

July 2021

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) - Post Examination Report



Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Examination

The government mandated lockdowns that occurred in New South Wales affected the scheduled delivery of the MCQ Examination on 30th July. The Committee for Examinations determined that it would be safer for candidates who live in New South Wales to sit the examination at a later date when restrictions and limitations on services have eased and travel between local government areas would be less restrictive. Hence this report will focus on the MCQ exam conducted on 30th July. A second report will be produced for the Reserve Paper Examination conducted on 27th August.

The Committee for Examinations followed 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 July 2021 MCQ Examination was sat by 162 candidates. A pass rate of 68% was achieved, which was lower than previous MCQ exams.

The Exam content covered the foundational knowledge within the Stage 1 and Stage 2 syllabus. The pass mark was set to the standard expected by end of Stage 3 training. Candidates were provided performance feedback in identified curriculum areas. These areas include Assessment, Basic Science/Medical Knowledge, Epidemiology, Diagnosis & Classification and Public Health, Ethics and History, Phenomenology, Psychiatry, Philosophy & Psychodynamic Principles, Specific Areas of Practice, Specific Disorders, and Treatments in Psychiatry.

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

Areas of psychiatry which candidates are not as strong in are Ethics, History and philosophy and Specific Disorders.

Critical Analysis Problems (CAPs)

The Critical Analysis Problems presented to the cohort were drawn from articles about a narrative study and a longitudinal study.

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

Cohort performance on the CAP questions overall was relatively strong. The most difficult questions required a deeper knowledge and ability to interpret subtle differences.

The CFE would like to remind all candidates that the ability to read and interpret the 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 CAP's](#)

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Extended Matching Questions (EMQ) / MCQs

EMQs 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 performance of question in all exams vary and any EMQs that the cohort find difficult are analysed by members of the CFE. Post-examination analyses of these questions in the exam revealed generally a lack of knowledge determining poor performance and reasonably robust question quality.

Looking at the average pass rate for each of the curriculum content used in the EMQs, Phenomenology, Psychology, Philosophy and Psychodynamic Principles, and Leadership, Governance and Relevant Legal Frameworks were areas that the cohort found less challenging.

The cohort may benefit from more study in areas relating to Sociocultural Awareness and Ethics, History and Philosophy.

The specific areas of practice were broken down to the categories of Child and Adolescent, Consultation Liaison (only 1 question), Forensic and Old Age. Analysis showed strong knowledge in Forensic and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Further analysis showed that trainees had a good grasp of Mood, Organic, Substance abuse disorders and Perinatal knowledge. This was evident in the performance of the Specific Disorders questions. This category included Disorders of Eating, Impulse control, Mood, Organic, Perinatal, Personality, Psychosis, Sexual, Sleep, Somatoform disorders, Substance use disorders, and Trauma & stress-related & dissociative.

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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Chair
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