

# September 2023 Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ) - Post Examination Report

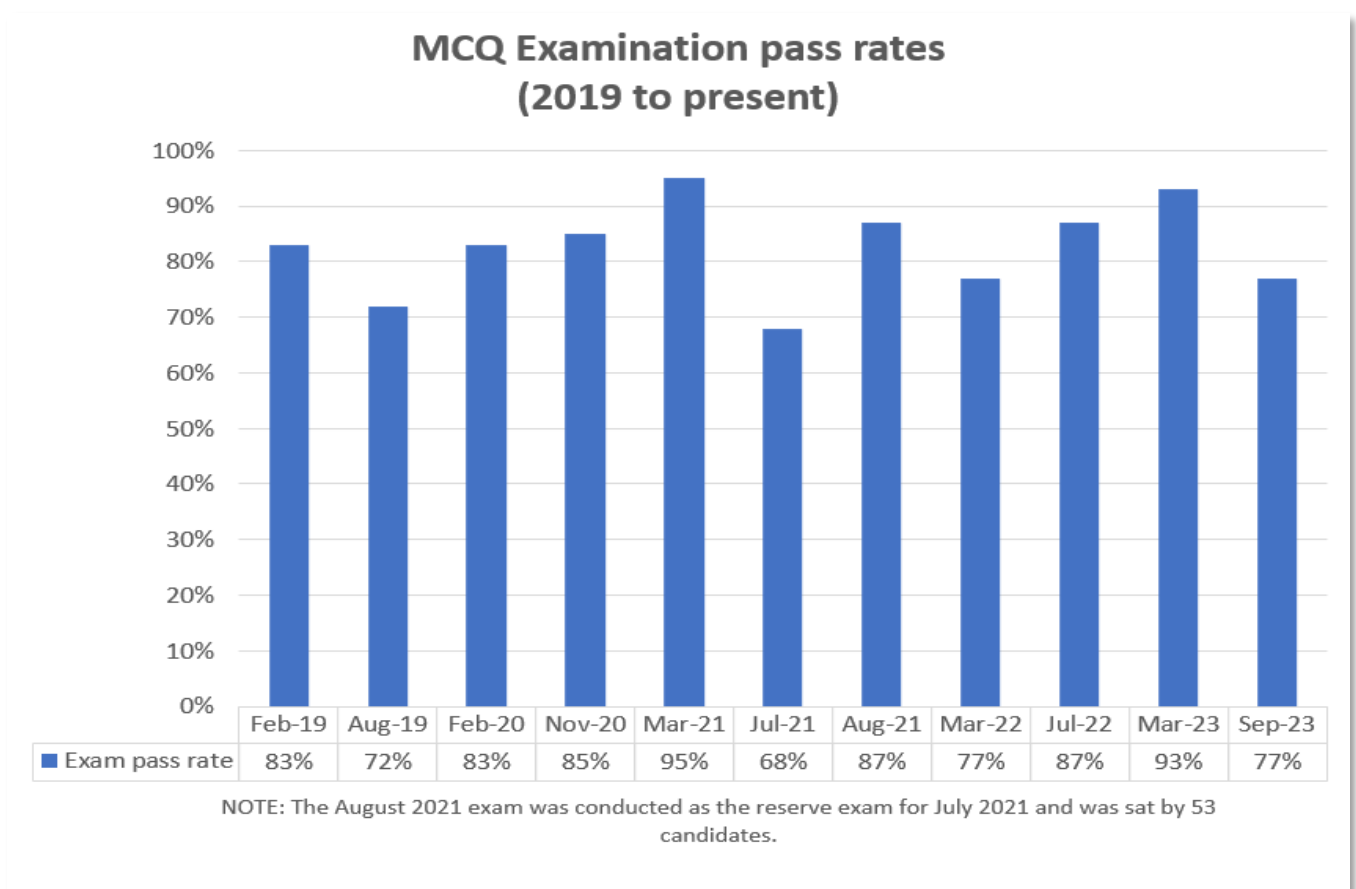


In the September MCQ Examination, 196 candidates took the test at twelve different Australian and New Zealand test centres. The pass rate for the September 2023 round stood at 77%.

The Committee for Examinations (CFE) adhered to established procedures in developing this examination. Fellows from Australia and New Zealand contributed to determining the standard for each question and establishing the final cut score. The methods employed by the CFE to set the cut score align with the processes used in previous examinations.

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
Assessment	65%
Phenomenology	63%
Basic sciences/medical knowledge	59%
Psychology, philosophy and psychodynamic principles	58%
Treatments in Psychiatry	57%
Specific areas of practice	57%
Specific Disorders	56%
Epidemiology, Diagnosis, Classification and public health	50%
Ethics, History and Philosophy	40%

The analysis reveals strong performance by candidates in areas of psychiatry such as Assessment, Phenomenology, and Basic Sciences/Medical Knowledge. However, candidates demonstrate comparatively weaker performance in the fields of Epidemiology and Ethics, History, and Philosophy within psychiatry.

## **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, Forensic and Old Age. Analysis showed a strong knowledge in Old Age and Addiction.

The Specific Disorders covered in the exam were Anxiety, Eating, Impulse Control, Mood, Organic, Personality, Psychosis, Sleep, Somatoform disorders and Substance use disorders.

Analysis showed strong knowledge of Psychosis, Substance Use disorders and Anxiety.

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## **Critical Analysis Problems (CAPs)**

The Critical Analysis Problems presented to the cohort were drawn from articles about research 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 majority of questions within both CAPs were answered in a focused manner with candidates showing confidence in the responses. Analysis on the overall results showed that the cohort performed equally well in both CAPs.

A small percentage of the cohort found a number of questions challenging as the frequency distribution of answers showed a varied cross section of responses.

The CFE emphasises to all candidates that the ability to read and interpret professional literature is considered a core skill for a psychiatrist. Candidates are expected to have knowledge of various types of research studies, controls, sources of bias, basic descriptive and analytic statistics, and the accurate 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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