

My advice comes from my personal experience, I was very lucky and had incredible supports. Nonetheless I hope this will help some candidates

- Give yourself a week off after the written paper, then start practising vivas – this is a new skill and 2 months is not that much time to learn it
- Practise a lot – I drove one of my friends who had done the exam the year before to and from work and tried to do a viva on the way – this is clearly unique to my circumstances but illustrates a point
- A good viva should feel similar to explaining your anaesthetic plan to a supportive consultant – you convey your knowledge in a structured fashion, you are happy for them to interrupt, ask questions and redirect you.
- Find a way to talk about the topics you “sort of know” .
  - Some questions must be answered e.g.
    - *What is a normal fasting BSL?*
    - Answer: 4.0-5.5 mmol in an adult
  - Some questions you would be never expected to know, and you can just quickly say “I don’t know” e.g.
    - *What is insulin co-secreted with?*
    - Amylin
    - I was asked this
  - Some questions you will be able to answer partially (in fact the majority of marks may lie in such questions). The goal here is to get across as much you can, without stalling for a long time on small details you have forgotten.
    - *How is insulin secreted?*
    - Get across /signpost the main principle – “e.g. the main determinant is plasma glucose, increased plasma glucose leads to increased insulin secretion”
    - Fill in as much detail as you can “specifically, increased plasma glucose leads to increased beta-islet glucose via GLUT-2, this leads to increased ATP production which closes ATP sensitive potassium channels, which leads to cells depolarisation, calcium entry, release of preformed vesicles...” then pause to see if the examiners would like more
    - Be prepared to use qualifiers “I think”, “if I remember correctly”, “from first principle”
    - If you’ve forgotten GLUT-2 or any other part just skip it and get the rest across
- Signpost
  - E.g. Saying “in terms of the mechanism of insulin secretion” tells the examiner where you are heading and allows them to either nod or interrupt with “actually we do not need mechanism, tell us about exogenous insulin”
- Practise responding politely to examiner interruptions and redirections
  - Pause
  - If you accidentally talk over them say “sorry” and follow their next question
- Be prepared to ask questions to help direct you answers
  - E.g “would you like to hear other factors stimulating insulin release”
- Bring in remembered vivas or ask consultants in advance to bring in vivas they’ve asked before
- Talk about pieces of equipment you see every day

- Suction, scavenging, filters, self-inflating resus bags
- Plug some numbers into a TCI pump to see what it generates under different circumstances
  - Do this with air filled syringe not connected to a patient
- Practice saying and writing common formulas
  - It is easy to state LaPlace's and Fick's incorrectly
- The examiners are trying to help you answer the question