

March 2023 Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ) - Post Examination Report



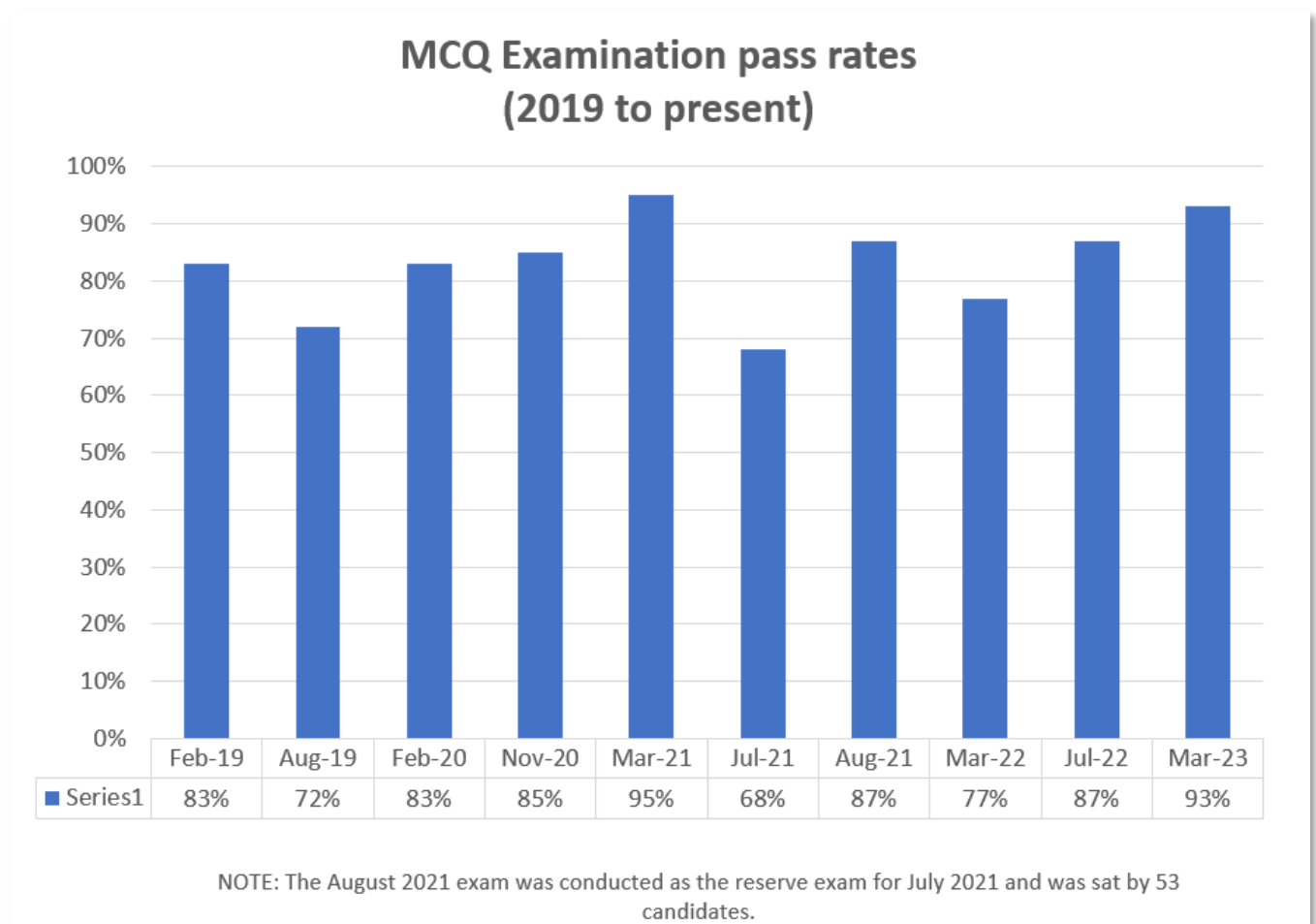
In March 2023, 229 candidates sat the MCQ Examination, the highest number of trainees over the last 15 years. The cohort had a 93% pass rate.

The Committee for Examinations (CFE) followed the established procedures to create this examination. Fellows across Australia and New Zealand contributed to the standard setting of every question and the final cut-score that was calculated.

The methods used by the CFE to establish the cut-score, are consistent with previous exam processes.

Table 1 below shows the pass rates over the last 5 years.

Table 1: MCQ Examination pass rates (2019 to present).



The exam content covered the foundational knowledge of the Stage 1 and 2 syllabus. The pass mark was set to the standard expected by the end of Stage 3 training. Candidates were provided performance feedback in identified curriculum areas.

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Table 2 shows a breakdown of exam content and the average percentage achieved for each question content.

Table 2: Average percentage of each question content.

Question content	Average percentage of marks achieved by cohort
Phenomenology	68%
Specific Disorders	68%
Leadership, governance & relevant legal frameworks	66%
Basic sciences/medical knowledge	65%
Ethics, History and Philosophy	63%
Assessment	62%
Psychology, philosophy and psychodynamic principles	61%
Treatments in Psychiatry	60%
Epidemiology, Diagnosis, Classification and public health	58%
Specific areas of practice	56%
Sociocultural awareness	55%

Analysis showed that areas of psychiatry where candidates performed well were in the fields of Phenomenology, Specific Disorders and Leadership, Governance and relevant legal frameworks.

Areas of psychiatry in which candidates are not as strong are Specific areas of Practice and Sociocultural awareness. It is recommended the cohort may benefit from more study in these areas.

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

MCQs cover foundational knowledge in psychiatry and can include areas of knowledge such as (but not limited to) neuroscience, pharmacotherapy, experimental design and critical analysis, history and philosophy of psychiatry, and principles of key psychotherapies.

The examination questions from the data bank are continuously reviewed for quality based on the item's performance.

The performance of questions in all exams varies, and members of the CFE review any MCQ items that show low performance. A post-examination review of such questions in the exam confirmed the quality and robustness of these questions, indicating that lack of knowledge may have contributed to poor candidate performance. Questions with a response pattern that was unexpected were individually reviewed and adjustments were made as determined by members of the CFE.

The Specific Areas of Practice were broken down into the categories of Addiction, Child and Adolescent, Consultation Liaison, Forensic and Old age. Analysis showed a strong knowledge in Addiction and Consultation Liaison.

The Specific Disorders covered in the exam were Anxiety (1 question), Impulse Control, Mood, Personality, Psychosis, Sleep, Substance Use Disorders and Trauma and stress-related and dissociative. Analysis showed strong knowledge of Substance Use Disorders and Trauma and stress-related and dissociative.

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Critical Analysis Problems (CAPs)

The Critical Analysis Problems presented to the cohort were drawn from articles about a narrative study and a systematic review and meta-analysis.

All CAP questions are categorized within Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the syllabus as covering basic sciences and medical knowledge.

The frequency distribution of responses across all questions within both CAPs showed that half of the questions proved challenging for the candidates resulting in a large cross section of responses. In contrast, the remaining questions were answered in a more focused manner.

The CFE would like to remind all candidates that the ability to read and interpret professional literature is regarded as a core skill of a psychiatrist. Candidates are expected to have knowledge of different types of research studies, controls, sources of bias, basic descriptive and analytic statistics, and reporting of findings. You can access a detailed guide to the knowledge that may be assessed in the CAP component on the College website: [RANZCP Guidelines for CAPs](#)

The CFE would like to remind candidates that, as the MCQ examination is predominantly a knowledge-based examination, it is important for candidates to ensure that they are up to date with basic sciences and medical knowledge.



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