



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

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## CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EXAMINATIONS

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### PURPOSE

The College of Intensive Care Medicine (the College) recognises that unforeseen circumstances may occur during examinations and a certain degree of flexibility must be applied to accommodate these scenarios. The purpose of this guideline is to address the majority of issues and to provide a course of actions while maintaining the integrity of the examination process.

This document must be read in conjunction with Notes to Candidates and Instructions to Invigilator documents.

### SCOPE

These guidelines apply to First Part, Second Part (General) and Second Part (Paediatric) examinations.

Any incident must be recorded on the Examination Incident Form and must be submitted to the College as soon as possible.

### 1. WRITTEN EXAMINATION

#### 1.1 Failure of questions to arrive

If a question paper has not arrived within two working days before the date of the examination, the following action must be taken:

- 1.1.1 The local Organiser must advise the College that copies of the examination paper have not arrived at the examination centre.
- 1.1.2 An investigation as to the status of the missing papers will be undertaken by the College.
- 1.1.3 If there are concerns that candidates may have access to the missing papers, it may be necessary to reset the questions for the whole examination.
- 1.1.4 If there are no such concerns, then replacement question papers must be urgently despatched or emailed to the Organiser under strict security.
- 1.1.5 If appropriate email facilities are unavailable, the paper shall be scanned and faxed to the Organiser under strict security. When accuracy has been verified, the appropriate number of copies will then be made including one to be returned to the College with the answer papers. Normal security precautions apply to these copies.

## 1.2 Failure of answers to arrive

If the candidates' examination answers from any one centre have not arrived at the College by three working days after the date of the examination, the processing of the rest of the candidates should not be delayed. Although all measures will be taken to maintain the fairness of the exam in question, there may be a delay in releasing the results to the affected candidates.

- 1.2.1 In the event of the loss of a single answer script for one question from one candidate, the candidate shall be granted the mean score of the candidate's other Multichoice questions (MCQ) or Short Answer Questions (SAQ) marks.
- 1.2.2 In the event of the loss of more than one answer, the Chair must consult the Chair of the Assessments Committee to determine a suitable course of action. This may include assessing the candidate only on the available questions.

## 1.3 Failure of candidates to arrive

If a candidate fails to arrive at the time and date scheduled for the commencement of the written section due to circumstances (other than illness) beyond his/her control, the following action may be taken:

- 1.3.1 The candidate may only be admitted if the delay is less than **fifteen (15) minutes** after the scheduled start time **AND** any arrangements to admit the late candidate neither disadvantage nor advantage the other candidates sitting.
- 1.3.2 A candidate starting after the scheduled start time is permitted a corresponding extension of the time limit for completion of the paper up to a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes.

## 2. CLINICAL SECTION ("HOT CASE ENCOUNTER") – Oral examination (Second Part only)

### 2.1 Timetable changes

As the clinical section of the Second Part oral examination occurs in functioning intensive care units, the needs of the patient, family members and hospital staff come before the delivery of the examination. Each candidate must receive the prescribed amount of time for each hot case encounter, however a certain degree of flexibility will allow for unforeseen events. This may include adjusting the schedule.

### 2.2 Absence of a candidate

In the event of a candidate's absence at the time and date scheduled for the commencement of a hot case encounter, the following action(s) may be taken:

- 2.2.1 The start may be delayed until all required parties are present. This may also result in a change to the schedule to accommodate the candidate. If the candidate can be located within **5 minutes** after the scheduled start time, the Chair can delay the start of the session to accommodate the individual candidate.
- 2.2.2 In the event of the candidate being incapacitated momentarily, the hot case encounter may be rescheduled to a later time the same day at the discretion of the lead examiner.

## **2.3 Absence of examiners**

In the event that an examiner is absent at the time and date scheduled for the commencement of a hot case encounter, the following action(s) may be taken:

- 2.3.1 The encounter may be delayed until all required parties are present.
- 2.3.2 If, prior to starting, an examiner is incapacitated, a back-up examiner may step into the role and the hot case encounter may start as scheduled.
- 2.3.3 If an examiner is unable to complete a hot case encounter once the encounter has commenced, a back-up examiner may step into the role and the hot case encounter may continue. Any delays attributed to this can be compensated for additional time.
- 2.3.4 If there are concerns the hot case encounter has been compromised and it is unfair to the candidate, the hot case encounter may be rescheduled to another time on the same day.

## **2.4 Patient suitability**

The Second Part examination relies on the assistance of actual patients to conduct the examination so it is difficult to account for unforeseen circumstances. In the event that a patient is no longer suitable for examination, the following action(s) may be taken:

- 2.4.1 If the patient is deemed to be unsuitable prior to the beginning of the encounter, the candidate may be directed to a different patient at the discretion of the lead examiner.
- 2.4.2 If using another patient is not feasible, the hot case encounter may be rescheduled to another time on the same day.
- 2.4.3 If the hot case encounter has been going for 50% of the allocated time and then the patient is no longer suitable to be examined, the examining team may consult with the lead examiner and decide if they can continue. Any delays attributed to this can be compensated with additional time.
- 2.4.4 If there are concerns that the hot case encounter has been compromised and it is unfair to the candidate, the hot case encounter may be rescheduled to another time on the same day.

## **3. VIVAS – Oral examination (All examination types)**

### **3.1 Timetable changes**

As the vivas are time sensitive, there is minimal flexibility that can be applied to the schedule. Any actions to delay the start of a viva or the overall flow can have unfair consequences on the entire cohort and should be avoided.

### **3.2 Absence of a candidate**

In the event a candidate is absent at the time and date scheduled for the commencement of a viva session, the following action(s) may be taken:

- 3.2.1 If the candidate is missing before the start of a viva session, the start cannot be excessively delayed. If the candidate can be located within **5 minutes** after the

scheduled start time, the Chair can delay the start of the session pending the arrival of the candidate in question.

- 3.2.2 If the delay is longer than 5 minutes, the Chair may start the viva session to ensure the entire cohort is not disadvantaged and the overall schedule is not compromised.
- 3.2.3 If an individual candidate is not present for the start of his/her allocated viva session, he/she will have to start at the viva station corresponding to the schedule. The candidate may then complete the missed station(s) at the end of the session or be re-scheduled to a later cohort at the discretion of the Chair. If this is not feasible, the candidate may be required to attend a future examination.
- 3.2.4 In the event of a candidate being incapacitated once the vivas have started, the Chair may use discretion and allow the candidate to move to a later cohort if feasible. Any marks accrued up until this point will be recorded and cannot be changed. If this is not feasible, the candidate may be required to attend a future examination.

### **3.3 Absence of examiners**

In the event that an examiner is absent at the time and date scheduled for the commencement of a viva session, the following action may be taken:

- 3.3.1 The Chair may choose to delay the start of the entire cohort.
- 3.3.2 If the delay is longer than 5 minutes, the Chair may appoint a back-up examiner to fill the vacancy.
- 3.3.3 In the event a back-up is not available, the Chair or Deputy Chair may step in to conduct the viva.
- 3.3.4 If the viva originally had two examiners present and there are no additional examiners to fill in, the viva may be conducted by the remaining examiner.
- 3.3.5 If there are no additional examiners immediately available, the viva in question may be rescheduled for affected candidates.

## **4. UNFORESEEN DISRUPTIONS TO EXAMINATION CONDITIONS**

Disruptions are events that are outside of the College's control, which may interrupt and adversely affect a candidate's performance immediately before, or during, an examination. Organisers are to be aware that perceived disruptions will be subjective at the time of the examination.

### **4.1 Temporary disruptions**

In the event of a minor disruption, the following action may be taken:

- 4.1.1 If the disruption is localised to a single candidate and not affecting the entire candidate cohort, the examination can continue.
- 4.1.2 At the discretion of the Chair, the affected candidate may be compensated for the disruption, and this may result in the granting of additional time, awarding of marks or rescheduling.

## 4.2 Major disruptions

In the event of a major disruption, including an evacuation of the examination venue, the following action may be taken:

- 4.2.1 All examiners, candidates and staff are required to adhere to the individual venue's evacuation policies and procedures.
- 4.2.2 In the event that examiners and candidates are required to evacuate the venue, the examination may be paused until the extent of the issue has been identified and resolved. Any marks accrued up until this point will be recorded and may be taken into consideration.
- 4.2.3 If the disruption cannot be rectified in a timely manner, the examination may be cancelled, and appropriate alternative arrangements will be made which may include rescheduling that section of the examination. Any marks accrued up until this point will be recorded and may be taken into consideration for future attempts.
- 4.2.4 Any alternative arrangements must not disadvantage or advantage candidates and must be equitable for the entire cohort.

## 4.3 Technical faults

In the event of a technical fault that hinders the delivery of the examination, the following action may be taken:

- 4.3.1 If the fault is localised to a single candidate and not affecting the entire candidate cohort, the examination can continue.
- 4.3.2 At the discretion of the Chair, the affected candidate may be compensated for the disruption and this may result in granting additional time, awarding of marks or rescheduling that particular encounter to another mutually convenient time on that day.
- 4.3.3 If the fault can be rectified in a timely manner, the examination may be paused until the extent of the issue has been identified and resolved. Any marks accrued up until this point will be recorded and may be taken into consideration.
- 4.3.4 If the fault cannot be rectified in a timely manner, the examination may be cancelled, and appropriate alternative arrangements will be made which may include rescheduling that section of the examination. Any marks accrued up until this point will be recorded and may be taken into consideration for future attempts.

### References and sources

Not applicable

### Acknowledgments

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| 2019 | Updated to have 15 minute allowance if late to written or viva examinations, disruptions are subjective. |
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### **Further Reading**

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Notes to the Candidates  
Instructions to Invigilator

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### **Publishing Statement**

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Published by CICM: December 2019. This Professional document has been prepared with regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case. The College's Professional Documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure the current version has been obtained.

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