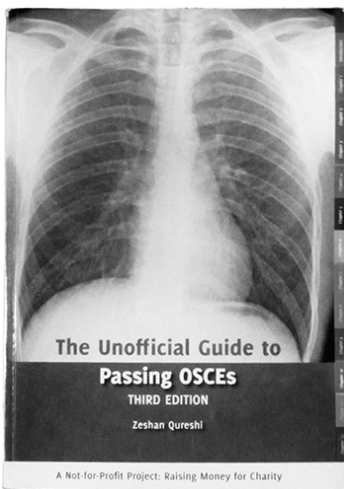


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Craig Riddell is a fifth year medical student currently praying he makes it through the last hurdles to receiving the TI grant. He is interested in medical education and healthcare systems.



The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs, Third edition

Editor: Zeshan Qureshi
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If the proof of the pudding is in the eating then surely the merit of a book titled *The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs* should be judged on how I do in short cases coming up in a week's time. In lieu of having that result I will tell you that this text is ideal if you are a second or third year student looking for a basic clinical examination guide that will last you throughout medical school. Oh, and did I mention that all proceeds from the book are donated to charity?

The Unofficial Guide goes far beyond medical examination in its scope, with chapters on history, examination, basic prescribing, and practical skills. The clinical scenarios provided are a mixture of physical examination and history-taking which cover all of the major medical, surgical, and orthopaedic examinations as well as some more bizarre choices (for

example, an acromegaly-specific examination?). There are also separate chapters on paediatrics, psychiatry and obstetrics and gynaecology, which are often missed by more medically-focused texts.

It is impossible to consider a clinical examination textbook without reference to Talley and O'Connor's *Clinical Examination*, which, now in its sixth edition, is still a goliath figure against which other textbooks struggle mightily. So how does the content stack up? In three words: shorter and sweeter. With the sheer volume of potential material available *The Unofficial Guide* has artfully stripped down each examination to its essential components. While some examinations and sections may focus on more low-yield OSCE areas, these extraneous sections can easily be skipped.

Being shorter (it's only 292 pages long) does not necessarily imply a dearth of information though. There are lots of clear photographs displaying spot-diagnosis signs and how to perform the more difficult techniques of each examination. Can't figure out if the clinical picture points to aortic regurgitation or stenosis? No worries, there are plentiful tables to help you interpret signs and select diagnoses based on your findings. I think that this is a book best bought in pre-clinical years and used to get your basic examinations flowing as it clearly lays out a systematic method to approaching patients requiring examination of each system.

In short, this book succeeds in its goal of being probably the best reference if your aim is simply to pass all of your OSCEs throughout medical school. If however you're looking for distinction then you might want to keep using your copy of Talley and O'Connor's in all its 460 pages of glory.

Editor's Note: Craig did indeed pass his fifth year examinations.