

Education Training Policy and Procedure

Essay Examinations (MEQ and CEQ)



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Responsible Committee/ Department:	Education Committee
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Replacement policy effective August 2021 examinations

This policy replaces the previous Writtens Examinations policy, effective from the August 2021 examination onwards.

In response to the recommendation from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the previous Essay-style examination has now been decoupled and split into two independent examinations – Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination and the Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination. This policy on 'Essay examinations' makes reference to the two decoupled essay examinations – MEQ and CEQ. Please note these two exams are delivered as completely independent exams.

The Multiple-Choice Questions Examination policy is covered in a separate policy.

The policy will continue to be reviewed as the two independent examinations are implemented and processes evolve further.

The previous Writtens Examinations policy will remain valid and applicable for issues pertaining to the combined Essay-style Examination.

Contents

1. Policy and procedure on the essay examinations

This document sets out the requirements of the essay examinations, which trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) who have been assessed as partially comparable must successfully complete in order to be eligible for Fellowship. Throughout this policy, trainees and partially comparable SIMG candidates are together referred to as 'applicants' except where specific distinction is required.

2. Policy statement

The essay examinations together assess an applicant's knowledge of the theoretical and scientific underpinnings of psychiatry, critical thinking relevant to psychiatry, and clinical and ethical issues in psychiatry.

3. Purpose

The essay examinations are mandatory summative assessment components of the RANZCP Fellowship Program. This document sets out the requirements for their successful completion.

4. Policy and procedure details

4.1 Requirements and composition of the essay examinations

The RANZCP Fellowship Program requires the successful completion of two independent essay examinations: the Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination and the Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination.

4.1.1 Standard

The standard of performance required for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations is the demonstration of theoretical and applied knowledge level expected at the end of Stage 3. As per the definitions, the standard expected at the end of Stage 3 refers to a recently qualified Fellow of the RANZCP.

4.1.2 Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination

The Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination comprises clinical scenarios which have a clinical focus and will assess capacity for critical thinking about clinical practice and the application of clinical knowledge.

The examination is 150 minutes in duration, including reading time. The total marks allocated to MEQ Examination are 125.

This examination is currently offered as a paper-based test (only). All applicants will be required to undertake this examination at approved locations.

Table 1: Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination - 150 minutes

Examination Type	No. of Questions	Marks per Question	Total Marks
Modified Essay Questions (MEQs)	4-6	Up to 38 marks each	125 marks
Total			125 marks

4.1.3 Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination

The Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination comprises one essay question that tests the capacity for critical thinking about issues relevant to the practice of psychiatry including sociocultural, models of illness, ethical and complex service issues. The CEQ Examination is 50 minutes in duration, including reading time. The total marks allocated to CEQ are 40.

This examination is currently offered as a paper-based test (only). All applicants will be required to undertake this examination at approved locations.

Table 2: Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination - 50 minutes

Examination Type	No. of Questions	Marks per Question	Total Marks
Critical Essay Question (CEQs)	1	40 marks	40 marks
Total			40 marks

4.2 Applicant eligibility for the essay examinations

In order to undertake the MEQ and CEQ Examinations, applicants must be registered as RANZCP trainees or as SIMG candidates.

Additionally, all applicants must have current, valid registration as a medical practitioner in Australia or New Zealand when applying for and when sitting the examination (Applicants must also have current medical registration at the time of the result release date for their results to be released.)

Successful completion of either the Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) Examination or the CEQ Examination is not an eligibility requirement for sitting the Modified Essay Question (MEQ) Examination.

Further, successful completion of either the Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) Examination or the MEQ Examination is not an eligibility requirement for sitting the Critical Essay Question (CEQ) Examination.

Submitting an examination application does not grant an applicant automatic eligibility to sit the examination. The requirements for eligibility must be fulfilled in order for a place to be granted. Applicants must be familiar with the [Examination Cancellation and Refund Schedule](#), particularly the refund cut-off dates.

4.2.1 SIMG candidate eligibility to apply for and sit the essay examinations

SIMG candidates assessed as partially comparable must have current comparability status with the RANZCP at the time of the application closing date to be eligible to apply for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations. The comparability status must cover the examination period including the time required for declaration of results (the scheduled release date can be found on the relevant MEQ and CEQ Application Forms).

4.2.2 Trainee eligibility for the essay examinations

Trainees are eligible to apply for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations once they have successfully completed 18 months of FTE training, including 6 months FTE in Stage 2, as demonstrated by their RANZCP Training Record. Applications will not be accepted before 6 months of FTE training in Stage 2 has been accredited to the trainee's Training Record.

Trainees are eligible to apply for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations while on an approved break in training. A trainee who has interrupted their training but is not on an approved break in training (i.e. is accruing not-in-training time) is not eligible to apply for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations.

Trainees required to submit a Training Review application for the CEQ or MEQ Examinations are not eligible to apply for further attempts at the CEQ or MEQ Examinations unless a Training Review outcome is received and provides the trainee with further attempts or time to complete the CEQ or MEQ Examinations.

4.3 Applying for the essay examinations

To apply to sit an essay examination (either MEQ or CEQ), All examination applicants must complete and submit the prescribed Examination Application Form for the relevant examination. There will be a separate examination application and fee for each examination; however, applicants can apply for both examinations in the same round.

A new application must be submitted for each attempt at an essay examinations. There is no automatic enrolment of applicants (i.e., applicants are not automatically enrolled in the next examination round if they failed or withdrew from a previous round, or if they are nearing the deadline for successful completion as per the [Progression through Training Policy \(6.1\)](#).

4.3.1 The application

The CEQ Examination and MEQ Examination Application Forms must be submitted by the Application Closing Date as per the [Examination Timetable](#) published on the RANZCP

website. A submitted online application must include the following items:

- a) an electronic version (PDF) of the applicant's current medical registration certificate or annual practising certificate
 - Applicants must have current, valid registration at the time of application and of sitting the examination. Applications will remain "pending" without a current medical registration certificate.
 - If an applicant's medical registration expires before the examination period, they must submit a copy of their current medical registration and then forward their new medical registration once received.
- b) a passport style photograph of the applicant taken within the last 12 months must be present on the applicant's InTrain profile or uploaded at the point of application if no photograph is present on their InTrain profile.
- c) the prescribed examination fee in full
 - Full funds for the CEQ and MEQ Examinations must be available on the application closing date until the funds are deducted. Fees will be deducted within 10 working days of receipt of 'Registered' or 'Paid' applications.
 - The deduction of funds does not guarantee a place in the examination. Applicants not granted a place in the examination will be provided a full refund. However, Applicants who withdraw or who become ineligible to sit the CEQ and MEQ Examinations after applying for the examination will be refunded in accordance with the Cancellation and Refund Schedule.
- d) any special consideration requests and the required documentation (where relevant)
- e) signed [Commencement of Targeted Learning Form](#) (if required – note this form can be provided by the 50 per cent refund date).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to be familiar with the [current Cancellation and Refund Schedule](#), which states the relevant application closing date and refund deadline for each examination.

Applications should be submitted online via email to assesshelp@ranzcp.org by 5.00 pm AEST/AEDT on the date the applications close.

4.3.2 Trainee applications related to targeted learning

Trainees who are undertaking or have undertaken targeted learning relevant to the MEQ, CEQ Examination or the previously combined Essay-Style Examination must comply with the [Targeted Learning Policy and Procedure \(6.2\)](#). A brief reference to the requirements follows; however, applicants are responsible for being aware of all requirements of the Targeted Learning Policy and Procedure.

Targeted learning must be specific to an identified examination; separate targeted learning plans would be required for the MEQ Examination and the CEQ Examination.

A targeted learning plan should be reviewed by the trainee, DOT and supervisor (where relevant) prior to the trainee attempting or re-attempting the relevant essay examination.

A trainee who is required to undertake progression-based targeted learning (for not passing the MEQ, CEQ or the previously combined Essay-Style Examination by the targeted learning deadline on the Trainee Progress Trajectory) remains eligible to attempt the relevant essay examination.

A trainee who is required to undertake assessment-based targeted learning (for two failures of the MEQ Examination, CEQ Examination or two failures of the previously combined Essay-

style Examination) will be eligible to re-attempt the relevant essay examination (that is, MEQ or CEQ) once they submit the [Commencement of Targeted Learning Form](#) to the RANZCP Training Department. If a trainee applies to sit the examination prior to submission of the Commencement of Targeted Learning Form, their enrolment will be pending until they submit this form or until the 50 per cent refund date stated on the Examination Timetable, whichever is earlier. A trainee will not be allotted a time slot and allocation for the relevant examination if the RANZCP does not have notification that the trainee has commenced targeted learning by the 50 per cent refund date. A trainee will not be eligible for the relevant examination if this process is not completed by the required date.

Trainees who are not registered with a training zone cannot commence or complete Targeted Learning Plan. Trainees must be in a training zone in order to commence or complete a Targeted Learning Plan.

4.3.3 Applications for special consideration

Applicants requesting special consideration for either the MEQ or CEQ examinations must apply in writing to the Committee for Examinations (CFE) for approval, in accordance with the [Special Considerations Policy \(18.2\)](#).

Requests for special consideration must accompany an applicant's MEQ or CEQ Examination Application Form, unless exceptional circumstances apply (such as the applicant experiencing a significant change in personal circumstances or medical condition(s) that occur after the examination Application Close Date). Requests for special consideration received after the application closing date may not be accommodated.

A separate application for special consideration must be submitted for each examination and for each reattempt (if any). However, applicants are only required to resubmit the supporting documentation if there is a change in circumstances.

4.4 Confirmation

4.4.1 Confirmation of receipt of application

Applicants will receive on their InTrain dashboard, a 'Submitted' status beside their lodged application indicating the application has been received by the RANZCP. The 'Submitted' status of an application does not confirm that the applicant is eligible for or has been granted a place at the examination.

Should an issue arise with an application, examination staff will return the online application to the Trainees via Intrain along with an alert instructing the applicants on what needs to be resolved before the applicant can resubmit the application.

Once examination staff approve the 'Submitted' application, applicants will receive an 'Approved' status beside their lodged application proving the form has been processed by the RANZCP. The 'Approved' status is not the final stage of the application process nor does it confirm that the applicant is eligible for or has been granted a place at the examination.

Applicants are then required to make payment via InTrain by clicking on the dashboard alert for the 'Approved' application. Payment must be paid using either EFT or Credit Card via the application process.

Once payment details have been completed, applicants must click the 'Exam Payment' button at the bottom of the screen.

An applicant will then receive on their InTrain dashboard, a 'Registered' status beside their lodged application indicating that payment has been received by the RANZCP. When payment has been processed by the RANZCP, the application status will be updated to 'Paid'. This 'Paid' status confirms eligibility to sit the CEQ and MEQ Examination.

4.4.2 Confirmation of eligibility to sit the examination

The RANZCP will inform applicants via email whether they are eligible to sit the relevant essay examination once all eligibility requirements have been verified and their fee payment has been deducted (payments are deducted within 10 working days of the application's receipt).

4.4.3 Confirmation of examination site details

Confirmation of the applicant's nominated exam site, exam address and commencement time will be emailed to applicants by the RANZCP approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to the examination date.

Should the applicant need to change their test centre location, they are to email assesshelp@ranzcp.org as soon as possible with their amended preference. Such requests made to RANZCP less than two weeks of the exam may not be able to be accommodated.

4.5 Preparation and advice for essay examinations

Applicants are advised to be familiar with the RANZCP journals and RANZCP treatment guidelines, to attend journal clubs and mock examinations and to work on improving their examination techniques.

Applicants should also familiarise themselves with the examinations practice content available on the RANZCP website:

- [MEQ Past papers and study support](#)
- [CEQ Past papers and study support](#)

4.5.1 Applicant advice for the MEQ Examination

It is recommended that the following points are taken into consideration when preparing for the MEQ Examination:

- It is important for applicants to read the instructions, scenarios and questions thoroughly and to address the questions asked with specific reference to the patient in the scenario. All information provided in a scenario is considered important.
- Applicants should pay attention to the specific tasks required to answer the question, for example, they may be asked to *outline*, *describe* or *discuss* topic areas as opposed to *listing* them, or vice versa.
 - A 'list' contains keywords or phrases without elaboration.
 - 'Outline' is a list with some justification.
 - 'Describe' is a list with more justification.
 - 'Discuss' is a more comprehensive answer.
 - Where details and/or justification are required, marks will not be awarded for topic headings without elaboration (lists).
 - Bullet points may be used; however, applicants should ensure they include the justification/explanation required to effectively answer the question where required.

- Information that is provided outside of that asked for will not score marks.
- Applicants should endeavour to present concise and well-structured answers including justification for their responses.

Applicants are advised to draw on their knowledge and clinical experience when answering questions.

4.5.2 Applicant advice for the CEQ Examination

- It is recommended that the following points are taken into consideration when preparing for the CEQ Examination: Applicants must read the question thoroughly.
- Applicants should practise the techniques involved in writing critical essays.
- Applicants should consider the broader context of a question, including an awareness of relevant sociocultural issues, and broader models of illness (not limited to the medical model).
- Applicants should write a response specific to the question asked rather than a generic essay.
- Applicants should respond with structure and clarity.
 - While a reliance on bullet points is not recommended for the CEQ, bullet points are allowed within an essay where they may aid structure and clarity.

4.6 Examination rules

Applicants are responsible for being familiar with this policy, as well as all other RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012 and the RANZCP Code of Ethics. Applicants must adhere to the rules presented in these documents.

Any breach of these rules is a serious ethical matter which will be investigated. Due to the serious nature of any breaches, outcomes are determined in accordance with the [Examination Incident Report and Breach Review Procedure \(18.3-4\)](#).

The essay examinations are managed by test administrators. RANZCP Fellows and staff may attend in order to observe that the correct examination protocol is followed and the environment is in accordance with RANZCP standards. Applicants must observe and comply with all instructions and/or directions given by the test administrators.

4.6.1 Examination arrival

Each applicant must present for an examination in person. It is a serious offence for a applicant to allow any other person to present for an examination in their place. It is also a serious offence to aid and abet an applicant to arrange for any other person to present for an examination in the applicant's place.

Applicants will not be admitted to an examination room if they appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Applicants must be present in the examination registration area a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement of the examination, however, 60 minutes prior is recommended for larger venues.

- Generally, applicants may not enter the examination room once the examination has commenced.
- **In exceptional circumstances**, a test administrator may grant a late applicant access to the examination; however, late entrance **will not be permitted** more than 30 minutes after the scheduled commencement time of the examination.

Applicants are required to present a government issued photographic proof of identity (ID) at registration prior to being admitted to the examination room. The ID must be either a valid passport or driver license (must be original and unexpired – not a photocopy or digital ID).

Applicants must sign an attendance record, which acknowledges that they have read the [MEQ and CEQ Essay Examinations Policy and Procedure \(18.1\)](#). Their signature will indicate that they agree to sit the examination according to this policy, related examination policies and the RANZCP Code of Ethics. These documents will be available at the examination site for any applicant who has not read them prior to arrival; however, it is the applicant's responsibility to be familiar with them.

- [See list of RANZCP training regulations.](#)

4.6.2 Items permitted in examination room

Applicants will be checked by test administrators to ensure they do not bring items into the examination room that are not permitted. All permitted items brought into the examination room must be in a clear zip-lock bag (where relevant) and will be inspected by test administrators. Items are to be placed on the examination desk prior to commencement of the examination.

The following items are permitted in the examination room for the MEQ and CEQ Examinations without a requirement for a applicant to apply for special consideration and will be inspected prior to the applicant's entry:

- throat lozenge/cough drop – must be unwrapped and not in a container
- pills – must be unwrapped and not in a container (unless they must remain in the packaging due to air exposure)
- bandages/braces/casts/slings
- mobility devices (e.g., canes, crutches, motorised scooters/chairs, wheelchairs, walkers)
- eye drops
- eye patches
- eye glasses without case
- handheld magnifying glass (non-electronic and without a case)
- hearing aids
- inhalers
- medical alert bracelets, including those with USB ports
- medical devices attached to a person's body
- medical/surgical face masks
- pillows/cushions
- In addition:
 - Applicants **must bring** their own blue or black pens for these examinations.
 - Highlighters and a ruler may be brought into the examination if desired.
 - Applicants **are not permitted to bring** any wristwatches (both analogue and digital) into the examination room. A visible clock will be available in the examination room.
 - Applicants are required to bring either a valid passport or driver licence into the examination room (must be original as specified under section 4.6.1).

4.6.3 Restricted and prohibited items

Applicants must not bring the following items or any other personal item that a test administrator deems as unsuitable into the examination room. Applicants who require an exception must apply to the CFE for special consideration as per point 4.4.4 and the [Special Consideration Policy \(18.2\)](#):

- timing devices, clocks and wristwatches (both analogue and digital) will not be permitted in both the MEQ and the CEQ Examination (A clock will be in view in the MEQ and CEQ Examination rooms).
- pencil cases
- notes
- books or dictionaries (including religious texts)
- mobile phones
- electronic or recording devices capable of storing, receiving or transmitting information
- bags
- wallets
- car keys
- calculators (Calculators are not required at any time during the examination.)
- outerwear (coats or jackets)
- scarves of any kind except those for cultural, religious, or medical reasons
- hats or head coverings except those for cultural, religious, or medical reasons
- hairbands or hairclips that are wider than 1 cm
- jewellery that is wider than 1 cm unless the item cannot be physically removed
- lip balm
- tissues
- earplugs
- headphones
- weapons
- food or beverages, including water (water will be available at the examination venue).

All applicants must bring a bag in which to store items not permitted in the examination room. Applicants must turn off their mobile phones and place all prohibited items in their bag prior to entering the examination room. Bags will be stored away from the applicants' examination desks. At the conclusion of the examination, applicants will be able to collect their prohibited items.

During the registration, each applicant will be required to turn off their smart devices and place them in a clear zip-lock bag already clearly labelled with their Last Name and RANZCP ID. Applicants' mobile phones are to be placed face up on the table designated for phones before being seated. At the completion of the examination, applicants may collect their bags and their mobile phones. If an applicant's mobile phone rings during an exam period, the zip-lock bag will be isolated immediately and taken out of the exam room to a secured location. At the end of the exam, the applicant with the isolated mobile phone must be identified before they are allowed to leave the building and an incident report be logged with its impact to the applicants in the room.

Should a applicant anticipate requiring access to specific belongings at any time during the examination, they must apply for special consideration as per point 4.4.4 and the [Special Consideration Policy \(18.2\)](#). Access to belongings without special consideration will only be considered in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the test administrators. If access is permitted, it must be supervised and applicants will not receive any extra time to make up for their unscheduled break during the examination.

The RANZCP and its associates do not accept responsibility for the loss of any applicant's personal property.

4.6.4 Conduct during the examination

Applicants are not permitted to communicate with, or provide any assistance to, other applicants once in the examination room.

Applicants are not permitted to accept assistance from any other applicants once in the examination room.

Should an applicant wish to speak to a test administrator, the applicant is to raise their hand.

Applicants are responsible for immediately notifying a test administrator if:

- the correct examination paper has not been provided or if the examination paper is missing or has duplicate pages (in the case of the MEQ and CEQ Examinations).

Applicants are not permitted to look at another applicant's examination papers for any reason.

Applicants are not permitted to disturb other examination applicants in any way.

- Applicants are not permitted to read aloud during the examination reading time.

Applicants must raise their hand if they wish to leave the examination room and will not receive extra time to compensate for any unscheduled breaks. The applicant's ID will be checked prior to their re-admission to the examination room.

Applicants who have completed their examination and wish to leave before the designated time must raise their hand, and the test administrator will go to their workstation and verify that their examination session has ended properly. Applicants must leave all examination materials at their desk after they have completed their examination. They may then leave the exam room on the direction and consent of the test administrator.

Applicants must remain seated until a test administrator has given the direction for applicants to leave the examination room.

4.6.5 Procedures for the MEQ Examination

- a) The MEQ Examination paper will be placed face down on applicants' allocated desks prior to applicants entering the examination room/area.
 - The examination paper comprises:
 - examination book/s (contains questions and pages for writing answers)
 - stimulus (contains duplicate questions)
 - note paper
 - supplementary sheets for writing longer answers are available.
- b) At the appointed time, applicants are asked to turn over their examination papers and are given 150 minutes to read, plan and complete the examination.
- c) Once applicants are given instructions to commence the examination, they are to sign their name and write the date on the front page of the examination book.

- d) Applicants should use their own pens to answer the questions.
- e) In this examination, **all** questions should be attempted.
- f) Applicants are advised that if their handwritten script is illegible, their answer will not be marked.
- g) Handwritten responses are to be **contained within the lines and pages applicable to that question or on the supplementary sheets provided**. Applicants are advised that **marking is not guaranteed if answers are written in a place other than on the relevant allocated lines and pages**.
 - Note: the answer to each question within an MEQ is to be written on a separate page.
- h) The applicant is to write their RANZCP ID number, question type and question number details on any supplementary sheets. Applicants may answer only one question per supplementary answer sheet.
- i) Any incorrect words or phrases that the applicant does not wish the examiner to take into consideration are to have a horizontal line drawn through them.
 - Examiners have been instructed to ignore any such words or phrases that have been treated this way.
- j) After completion of a multiple line answer, should the applicant deem their response unsatisfactory, they are to place a diagonal slash through the response.
 - Examiners have been instructed to ignore text that has been treated this way.
 - Should there not be enough room to complete a revised answer, applicants are to request supplementary sheets from a test administrator.
- k) At the conclusion of the examination time, applicants **must stop writing** immediately.
- l) No pages are to be torn out of, or removed from, the examination books
- m) Before all examination papers are collected, applicants should ensure they have signed the declaration statement on the front cover of the examination paper.
- n) All examination materials must be left in the examination room. No material (including the note paper provided) is to be removed.

4.6.6 Procedures for the CEQ Examination

- a) The CEQ Examination paper will be placed face down on applicants' allocated desks prior to applicants entering the examination room/area.
 - The examination paper comprises of:
 - examination book/s (contains questions and pages for writing answers)
 - stimulus (contains duplicate questions)
 - note paper
 - supplementary sheets for writing longer answers are available.
- b) At the appointed time, applicants are asked to turn over their examination papers and are given 50 minutes to read, plan and complete the examination.
- c) Once applicants are given instructions to commence the examination, they are to sign their name and write the date on the front page of the examination book.
- d) Applicants should use their own pens to answer the questions.
- e) In this examination, **there is only one essay question to** be attempted.

- f) Applicants are advised that if their handwritten script is illegible, their answer will not be marked.
- g) Handwritten responses are to be **contained within the lines and pages applicable or on the supplementary sheets provided**. Applicants are advised that **marking is not guaranteed if the answer is written in a place other than on the relevant allocated lines and pages**.
- h) The applicant is to write their RANZCP ID number, question details on any supplementary sheets.
- i) Any incorrect words or phrases that the applicant does not wish the examiner to take into consideration are to have a horizontal line drawn through them.
 - Examiners have been instructed to ignore any such words or phrases that have been treated this way.
- j) After completion of a multiple line answer, should the applicant deem their response unsatisfactory, they are to place a diagonal slash through the response.
 - Examiners have been instructed to ignore text that has been treated this way.
 - Should there not be enough room to complete a revised answer, applicants are to request supplementary sheets from a test administrator.
- k) At the conclusion of the examination time, applicants **must stop writing** immediately.
- l) No pages are to be torn out of, or removed from, the examination books
- m) Before all examination papers are collected, applicants should ensure they have signed the declaration statement on the front cover of the examination paper.
- n) All examination materials must be left in the examination room. No material (including the note paper provided) is to be removed.

4.7 Results

De-identified pass/fail results for the MEQ and CEQ examinations are scheduled to be released onto the RANZCP website under [Results and Timetable](#) at 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the date listed on the examination application form and on the Examination timetable. All applicants can obtain their results using their RANZCP identification number.

Once results are released on the RANZCP website, Trainees may obtain their results via InTrain and SIMG candidates from the RANZCP website using their RANZCP identification number.

4.7.1 Results breakdown

Each question has been categorised according to the diagnostic category and to the question type. Applicants will be advised of their aggregate score in each of these categories.

A review of an applicant's performance across these categories indicates relative strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge or skill base, thus highlighting areas that may require further development.

This information may provide a useful basis on which an applicant can discuss their progress with their supervisor or DOT. DOTs will only have access to applicant's results and results breakdown, for those applicants within that DOTs training zone.

4.7.2 Examination outcome

The pass score is determined for each examination, depending on the degree of difficulty of the examination and, hence, may vary from paper to paper. The degree of difficulty of each examination is rated by the CFE together with Fellows who are familiar with the expected level of performance of a applicant undertaking the written examination. This ensures a consistency of standard and takes into account the variation that is inherent between all examination

papers past and present. This rating is determined prior to the examination using educationally valid standard-setting methodology (the modified Ebel method), and is used to determine the pass mark for the components of the examination and hence the overall pass score.

- The actual pass score for an examination will not be released. The pass score in itself is not of educational merit nor does it assist unsuccessful applicants in preparation for subsequent sittings.

4.7.3 Feedback

Feedback and advice from the CFE regarding the overall performance of the examination cohort will be released on the RANZCP website once the applicants' individual results breakdowns have been released.

4.7.4 Results withheld

The RANZCP reserves the right to withhold any applicant's results.

Applicants who have any outstanding training or examinations fees owed to RANZCP at the time of the result release will have their results withheld until such fees are paid in full.

Results may also be withheld for various other reasons such as:

- medical registration or comparability status not being current
- an alleged breach of this policy or of the RANZCP Code of Ethics under investigation as per the [Examination Incident Report and Breach Review Policy \(18.3-4\)](#).

4.8 Incident report

Should an applicant wish to report an incident that they believe may have unfairly affected the outcome of a written examination, the applicant must follow the processes outlined in the [Examination Incident Report and Breach Review Policy \(18.3-4\)](#).

4.9 Failure to adhere to examination rules

If a test administrator believes that an applicant has breached the examination rules in this policy, the applicant will be officially warned by the test administrator. The applicant will have their paper marked at that point with the time, date and test administrator's signature. If relevant, the test administrator must confiscate any suspicious material or articles from the applicant. The applicant will be advised that the matter will be reported to the Chair, CFE via the RANZCP's Assessment Manager.

Following any incident, the test administrator will provide a written report of the incident(s) to the Chair, CFE, along with any confiscated material as per [the Examination Incident Report and breach Review Policy \(18.3-4\)](#).

The test administrator may require an applicant to change seats during the examination.

If an applicant causes any disruption to the examination or continues to breach examination procedures following a warning by a test administrator, the administrator may request the applicant to leave the examination room immediately.

An alleged breach of the Essay Examinations Policy will follow the protocols in the [Examination Incident Report and Breach Review Procedure \(18.3-4\)](#).

4.10 Cancellations and refunds

Applicants are to inform RANZCP if they wish to withdraw from the examination. Refunds will be made in accordance with the [Cancellation and Refund Schedule](#).

4.11 Failure to present at an examination ('no show')

An applicant will have 5 working days after the date of the examination to provide a written explanation for their lack of attendance to the RANZCP Head Office, which the CFE will consider on a case-by-case basis. Should the CFE determine that the applicant was unable to attend the

examination due to reasons beyond the applicant's control (e.g. hospitalisation) their result will be recorded as a withdrawal rather than a failure of the examination.

Applicants wishing to withdraw from the CEQ and/or MEQ Examination must do so by emailing assesshelp@ranzcp.org.

It is advisable to refer to the dates in the [RANZCP Cancellation and Refund Schedule](#) when considering withdrawing from the examination.

A failure of the examination due to lack of attendance will be considered a failure in relation to the requirements of the [Targeted Learning Policy and Procedure \(6.2\)](#), [Progression through Training Policy \(6.1\)](#), and [Failure to Progress Policy \(19.1\)](#).

4.12 Trainee deadlines and relation with progression through training

Applicants must pass the MEQ and CEQ examinations within the time required to be eligible for Fellowship. (See the [Progression through Training Policy \(6.1\)](#) for more information on assessment deadlines.)

The deadlines for successfully completing the MEQ and CEQ examinations are detailed in the [Policy on Progression through Training \(6.1\)](#). A brief reference to these requirements and those of the [Policy on Failure to Progress \(19.1\)](#) follow; however, trainees are responsible for knowing the requirements of these and other policies.

4.12.1 Deadline for the MEQ Examination

The MEQ Examination is expected to be attempted and passed by the time the trainee has completed 60 months of FTE accredited training.

- Failure to do so will result in a requirement for the trainee to undertake progression-based targeted learning and may lead to a requirement for the trainee to submit a training review application to the Committee for Training (CFT) as to why they should be able to continue towards Fellowship. Further detail, including information on exceptional cases, can be found in the [Policy and Procedure on Failure to Progress \(19.1\)](#).

4.12.2 Deadline for the CEQ Examination

The CEQ Examination is expected to be attempted and passed by the time the trainee has completed 60 months of FTE accredited training.

- Failure to do so will result in a requirement for the trainee to undertake progression-based targeted learning and may lead to a requirement for the trainee to submit a training review application to the CFT as to why they should be able to continue towards Fellowship. Further detail, including information on exceptional cases, can be found in the [Policy and Procedure on Failure to Progress \(19.1\)](#).

4.12.3 Targeted learning requirement for multiple failures

Should an applicant fail the same essay examination twice (i.e., two failed attempts at the MEQ Examination or two failed attempts at the CEQ Examination), the applicant must undertake assessment-based targeted learning for the relevant examination as per the [Policies and Procedures on Targeted Learning \(6.2\)](#) and [Progression through Training \(6.1\)](#).

Please note in counting the failed attempts for progression and targeted learning, the previously failed attempts for the combined Essay-style Examination will be taken into account. For example, an applicant who has failed the Essay-style examination in August 2019 and decides to sit for the MEQ examination in August 2021 - if they fail the MEQ Exam in 2021, they will be required to undertake targeted learning for MEQ before they can apply for the next MEQ Exam. If they also sit for the CEQ exam in August 2021, they will have to

undertake targeted learning separately for CEQ also before they can sit for the next CEQ Exam.

No disadvantage examinations

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the two Essay-style Examinations in 2020 were offered as 'no disadvantage' examinations wherein, an unsuccessful attempt for these examinations was not counted towards applicants' trajectory or total number of unsuccessful attempts. The unsuccessful attempts for the 'no disadvantage' exams held in 2020 do not require Targeted Learning to be undertaken, although it is encouraged for trainees to consider it to improve their chances of passing at the next exam.

Even though the February 2021 Essay-style Examination is a 'no disadvantage' examination, this will be counted towards an applicant's Targeted Learning requirement.

4.12.4 Requirement to submit a training review application

Should an applicant fail the same essay examination three times (i.e. three failed attempts at the MEQ Examination or three failed attempts at the CEQ Examination), the trainee must submit a training review application to the CFT as to why they should be able to continue towards Fellowship as per the [Policy and Procedure on Failure to Progress \(19.1\)](#). Please note in counting the failed attempts for the requirement to submit a training review application, the previously failed attempts for the combined Essay-Style Examination will also be taken into account.

4.13 SIMG candidate deadlines

SIMG candidates assessed as partially comparable are expected to successfully complete the MEQ Examination and the CEQ Examination within their stipulated time period on the specialist pathway. Information on their progression requirements are available on the RANZCP website at: [Progression requirements: Partial Comparability requirements for RANZCP Fellowship policy](#).

4.14 Review of decisions

Trainees and SIMGs dissatisfied with training or assessment outcomes must first address their concerns with their supervisor, Director of Training, or relevant personnel. Should the issue remain unresolved, they are to raise the matter promptly as possible with the relevant RANZCP Education Committee for further review and resolution.

Trainees and SIMGs are referred to the RANZCP [Appeals and complaints](#) webpage which provides guidance for those who aren't satisfied with the outcome of a decision relating to training or assessment, in accordance with the [RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure](#).

5. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Education Committee shall implement, monitor and review this document and report on anomalies and issues as these arise. This document will be reviewed biennially and updated as required.

6. Associated Documents

Documents	Document title
Regulations	(18.1) Written Examinations Education Training Regulation
Policies and Procedures	(6.1) Progression through Training Education Training Policy
	(6.2) Targeted Learning Education Training Policy
	(18.1) Essay Examinations Policy and Procedure
	(18.2) Special Consideration Education Training Policy
	(18.3-4) Examinations Incident Report and Breach Review Policy
	(19.1) Failure to Progress Education Training Policy
	RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure
Other	MEQ Examination Application Form
	CEQ Examination Application Form
	Cancellation and Refund Schedule
	RANZCP Code of Ethics
	RANZCP Code of Conduct
	Guidelines for Critical Analysis Problems
	Written examination venue map

Revision Record

Regulation Owner:		Education and Training Department	
Contact:		Project Officer, Education and Training	
Date of effect	Version	Approved by	Description
06/09/13	v.1.0	RANZCP Board	Reviewed by Written Exams Subcommittee 22/07/13. Reviewed by TRC 20/08/13. Approved by CFE 23/08/13. Approved by EC 28/08/13. Approved by CGRC out of session 02/09/13. Approved by RANZCP Board B2013/4 R7.
08/02/14	v.2.0	RANZCP Board	Updates to reflect FAC & EC decision that a 'no show' at an exam will be considered a failure and to clarify application, MCQ purpose and candidate advice. Reviewed by TRC 28/11/13. Approved by CFE 11/12/13. Approved by EC out of session 17/12/13. Approved by CGRC with minor wording change in 4.7.1 Exam Arrival on 23/01/14. Approved by RANZCP Board B2014/1 R14.
30/08/14	v.3.0	RANZCP Board	Updated to reflect EC March 2014 decision (from CFE recommendation) to set both an aggregate and CEQ component pass score for the Essay-style Exam. Approved CFE. Approved EC 8/8/14. Approved CGRC 14/8/14. Approved Board B2014/5 R13.
14/02/15	v.4.0	RANZCP Board	Updates based on examinations team advice related to eligibility to apply for the essay-style exam vs eligibility to sit to align with the exam schedule/rotation timing and how the MCQ is done. Noted by CFT 4/12/14. Approved by CFE 10/12/14. Approved by EC 16/01/15. Reviewed by CGRC 22/01/15. Approved by Board 2015/1 R17.
21/03/15	v.5.0	RANZCP Board	Updates to reflect computer-based testing for MCQ Examination (from August 2015) and to align with the Leave & Interruptions to Training Policy. Reviewed by the CFE 23/2/15. Reviewed by

			the TRC 23/2/15. Reviewed by CGRC 24/2/15. Approved by EC with minor changes from CFE Chair 27/2/15. Approved by Board 2015/2 R13.
22/08/15	v.5.1	N/A	Minor rephrasing of applications related to remediation and amendments to 'results withheld' section to align with wording approved in OSCE policy. Clarification that exam cancellations should be made by contacting the Pearson VUE call centre.
20/07/16	v.6.0	RANZCP Board	Minor rephrasing to state SIMG comparability status (formerly exemption status). Updates to clarify that partially comparable SIMG candidates are no longer required to complete a remedial plan and that candidates must log on to the Pearson VUE – RANZCP portal if they wish to cancel their place at, or will not be attending, the exam. Revised to reflect targeted learning/targeted learning plan (formerly remediation/remediation plan) and standard expected at end of stage 3 (formerly junior consultant standard) terminology changes. Approved EC 29/04/2016. Reviewed CGRC 28/04/2016. Approved Board B2016/4. Revised to reflect updates to the targeted learning and show cause points for the five centrally administered assessments, effective from 1/1/2017. Approved EC 03/06/2016. Reviewed CGRC 17/06/2016. Approved Board B2016/5.
11/02/17	v6.1	RANZCP Board	Removal of Satisfactory Progress in a Targeted Learning Program Form and clarify a trainee's eligibility is dependent on the completion of the targeted learning program. Reviewed CGRC 19/1/16. Approved by EC 27/01/17, RANZCP Board B2017/1.
19/05/17	V6.2	Education Committee	Clarifying eligibility to apply for the MCQ and Essay-Style examination, and aligning 'Standard' section with OSCE Policy wording for level expected at end of Stage 3. Approved CFE 10/05/17 and CFT 11/05/17. Approved by EC 19/05/2017.
15/09/17	v.6.3	N/A	Alignment with Targeted Learning Policy & Procedure updates (that Commencement form rather than Completion form required for eligibility to attempt exam after two failures) that were approved by RANZCP Board 13/08/17 B2017/5 R16.
20/04/18	v.6.4	Education Committee	Aligning the wristwatch rule with the previously approved rule in the Clinical Examination Regulation. Previously reviewed by CFE 9/8/17, approved by EC with changes 1/9/17), reviewed by CGRC 26/10/17, approved by RANZCP Board 18/11/17 B2017/7 R30. Approved EC 20 April 2018.
12/04/19	v.6.5	Education Committee	Additions to section 4.4.3, Requests for special consideration received after the application closing date may not be accommodated. Previously reviewed by the CFE 20/03/19, approved by EC with changes 12/04/19.
11/03/2020	v.6.6	RANZCP Board	Change of terminology from 'Show Cause' to 'Training Review' (CFT approved, 12/12/2019)
23/04/2021	V6.7	RANZCP Board	Replaces the previous Writtens Policy and Procedure. As a result of decoupling the previous Essay-style Examination into two independent examinations, the previous Writtens Policy and Procedure has been separated into two policies – MCQ Examination Policy, and the Essay examinations policy (comprising MEQ Examination and CEQ Examination). EC approved 23/04/2021.
29/06/2021	v.6.8	Minor Amendment	Amendment of 4.6.1 in requiring the candidates to provide a governmental issue identification in form of a passport or driver license prior to entering the examination.
20/07/2022	v.7.0	RANZCP Board	Replacement of OSCE with Alternative Assessment Pathway (AAP). EC approved 15/07/2022. Board Approved 20/07/2022. Ref: B2022/9.
25/09/2022	v7.1	Education Committee	Amendment of 4.2.2 to confirm trainees undergoing a TR cannot attempt the examinations until they are provided with further attempts or time. EC approved (2/09/2022).
8/11/2022	v.7.2	Education Committee	Updating of the application submission process, removal of Pearson's Vue as venue and email address. EC approved (11/11/2022)
28/06/2023	v.8.0	RANZCP Board	AAP is replaced with Clinical Competency Assessment Board approved: B2022/OOS44, which now is the CCA with Modified Portfolio Review until early 2025 Board Approved: B2023/R10
13/03/2024	v.8.1	Minor Amendment	Minor: Expansion and update of Section 4.14, inclusion of RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeals Policy and College appeal process webpage. Change of terminology from candidates' applicants to prevent confusion with SIMGs. Recommendation of 60 mins in registration area prior to commencement of the exam for larger venues. Updated to new format.
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