COSECSA
Guidance for the COSECSA Membership (MCS) Examinations
This brief document is intended to help candidates better understand how the Membership examinations of the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) are structured, and what to expect when you sit the examination.

COSECSA has two surgical examinations, the Membership of the College of surgeons, or MCS, and Fellowship of the College of Surgeons, or FCS.

About the Exams
The MCS examination is designed to assess the basic principles of surgery and a broad knowledge of surgery in general. All MCS candidates sit the same examination.

Membership of the College does not confer specialist status but signifies that the member is ready to pursue higher surgical training in a particular specialty. Successful Membership candidates are invited to register for Fellowship training, in one of a number of different specialties.

Both MCS and FCS examinations consist of two parts. Part I is the written examination which takes place in early September. This exam is held in all COSECSA member countries with Membership and Fellowship candidates, and may occasionally be held in other centres outside the region.

For the MCS examinations, Part II is a 15 station examination in the objective structured clinical examination, or OSCE, format. For the FCS examinations Part II is a clinical and oral exam. Both Part II examinations take place in late November or early December of each year. Only candidates who are successful in the Part I written exam will be invited to the Part II exam.

MCS Part II Exam Format
Each MCS Part II examination consists of clinical stations, communication stations, rest stations and oral stations.

There will certainly be some overlap between the skills and knowledge evaluated in the different stations. However, the following descriptions give a general overview of skills and knowledge being examined.

The clinical stations cover the following themes: Physical examination skills, procedural skills, diagnostic imaging interpretation, applied clinical anatomy, physiology, and pathology.

The communication stations cover the following themes: Appropriate gathering of information from patients, and appropriate sharing of information with patients, families, and other health care professionals, and overall professionalism.

The oral stations cover the following themes: Appropriate evaluation of clinical data and synthesis of differential diagnoses, interpretation of investigations, synthesis of reasonable plans of management.
You can download the curriculum for the examinations on the COSECSA website.

**Exam Registration**
On the day of your examination you will be required to present yourself at the examination location at the specified time. Examination staff from the College will be there to welcome you. You will be asked to sign a registration form, show your identification and will be issued with a badge with your candidate number.

Any handbags, briefcases, coats and any other extra material will be stored in a safe place until after the examination. You are not allowed to take anything into the exam with you. This includes mobile phones and other electronic devices, which must be left with the examination staff. The candidate briefing will be read to the group.

**Conduct of the Exam**
At the appropriate time you will be called by candidate number from the waiting room and asked to line up with the other candidates, before a member of the examinations staff leads you to your first station, which you should wait outside. A bell rings to start the examination, and you should then enter the station. Each station lasts for 10 minutes. After 7 minutes a bell will ring, informing you that 3 minutes remain. 10 minutes after the start of the station, a bell will again ring, signaling the end of the station. You should leave the station and walk to the next station. There will be a 2 minute rest period between stations. Then a bell will then ring to start the next station. There are 15 stations in total.

**After the exam**
After the exam your possessions will be returned to you. There may be two sessions of a COSECSA examination in the same day. When this is the case it will be necessary to hold those candidates who attend the morning session until the afternoon session has commenced. Candidates will be provided with refreshments.

COSECSA hopes you have found this guidance useful and we wish you well in your preparations for your exams.