

Feedback from a Part 2 Candidate in 2021

Being comfortable with part 1 knowledge is so important. As I had to take it twice (and had one attempt cancelled due to covid) I really got my head around everything. I did part 2 1 year after passing part 1 which was useful as I had retained much of my knowledge.

I started a guideline recap around 6 months before the exam, but 4 months before was when I ramped up (i.e. no weekend plans, swapped as many on calls as possible etc.) I did use the list provided on your website to check things off and had a traffic light system so I could track how comfortable I was with a topic (red - not, yellow - ok, green - yes).

I concentrated the most on clotting and morphology. The exam is very very non-malignant weighted and I think most people will have enough knowledge from their day jobs in malignant haem to cope.

With clotting I made sure I could explain verbally and by written word each clotting assay on Practical Haemostasis and of course had to be confident at the relevant bsh and 1st guidelines.

We had a senior SpR do an exam focussed weekly morphology session with us and two other consultants led opened sessions a week. Despite that my colleague and I would go to the lab for 3-4 hrs on the weekend to work through slides collated by previous candidates. Time pressure is such an issue in the exam so I agree to give yourselves <8 mins per case to look and write (in the exam we had 90 mins for 10 cases - 5 cases of 45 mins and then rotate). It's important to remind everyone that the morphology is not a viva!

I had done a red cell job and our red cell consultant did a few hplc sessions, so I didn't attend a specific course.

A couple of consultants did vivas with us and we also practised as a revision group.

Some would say not to pay as much attention to the newer guidelines which popped up 2-3 weeks before our exam (as the exam is already set). However I can tell you definitely now these are fair game for the vivas! It is worth checking the bsh website and reading new guidelines up to the day before the exam starts.

Courses:

Nhsbt pre part 2 course - excellent course. Ruth Evans was one of the excellent instructors and got us to engage on an intensive course - but besides doing this week and looking at my notes I didn't need much else for transfusion!

Kingston course - is a must for the in-person exam mock and an introduction to the time pressure. Morphology slides are varied and high yield.

Birmingham online clotting course - (the royal free course was not running due to covid) it was an ok course but not exam oriented enough. On reflection, I would probably had given it a skip

Andrew Godfrey Chelsea & Westminster course - excellent week long, interactive online course covering everything with a great morphology platform. Access to multiple mock exams too.

Currently you need to contact him directly (andrew.godfrey6@nhs.net)

Books:

WHO 2016 book - a good reference book to have and the only book I used, worth buying or borrowing.

My final thing to say is that future candidates must not underestimate the time pressure esp on the short cases, transfusion and clotting paper. Many had told me this was a problem before, but I didn't understand truly what it meant until I feared multiple times I wouldn't finish the papers during the exam. It is so important to attempt all questions as marks are cumulative. Bullet points are probably most effective to achieve this!

I hope this helps candidates in the future and keep up the great work!

BW

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