



The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

The Modified Essay Question Exam

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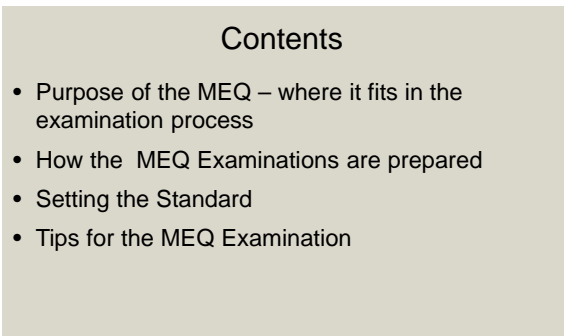


The Modified Essay Question Exam



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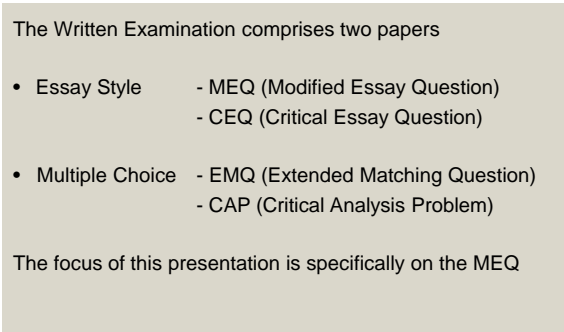
The Written Examination



The Written Examination comprises two papers

- Essay Style - MEQ (Modified Essay Question)
- CEQ (Critical Essay Question)
- Multiple Choice - EMQ (Extended Matching Question)
- CAP (Critical Analysis Problem)

The focus of this presentation is specifically on the MEQ



Purpose of the MEQ Exam



“The written examinations assess a candidate’s knowledge of the theoretical and scientific underpinnings of psychiatry, critical thinking relevant to psychiatry, and clinical and ethical issues in psychiatry.”

“The MEQ will have a clinical focus and will assess capacity for critical thinking about clinical practice and the application of clinical knowledge, as well as the capacity for critical thinking about issues relevant to the practice of psychiatry including sociocultural, models of illness, ethical and complex service issues.”

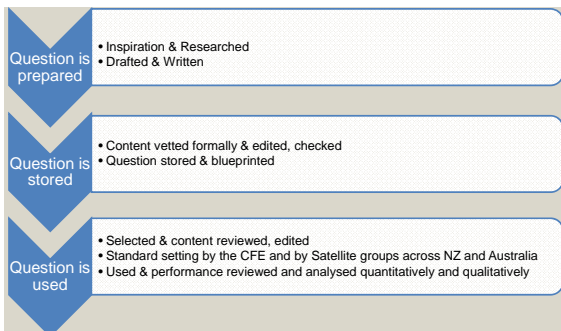
Quotes from College website

Purpose of the MEQ Exam

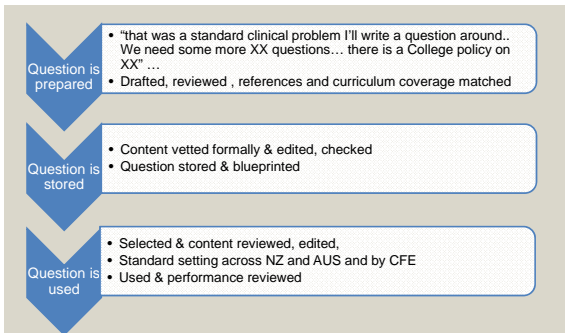


- Assessment of clinical competence and problem solving.
- Understanding and describing the management of complex but common psychiatric situations – high face validity.
- Capacity to think broadly and include bio psycho social aspects in assessment and treatment planning
- Requires some clinical maturity.

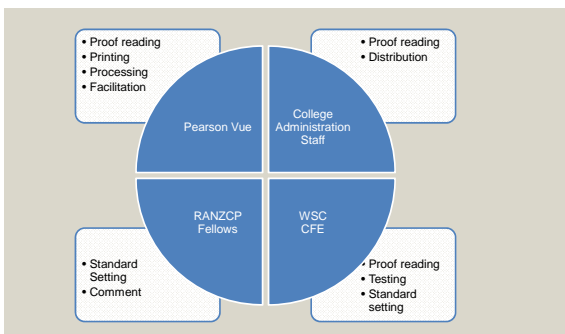
The Life of an MEQ Question



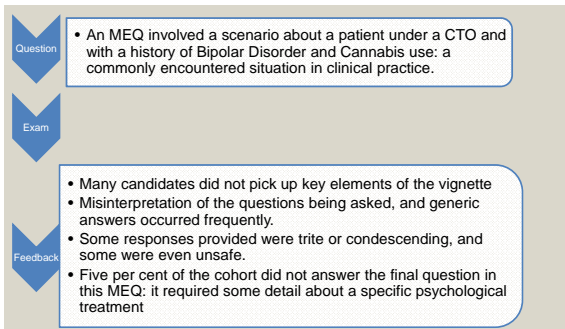
Example



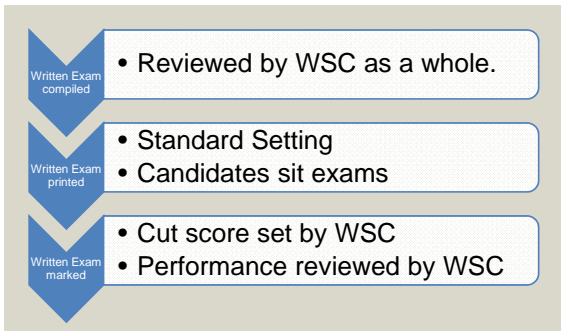
MEQ Exam Printed



From Feedback on Previously Sat MEQ



The Life of an MEQ Exam



The Modified Essay Question Exam



Setting the Standard

How does the CFE set the pass marks



- There is no predetermined pass mark.
- There is no predetermined pass %
- Every question is standard set by active clinical psychiatrists from across Australia and New Zealand.
- The modified Ebel Method is used for standard setting.

The Standard Setting Problem



Candidate is . . .

	Competent	Incompetent
Pass		
Fail		

Test Result is . . .

Standard Setting for MEQ



- Based on the difficulty of the question, each member of the standard setting group estimates a mark that a “minimally competent junior psychiatrist” should obtain.
- This is followed by discussion within the group, especially if there are outliers.
- A consensus mark is reached for that question after discussion.
- The same process follows for each MEQ question

Standard Setting for CEQ



- Similar to the MEQ
- Here the panel members estimate a score of (0 to 5) that a minimally competent junior psychiatrist should obtain for each domain of the CEQ
- The weighted score for each domain is then calculated to reach the cut score for the CEQ.

Standard Setting for MCQ



- Slightly different as candidates are expected to give one correct answer
- The panel members assess the relevance of each item, as to whether it is essential, important or desirable knowledge.
- Next they assess the difficulty of each question and estimate the proportion of minimally competent candidates who would answer the item correctly
- The initial estimates are followed by discussion
- A final consensus regarding the relevance and difficulty of the item is then reached.

The 2012 Candidate for College Fellowship



See Fellowship Competencies, Outcomes and Descriptors 2012

Themes from the Developmental descriptors end of stage 3: detailed, focussed, sophisticated, context related, thoughtful, comprehensive, complex, safe practice

In addition: experienced, anticipates problems and plans, critical and reflective practice, adaptive, able to prioritise, tailored management with developmental overview, ethical and professional practice, including scope of practice

The 2012 minimally competent candidate for College membership



Psychiatrists perform comprehensive, culturally appropriate psychiatric assessments with patients of all ages. Fundamental to the practice of psychiatry is the ability to perform and report thorough mental state examinations, integrating all available information to accurately formulate and diagnose patient conditions, subsequently providing an evidence-based bio-psychosociocultural management plan, mindful of the impacts of patients' physical health. Demonstrable skills in psychotherapeutic, pharmacological, biological and sociocultural interventions are requisite. Psychiatrists define and review patient outcomes, revising management as appropriate based on this review, and are committed to early intervention and recovery. Medical expertise is supported by the application of contemporary research, psychiatric research and treatment guidelines, as well as the application of mental health and related legislation in patient care.

Some Examples



Check the website and do every one you can

Outline (list and justify) what information you require to assess John's presenting problems. (12 marks)



John is a 12-year-old who was diagnosed 2 years ago with ADHD combined type. You are the psychiatrist at a community child and adolescent clinic.
John's mother tells you that he seems to be washing his hands a lot and he also wants the rest of the family to do the same. When they do not do what he wants, he becomes very angry and there is significant stress and tension in the household.

Scoring Key



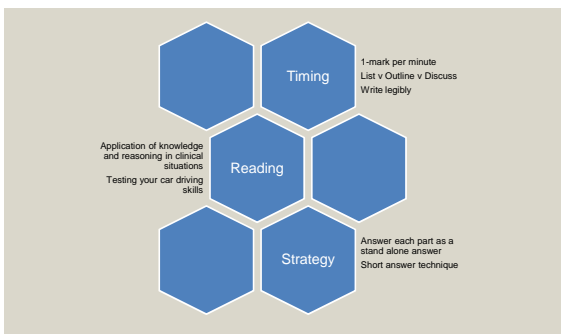
- A. Confirm diagnosis of an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4 marks)
- B. Review ADHD (4 marks)
- C. Recent stressors and precipitants (2 marks)
- D. Risks (1 mark)
- E. John's mental state examination (2 marks)
- F. Family systemic observations (1 mark)

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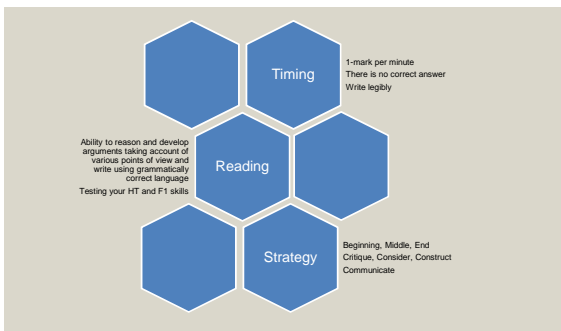


- How do the different exams fit into an Educational Process
- Where does the MEQ fit

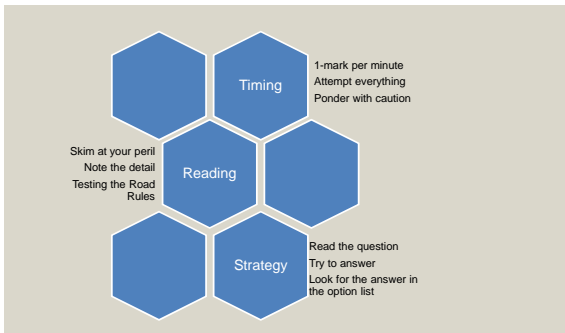
Modified Essay Questions



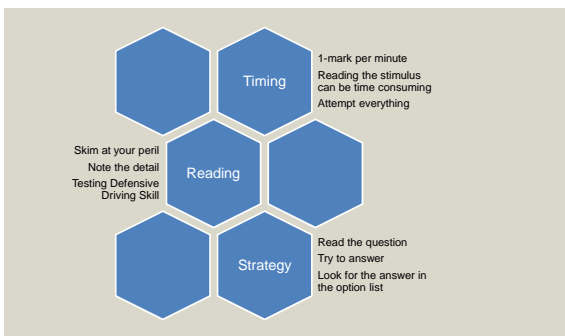
Critical Essay Question



Extended Matching Question eg:



Critical Analysis Problem



Tips from Experts



- Read the feedback about the written exams on the College website. Read it again.
- Write down the tips. Why?
- There are common themes in the feedback.
- Use common sense.
- Do not rewrite the question – there will be no marks for that.
- Do not tell us you will be “empathetic” – it should go without saying. You will not get marks for that and it will never be on the Scoring Key.

Tips from Experts



- Read and understand the instructions
- Answer the question
- Always include bio psycho social aspects in assessment and management.
- Write legibly
- Try to stick to the time frames - if a question says 9 marks then it implies 9 minutes to answer – even if you finish that in 2 then think about what you have left out
- Don't answer generically. The questions are about a particular scenario.

Tips from Experts



- The question will define “list”, “outline,” “describe” etc.
- Where details and/or justification are required, marks will not be awarded for topic headings without elaboration (lists).
- Spend time in clinical services where you will be exposed to a wide variety of cases/scenarios.
- Make sure that your supervision is about thinking like a psychiatrist, not like a trainee.

Tips from Experts



- Bullet points may be used; however, candidates should ensure they include the justification required to effectively answer the question where required.
- Irrelevant information, even if correct, will not score marks.
- Candidates should endeavour to present concise and well-structured answers including justification for their responses.
- Candidates are advised to draw on their clinical experience when answering questions.
- Make sure you are challenged.
