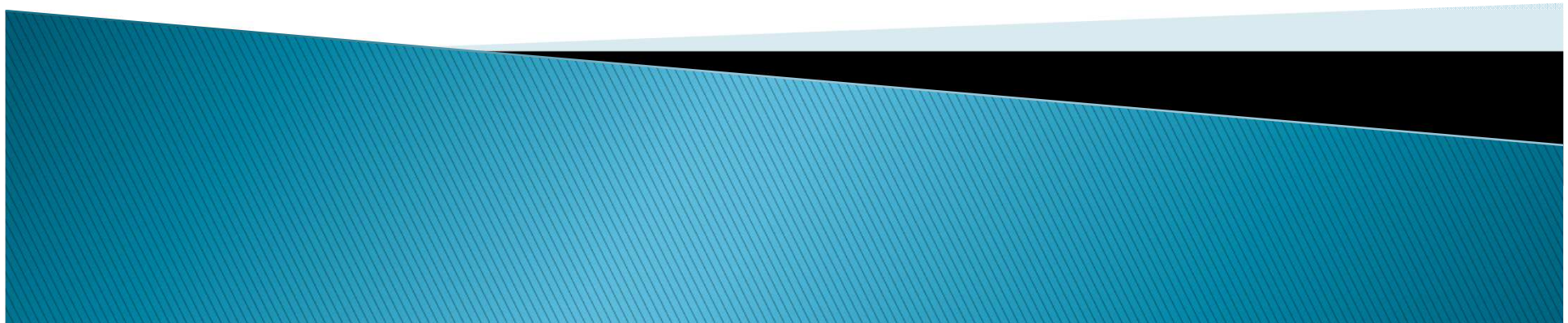


BSHI Higher Training Meeting 12/06/18



# FRCPath Exams – Structure & Tips

Natalia Diaz Burlinson



- Major changes to exam timing & structure from September 2017
  - To align exam timing with HSST course
  - To align exam content with other disciplines
  - To allow greater flexibility with Part 2 components
- Part 1 written paper once per year in Autumn
- Part 2 exam once per year in Spring
- Practical exam moved to Part 2
- Part 2 practical, written & oral components can be taken in any order

- PART 1: written exam
  - Application deadline usually June for September exam
    - 2018: 6<sup>th</sup> July deadline; Part 1 written: 25<sup>th</sup> September
  - 2 papers on same day, 3 hours each
  - First Paper: 2/3 Short Notes Questions & 2/3 Essay Questions
  - Second Paper: 20 Mandatory Short Answer Questions

- First Paper (3 hours):
  - 45 minutes max per question (including time to read questions/ proof read)
  - Each question equal weighting
  - Each section of short notes question equal weighting
  - Essay questions need structuring, not sufficient to write short notes
  - *Answer the question!* Eg. Compare and contrast

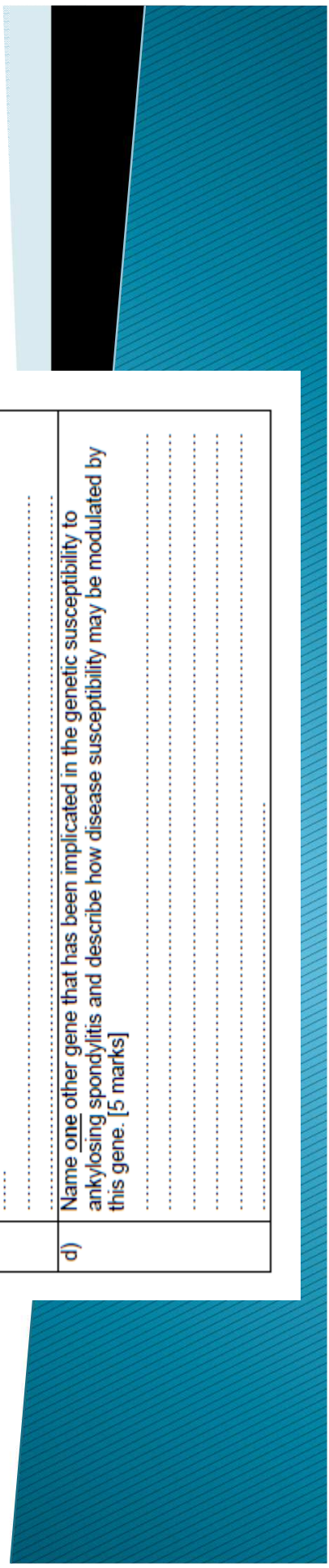
# Read the Question



- Second Paper (3 hours):
  - Short answer questions (SAQ)
  - 20 questions each worth 20 marks, all mandatory.
  - 9 minutes per question
  - Each question on same theme eg. Disease association, Renal Transplantation
  - Each question comprises multiple parts with marks available stated
  - Answers can be 1 word to couple of sentences, depending on marks awarded
  - Write answers in booklet provided, within the space provided
  - Tests breadth of knowledge
  - Sample questions available on RCPATH website
  - *No time to sit and ponder answer*

**Sample question 2**

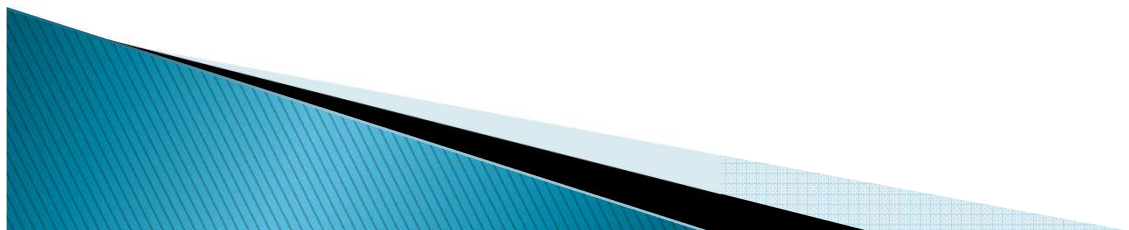
<p>a) Give a brief definition of ankylosing spondylitis. [3 marks]</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>b) Genetic susceptibility to ankylosing spondylitis (AS) is associated with the HLA-B*27 group of alleles. Name <u>two</u> B*27 alleles that are associated with AS and name <u>two</u> B*27 alleles that have either weak or no association. [4 marks]</p> <p><u>AS associated alleles:</u></p> <p>.....</p> <p><u>AS weak or no association alleles:</u></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>c) Briefly outline <u>two</u> hypotheses to explain the association between HLA-B27 and ankylosing spondylitis. [8 marks]</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>d) Name <u>one</u> other gene that has been implicated in the genetic susceptibility to ankylosing spondylitis and describe how disease susceptibility may be modulated by this gene. [5 marks]</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>



# Understanding the Marking System



- Paper 1: closed marking scheme
  - Excellent pass = 15/25 maximum!
  - Clear pass = 14/25
  - Pass = 13/25
  - Borderline fail = 12/25
  - Clear fail = 11/25
  - Bad fail = 10/25 minimum
- Candidates are advised to try and obtain an average mark of about 13 per answer
- Manage time across all four answers
- Give relevant, informative and balanced answers to each question attempted





# Understanding the Marking System



- Paper 2: Angoff scoring
- Examiners decide how many minimally qualified candidates would answer the question correctly
- Average of examiners' scores set as cut-off for pass rate
- Pass mark set against a standard, rather than relative to peers
- Example:
  - Question worth 20 marks
  - If minimally qualified candidate expected to answer 10 points' worth correctly, cut off score for this question would be 50%
  - Cut off scores for each question added to give overall cut off score for paper
  - Possible that a very good score in one question can compensate for low score (<10) in another. BUT, unlikely that low marks in more than one question can be sufficiently compensated elsewhere



- PART 2
  - 3 components: written, practical, oral
  - Written: PhD / Taught Doctorate / Casebook / HSST research project
  - Practical: paper-based as per Part 1
  - If practical taken at Part 1, Part 2 oral only available currently until 2020
  - Viva: 30 min prep of seen cases, 1 hour questions on seen & unseen cases
  - Practical and oral linked to one sitting
  - Components don't have to be taken in same year; recommend written at late stage before applying for oral to help preparation

# Tips for studying



- Make time for study (use tablet during downtime such as commute?)
- Self help groups / Facebook H&I Higher Training Study Forum
- Refresh basics (use BSHI Diploma notes / good up to date textbook)
- Review articles save a lot of time.
- Guidelines
- Keep concise revision notes
- Revise well, no question spotting!
- Practice writing timed essays without notes.
- Towards September, do a full past paper and write for 3 hours without stop
- Comfortable pen. Don't underestimate it! Try out various in advance
- Be honest with yourself & your knowledge gaps: which areas need more attention?
- HSST curriculum available to check knowledge against:

<https://curriculum.nshcs.org.uk/programmes/hsst>

# Tips for exam

- Use an essay plan
- Facts = points = pass
- Use diagrams / tables
- Flowing prose / waffle = no points = fail
- Don't go overboard on any "gift" questions
- Stay within time
- SAQ paper: consider number of marks available if answer doesn't jump to mind; move on & don't waste time

