitating a structure in which all of the practical elements would be assessed within the same component (the Part 3), enabling candidates to adopt a more focused approach to their examination preparation.

Timing and assessment aims of each components

The new structure would introduce the following structure and timings:

Component	Format	Assessment Aims
Part 1 (unchanged)	2 x 150-minute papers	Applied Knowledge
Part 2 OSCE	12 x 7-minute stations	Applied knowledge Clinical skills (radiograph interpretation, prescription writing, obtaining consent etc.) Peer communication <i>Spoken</i> medical emergency response Oral health/population-based healthcare Ethical and legal principles Principles of safe practice
Part 2 Unseen Cases (unchanged)	4 x 30-minute cases	History taking Investigations Diagnosis Treatment planning Patient and peer communication
Part 3	180-minute assessment	Practical clinical dental skills

Each of these assessment aims will continue to be applied to the coverage of the *Preparing for Practice* curriculum.

Attempt Limits and Schedule of Exam Attempts

Currently, candidates are required to pass the Part 2 within five years of passing the Part 1, and are permitted four attempts at each part of the examination. With the revised structure of the examination, while the overall currency period of five years between passing the Part 1 and completing the examination should not change, the number of attempts permitted will be revised as indicated in the table below:

Examination Component	Number of Attempts	Currency of Pass	Projected Number of Diets Per Year
Part 1	4	5 years	2
Part 2	3	n/a	2
Part 3	3	n/a	3

Due to no Part 2 diets run in the last two years, the **overall currency period of 5 years will not count for 2020 and 2021**. This means that the candidates who passed the Part 1 in 2017, will have until the end of 2024 to pass the Part 2 and 3.

Transitional Arrangements for Existing LDS Part 2 Candidates

Candidates who already have a previous unsuccessful attempt at the LDS Part 2 are subject to two arrangements:

- Previous passes at the OSCE or USC components in the context of an overall fail *will not* be recognised, in line with the examination's regulations at the time of their sitting.

Equally, previous passes in the DM component in the context of an overall fail would not exempt a candidate from sitting the new Part 3.

2. All previous attempts at the Part 2 *will* still count, in order to preserve the principles informing limit on attempts in the first place. Candidates who have failed the Part 2 on three previous occasions are still be eligible to sit the reframed Part 2 on one further occasion, again in line with the examination's regulations when they had their most recent, third, attempt (which did not identify that this would be the final attempt at the Part 2).