



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is FLS?

The FLS program is a comprehensive, web-based educational module and assessment tool designed to teach the fundamental knowledge, judgment and technical skills required in basic laparoscopic general surgery. The learning and application of these fundamentals will help ensure a minimum standard of care for all patients undergoing laparoscopic surgery. FLS consists of cognitive learning, hands-on skills training and a proctored exam that gives surgeons and surgeons-in-training the opportunity to assess and document their skills.

What can I purchase from FLS?

FLS packages can be structured to meet your needs. For pricing information or to purchase the online multimedia curriculum and test voucher please visit www.flsprogram.org to download an order form.

What is the FLS Trainer Box?

The FLS Trainer Box is a device for residents and practicing physicians to develop psychomotor skills and dexterity required during the performance of basic laparoscopic surgery. It is a portable unit that includes a set of accessories used to simulate specific surgical techniques. Please visit www.fls-products.com to purchase.

Do I have to buy the FLS Trainer Box?

No - a different trainer box or simulator may be used to practice the FLS tasks. However, because the FLS Exam is a standardized, high-stakes exam, you must take the FLS manual skills test on the FLS Trainer Box. Please visit www.fls-products.com to purchase.

What do I learn from the FLS curriculum?

FLS includes a multimedia presentation of didactic content and “watch & do” exercises that focuses on manual skills training. The content is available in a web-based format accessed online.

What is a testing voucher?

A testing voucher is the “admittance ticket” needed in order to take the FLS exam. Each voucher has a unique identification number and can be redeemed one time only. All test vouchers, including retest vouchers, have an expiration date printed on the upper right hand corner, and tests must be completed by this date. The initial test must be completed within 12 months of the voucher purchase. If the FLS test is not successfully completed, a “re-test” voucher may be purchased at a lesser price within 18 months of the original exam date.

What is the FLS Exam?

The exam includes two assessments: a computer-based multiple-choice cognitive assessment and a performance-based manual skills assessment consisting of five skills performed on the FLS Trainer Box. Those who successfully complete both components will have demonstrated the knowledge, judgment and technical skills fundamental to the performance of basic laparoscopic surgery.

What is covered in the FLS manual skills exam?

The manual skill assessment consists of the five simulation exercises reflecting skills uniquely required in laparoscopic surgery such as ambidexterity, depth perception, hand-eye coordination and controlled movement of instruments, and efficiency of movement. The task performance is scored on both efficiency (time) and precision (accuracy).

What is the cognitive assessment?

The cognitive assessment consists of multiple-choice questions, some of which include visuals and clinical scenarios. It is computer-based and designed to test the understanding and application of the basic fundamentals of laparoscopy with as much emphasis as possible on clinical judgment or intra-operative decision-making.

Who is eligible to take the FLS Exam?

Anyone is eligible to review the curriculum, but FLS certification is limited to medical residents, fellows, and practicing general surgeons, gynecologists, urologists, and surgical oncologists and other physicians.

I’m a practicing surgeon. Why would I need the FLS Program?

Many surgeons who were already in practice during the advent of the laparoscopic revolution learned basic information and skills that were still a work in progress. FLS will help to refresh those cognitive and technical skills and provides you with a way to document those skills.

How much time will it take to complete the FLS Exam?

You will have 90 minutes to complete the multiple-choice cognitive assessment. The manual skills assessment includes the five designated skills administered on the FLS Trainer Box and lasts approximately 30-45 minutes. Both are administered by a trained FLS proctor.

Where can I take the FLS exam?

You can take the exam at the Annual SAGES Meeting, at the ACS Clinical Congress or at a FLS Regional Test Center. Visit www.flsprogram.org to see a list of FLS Test Centers.

When will I receive my FLS exam scores?

Score reports will be emailed approximately three weeks after the testing date. For privacy reasons, scores will not be transmitted by telephone. Those who successfully complete both the educational and assessment components will also receive a certification of completion confirming that they have demonstrated the knowledge, judgment and technical skills fundamental to the performance of basic laparoscopic surgery.

Can I take the FLS exam again?

If you fail one or both parts of the assessment, you must retake whatever part was not completed successfully within 18 months of your original exam date, and there is a \$125.00 fee to retest. If one or both are still not passed after the first retake, then the participant must wait 6 months for the next retake (again, this must occur within 18 months of your original exam date). After three retakes, or 18 months, a new registration process is required and both assessments must be undertaken anew, even if one had been passed previously.

Does my certificate expire?

Effective 10/1/2012 FLS no longer issues certificates that are valid indefinitely; instead, all certificates are dated and individuals must be recertified every 10 years by successful completion of the entire test (both cognitive and skills components).

- For certificates issued on 10/1/2012 or later, recertification is required no later than ten years from the original certificate issue date, but recertification may be sought as early as seven years from the original certificate issue date.
- "Grandfathering" – For certificates issued prior to 10/1/2012, recertification must be completed by 10/1/2022 regardless of the original certificate issue date. Individuals may initiate the recertification process as early as seven years from the original certificate issue date (i.e. ten year time limit starts 10/1/2012).

Recertification – Individuals wanting to maintain FLS certification should purchase an FLS Individual Package or an FLS Educational Package at the full price. Testing scheduling and test administration procedure is the same for those seeking recertification as those taking the exam the very first time. Both test components must be completed with the same passing score as those taking the exam the very first time. Individuals who pass the exam will be issued a new certificate, with a new effective date. Individuals who allow their certificate to expire will be classified in the same category as those who never attempted the FLS test, and those who have attempted the test but have not achieved a passing score.

How do I purchase the FLS Program?

Download an Order Form by visiting www.flsprogram.org or call the SAGES office at 310.437.0544, ext. 137, and ask for one to be e-mailed to you. Complete the Order Form and return it with payment by check or credit card.