

SUPPORTING CANDIDATES IN THE PRIMARY FRCA OSCE

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INTRODUCTION

The OSCE is a widely used gold standard assessment of clinical competency¹, utilised from medical school through to specialist training. The FRCA Primary OSCE is a challenging summative examination which assesses candidates' clinical and communication skills, alongside technical knowledge of anaesthetic equipment.

The West of Scotland OSCE course was established in 2023 in response to a lack of formal preparation courses available in the region. It aims to support candidates in their preparation for this challenging examination by improving confidence and exam readiness through realistic simulation.

METHODOLOGY

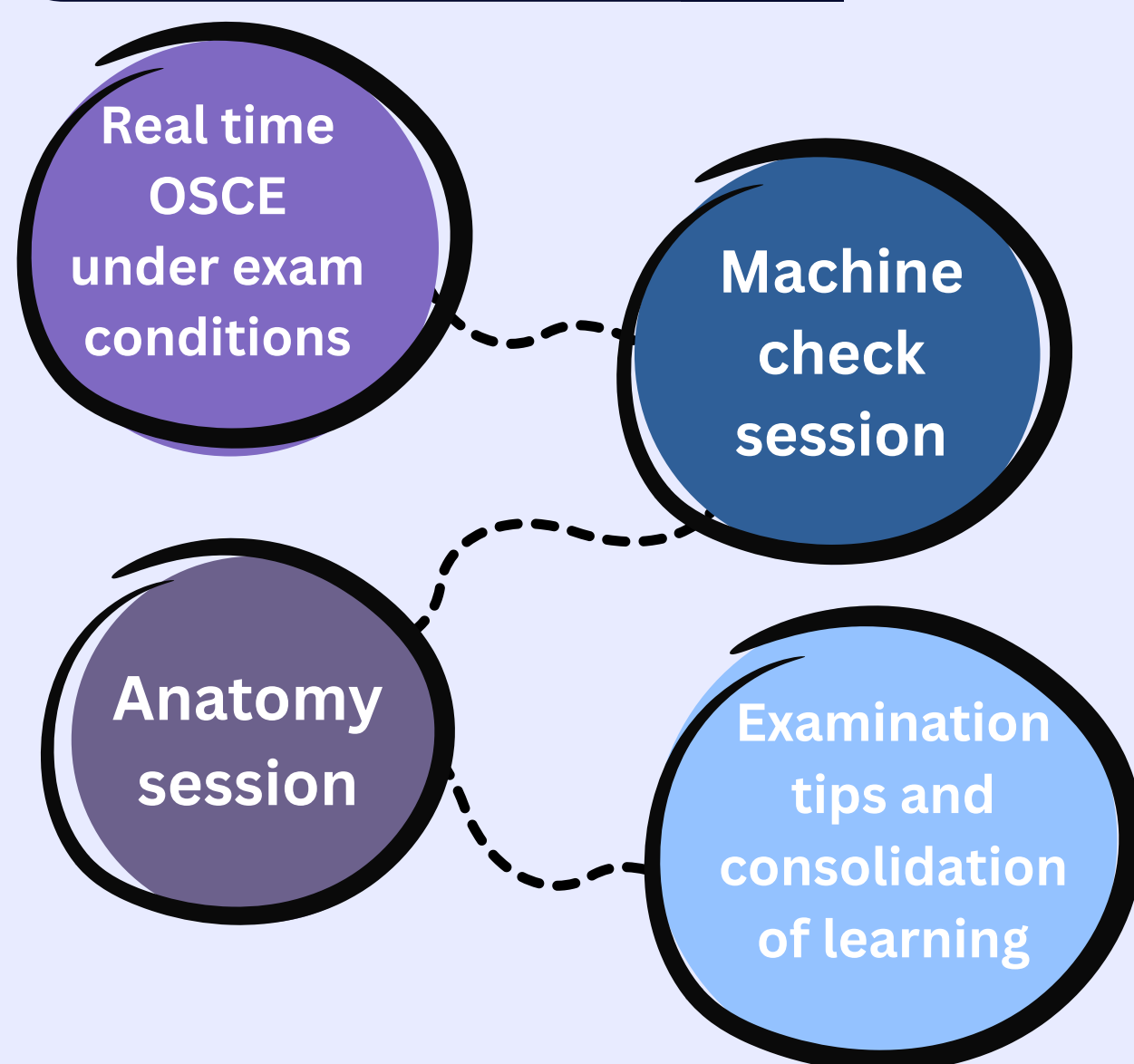
The course is run by consultant anaesthetists and senior trainees. In 2024 a new trainee lead role was introduced to ensure the course remains relevant and responsive to evolving trainee needs. This competitively appointed position was created to offer leadership opportunities and to support the sustainability and future proofing of the course.

The OSCE course is delivered with every exam sitting, typically 2-3 weeks prior. Central to our ethos is a commitment to inclusion, no matter how full the course we always find space for one more, typically welcoming 8-16 candidates with each sitting.

The day begins with a structured, timed run through of OSCE stations. Candidates are assessed by consultant anaesthetists and trainees across a wide range of stations, including emergency simulation, equipment and communication skills. In response to feedback a dedicated session on the anaesthetic machine check was introduced and developed in collaboration with a local operating department practitioner (ODP), who leads this session.

The pace then shifts with an interactive anatomy quiz designed to engage candidate's competitive side, complete with a sweet prize for the winning team. We then conclude with an examination tip session, focused on boosting candidate confidence and consolidating key learning points ensuring that participants leave feeling better prepared for the exam ahead.

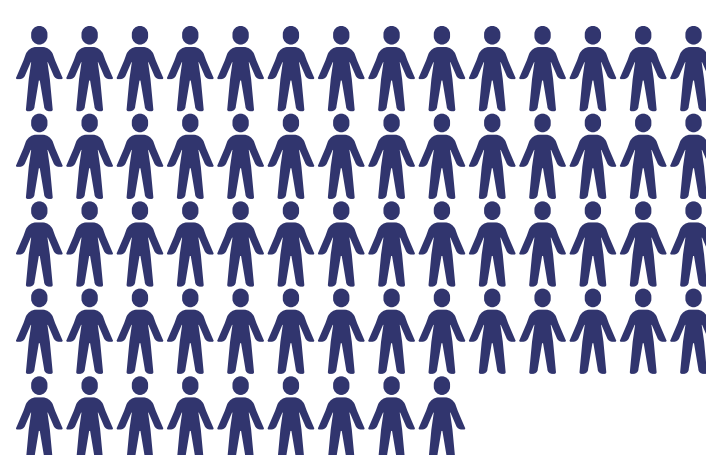
COURSE STRUCTURE



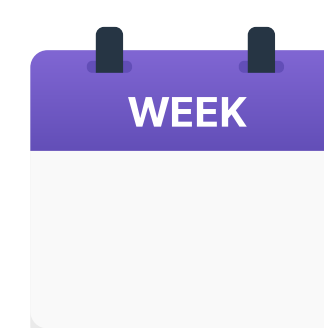
STATISTICS



6 courses since 2023

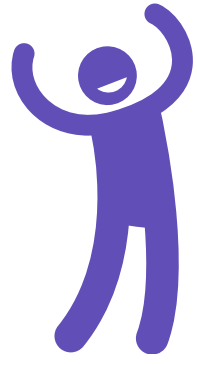


65 candidates



2-3 weeks before the exam

FEEDBACK



Candidates reported feeling more confident after attending the course



All candidates would recommend the course to colleagues when preparing for the OSCE



All candidates felt the course timing was appropriate

Suggested areas for improvement:

- More physics and equipment stations
- Requests for a two day course
- More anatomy revision and anatomy handouts

“Confidence building”

“Very similar to the actual OSCE, made the real exam feel less stressful”

“Plenty of anatomy and radiology at stations which reflected my weak points in the exam so that was helpful”

“The topics selected covered a good range of skills and knowledge. Useful to demonstrate that questions can be quite detailed, especially anatomy”

“Realistic set-up”

“ This course was among my only preparation for the OSCE; it was incredibly helpful to have a mock run through in the style of the exam”

CONCLUSION

The West of Scotland OSCE course was developed to fill a critical gap in structured exam preparation for anaesthetic trainees in the region. Since its inception in 2023 it has grown into a valued educational offering which provides realistic OSCE simulation and preparation delivered by a passionate faculty of consultant anaesthetists and anaesthetists in training. With over 65 candidates attending over 6 courses and consistently positive evaluations, the course is now firmly established as a trusted tool in the preparation for the FRCA OSCE amongst trainees in the West of Scotland. The evolving structure of the course including introduction of a trainee lead and ongoing refinements made in response to feedback, reflects a commitment to both educational excellence and longevity of the course through meaningful trainee involvement and innovation.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Continued adaptation of the course in response to candidate feedback
- Update of course structure with planned changes in exam

REFERENCES

1. Al-Hashimi K, Said UN, Khan TN. Formative Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) as an Assessment Tool in UK Undergraduate Medical Education: A Review of Its Utility. Cureus. 2023 May 4;15(5):e38519. doi: 10.7759/cureus.38519. PMID: 37288230; PMCID: PMC10241740.