



College of Intensive Care Medicine
of Australia and New Zealand
ABN: 16 134 292 103

NOTES TO CANDIDATES FOR THE FIRST PART EXAMINATION

Intensive Care Medicine covers a wide range of disciplines and candidates for this exam should carefully consult the examination syllabus available on the College website.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE EXAMINATION

The examination consists of two sections; written and oral. Some candidates may be exempted from the written section (e.g. carrying a previous pass in that section). The marking structure is as follows:

SECTION	MAXIMUM MARK (%)	PASS MARK (%)
<u>Written</u> 2 x 150-minute papers (<u>each PAPER</u> consists of): 10 x Short Answer Questions (SAQs) 50 x Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) Total Mark	40% 10% 50%	20% 5% 25%
<u>Oral</u> 8 x 10-minute examinable stations	50%	25%
TOTAL	100%	50%

To pass the examination, candidates must:

- (a) Achieve a mark of 45% in BOTH SAQ and MCQ sections (to be invited to the oral section),
- and
- (b) Achieve a total score (Written plus Oral section) of 50%.

Candidates are required to achieve a mark of at least 45% to be invited to attend the oral section. If a candidate is invited to the oral section under the 45% rule and are unsuccessful in the examination, they are required to re-sit the written section at their next attempt.

If a candidate achieves 50% in the written section and is unsuccessful at the oral section, they are permitted to carry this mark at the next two scheduled examinations. Failure at the third oral attempt will result in that candidate re-sitting the written section at their next attempt.

To best understand what is expected in the examination, candidates are encouraged to read previous examination reports available on the College website.

2. WRITTEN SECTION

There are two papers, each consisting of 10 short answer questions (SAQs) and 50 multiple choice questions (MCQs). The time allowed for each paper is 2.5 hours and this allows approximately ten minutes per SAQ and approximately 50 minutes for the 50 MCQs:

Morning and Afternoon papers	
Section	Time allocated
Reading Time (no writing)	10 minutes
Short Answer Questions (SAQ's)	10 x SAQ's (100 minutes)
Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ's)	50 x MCQ's (50 minutes)
Total Per Paper	160 minutes

2.1 Guidelines for answering the SAQs:

All answers must be written in the provided answer booklets and candidates are advised to carefully follow the instructions provided by the College and the invigilators at the examination venue.

In addition, candidates are advised:

- Apportion time carefully for all questions. SAQs with more than one part will have the marks apportioned;
- Write legibly. If Examiners cannot decipher what a candidate has written, no marks can be given;
- Use lists and diagrams to save time;
- Indicate units of measurement;
- Write using black or blue ink ballpoint pens only. Do NOT use highlighters, or other coloured ink pens;
- Explain abbreviations when first used within each question;
- Note form is acceptable.

2.2 Guidelines for answering the MCQs:

All answers must be completed on the prescribed Multiple-choice answer template. Candidates are advised to carefully follow the instructions printed on the answer template.

In addition, candidates are advised:

- Select ONE answer from four options. Do NOT select multiple answers for the same question; see example below:

The CICM office is based in which city?

- A. Adelaide
- B. Canberra
- C. Melbourne**
- D. Sydney

The correct answer is C. Melbourne.

- Use a 2B pencil only when completing the answer sheet provided. Do NOT use any ballpoint pens, felt tip pens, or highlighters;
- Erase any mistakes fully using an eraser;
- Do NOT fold or bend the answer sheet provided.

2.3 Examination venues

Candidates are advised to carefully read and adhere to the regional specific correspondence from the College when preparing to attend the written component.

Items permitted in the examination room:

- 2B pencils, erasers (no markings and/or labels);
- Black and/or blue ballpoint pens;
- Clear water bottle (no adhesive labels);
- Ear plugs;
- Non-programmable calculator;
- Pencil sharpener (no markings and/or labels);
- Rulers (no markings and/or labels).

Items NOT permitted in the examination room

- Food;
- Highlighters or coloured ink pens;
- Personal computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches and any other electronic equipment;
- Programmable calculators;
- Text books;
- Timers / clocks;
- Water bottles with adhesive labels.

3. ORAL SECTION: CROSS-TABLE VIVAS

Candidates are divided into cohorts to complete 8 individual stations of 10 minutes each. During the examination, candidates are allocated reading time of the introductory question(s) outside the station, before being able to enter the station. There are up to two examiners at each station with an additional observer who may be present.

Cross-table vivas	
Stage	Time allocated
A bell will sound to indicate the commencement of reading time	2 minutes
A second bell will sound to indicate it is time to enter the station	-
Interaction with Examiners inside the station	10 minutes
A bell will sound when it is time to move to the next station	-

No stoppage or changing of the rotation is allowed and candidates may not return to a station. All stations carry equal marks. The Examiner(s) at the station will assess the performance on a mark sheet according to pre-set criteria.

3.1 Rest periods

The viva section includes a series of mandatory rest periods to ensure both candidates and Examiners are provided with adequate breaks. During these breaks, candidates are NOT permitted to access any personal items.

3.2 Quarantine periods

To ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the examination process, candidates will be quarantined at the venue prior to and after the examination. The length of each quarantine period may vary for each cohort and are subject to change without notice.

3.3 Conduct

The College has an expectation that respect to Examiners, staff (including venue staff), other candidates and members of the public is shown at all times. This includes keeping noise levels down and adhering to examination conditions.

In addition, candidates are expected to be punctual and arrive at the venue as stipulated by the College. An individual candidate not adhering to the arrival time(s) will have an impact on all candidates and Examiners, leading to an increase in the length of quarantine periods and / or a delay in the release of results.

3.4 Examination venue

Candidates will be provided with secure lockers to leave personal items that will only be accessible after the examination and quarantine periods are completed. Candidates are not permitted to access the following items during the examination:

- Personal food and water bottles*;
- Personal computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches and any other electronic equipment;
- Programmable and non-programmable calculators;
- Text books;
- Timers / clocks;
- Writing material and stationery*.

*Refreshments (including food and water) and writing equipment will be provided to candidates by the College.

4. GENERAL

Each individual section is marked separately, and does not influence the marks in any other section. If a candidate is unhappy with a performance in one section, they are encouraged to move on and not let it detract from performing in subsequent sections. Candidates must **not** assume that a poor performance on a specific question or topic will result in failure of the entire section or examination. The marking system is rigorous. Each short answer question is marked by two Examiners, with the final mark being the average of the two.

5. RESULTS

Written results are sent to candidates via email and will not be given over the telephone. Final results are handed to candidates in a sealed envelope at the completion of the oral examination (times to be specified by College staff on the day). Candidates at the oral component are invited to meet the Court of Examiners for refreshments before receiving final results. Collection of final results is **not** mandatory and if candidates wish to make alternative arrangements this can be done by contacting the College **prior** to the oral examination.

The College does not send results via SMS nor can results be picked up by another candidate, Examiner, colleague or relative.

5.1 Breakdown of Results

Unsuccessful candidates are given a breakdown of their performance in each section of the examination. Feedback includes:

- A cover letter with an overview of the marking process;
- A breakdown of the questions which were passed and failed.

Candidates are advised to consult their Supervisor of Training or mentor with their feedback in conjunction with the examination report, to formulate an action plan for remedial training/learning. As there is a lot of information included, letters may take several weeks to collate and distribute,

6. EXAMINATION REPORT

A detailed report is compiled by the Examination Committee following the completion of the oral component of the examination. The report is made available on the College website. The report contains the following information for each section:

- **Written:** The actual SAQ, Examiner feedback and a summary of the key points required to answer the question. This is NOT an ideal answer template;
- **Vivas:** The introductory information given to the candidate prior to entering the station.

7. NUMBER OF EXAMINATION ATTEMPTS

As of 1st January 2013, candidates (including Overseas Trained Specialists) who present for either the written or oral component of a CICM examination may have a maximum of five attempts.

8. APPENDIX

Keywords that may appear in either the written and or oral sections of the examination:

- **Calculate:** Work out or estimate using mathematical principles
- **Classify:** Divide into categories; organize, arrange
- **Compare:** Examine similarities and differences
- **Define:** Give the precise meaning
- **Describe:** Give a detailed account of
- **Explain:** Make plain, interpret, and account for
- **Interpret:** Explain the meaning or significance
- **Outline:** Provide a summary of the important points
- **Relate:** Show a connection between
- **Understand:** Appreciate the details of; comprehend

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