



College of Intensive Care Medicine
of Australia and New Zealand
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NOTES TO CANDIDATES FOR THE FIRST PART EXAMINATION

This examination is a test of knowledge and understanding of the basic sciences applied to the clinical practice of Intensive Care Medicine. 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:

TOPIC	MAXIMUM MARK	PASS MARK
Written Section		
2 x 150 minute papers		
Short Answer Questions	40	20
Short Facts Questions	10	5
Total Mark	50	25
Oral Section	50	25
(8 x 10 minute examinable stations)		
TOTAL	100	50

Both the total mark and the mark in each section will be considered when determining a pass/fail decision. To pass the examination, candidates must:

- (a) Achieve a mark of at least 45% in the written section (to be invited to the oral section),
and
- (b) Achieve a total score of at least 50%.

Candidates are required to achieve a mark of at least 45% in order to be invited to attend the oral section. If a candidate is invited to the oral section under the 45% rule and are unsuccessful, 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.

This examination is not split into separate sections by subject. Questions from the entire syllabus are present in each written paper and in the oral section. Thus both written papers must be taken at the same sitting. If invited to the oral section, all stations must be attempted at the same sitting.

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 12 short answer questions (SAQ) and 20 short fact questions (SFQ). The time allowed for each paper is 2.5 hours and this allows approximately ten minutes per SAQ and approximately 30 minutes for the 20 SFQs.

The written section comprises 50% of the total mark: 40% is allocated to the SAQs and 10% to the SFQs.

Guidelines for answering the SAQs:

- Apportion time carefully for all questions. Note that SAQs with more than one part will have the marks apportioned
- Read the question carefully and answer the issues specifically
- Write legibly
- Plan the answer
- Use lists and diagrams to save time
- Indicate units of measurement
- Write using black or blue ink
- Explain abbreviations when first used within each question
- Important and relevant information gains marks
- Note form is acceptable

3. ORAL SECTION: CROSS-TABLE VIVAS

This includes Cross Table Vivas and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). There are 8 stations of 10 minutes each.

3.1 Objective

The objective of the oral section is to test the:

- knowledge of basic sciences;
- ability to apply these basic sciences to a clinical setting;
- ability to understand monitoring equipment used in a critical care environment.

3.2 Process of the oral section

Candidates are expected to arrive at the venue well before the scheduled commencement of the examination (as per College instructions). Candidates will encounter eight active tables with a series of 'rest' stations included. Two minutes are allocated to reading the introductory questions outside each oral, followed by 10 minutes in the station with the Examiners.

- A bell will sound allowing candidates to commence reading their first oral station;
- A second bell will sound when it is time to move inside the station;
- A bell will sound when it is time to move to the next station;
- There will be two examiners at each station. An additional observer may be present;
- Stations will include basic and more difficult questions to allow demonstration of an appropriate level of competence and understanding. Even if candidates are unable to answer all questions correctly, enough marks may have been gained to satisfactorily complete the viva.

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.

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 2 examiners, the final mark being the average of the two.

Calculators, personal computers, mobile phones and other electronic equipment may **not** be taken into any section of the examination.

5. RESULTS

Written results are sent to candidates via letter 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). 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.

Successful candidates are presented to the Court of Examiners following announcement of results.

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. FEEDBACK

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
- Discussion with a candidate's Supervisor of Training to facilitate the development of an action plan for remedial training/learning

Candidates are advised to consult their Supervisor of Training or mentor and use the feedback in conjunction with the examination report, to formulate an action plan for remedial training/learning.

Due to the specific and detailed information included in the feedback letters, they may take several weeks to create.

8. 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.

9. APPENDIX

Keywords:

- **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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