

Clinical Examination

The Clinical Examination is designed to assess early SET Trainees/Junior Doctors in the clinical application of the basic sciences. It tests applied knowledge of clinical conditions and scenarios expected to be encountered by junior doctors working in a hospital environment. It also evaluates cognitive and psychomotor skills required for successful surgical practice.

A key component of the Clinical Examination is reproduction of conditions closely aligned to the hospital work environment, in which Trainees/Junior Doctors are expected to practice on a day-to-day basis, with similar pressures and challenges. This feature of the examination contributes to the assessment of technical and non-technical competencies, such as situational awareness, assimilation of incomplete information, decision-making, and formulation of management plans within a limited amount of time. The conditions under which the examination runs are therefore as important to its validity, as the actual questions and scenarios that comprise it.

Registration

- Please bring photographic ID (e.g. passport, driving licence, hospital ID etc).
- All mobiles, tablets, watches and other electronic/recording devices are collected at registration for storage by the invigilators during the examination and quarantine period.
- You will be provided with a name badge and QR code that identifies you at each examination station.

Morning session

- You will need to arrive at the venue at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the examination to allow for the registration process.

Afternoon session

- Candidates in the afternoon session are subjected to a period of quarantine. This is to ensure that afternoon session candidates are not in contact with candidates who have sat the exam in the morning, so that the same examination can be used again. The Examiners also need a short break. To accommodate this you will need to arrive up to 2 hours before the commencement of your own examination. An exact arrival time will be given to you once registered.
- You can keep paper notes and books with you in the quarantine area, but no electronic devices are permitted.
- The quarantine time is necessary due to the number of candidates presenting. This requires two sessions in some locations and the quarantine time ensures the security of the examination.
- You may bring any food or drinks you may want to consume during this period. You cannot leave the quarantine area to purchase food once you have entered.

What to bring, what to leave

You are required to follow the requests and instructions from the Examination Coordinator and RACS staff that are present to ensure the integrity of the examination.

If you have any questions about a particular item, please contact the [Examinations Department](mailto:examinations@surgeons.org) prior to the examination for clarification.

- **Do bring your own stethoscope.** This will be required and these are not supplied. All other equipment you might need will be provided based on the examination station.

For general examination conduct reasons, there are many things that you won't be permitted to keep with you in the examination (and/or in some cases quarantine) room. This list below is not comprehensive, but an indication of the usual things. For full details around prohibited items and cheating please see the [exam policy](#).

Specifically, you cannot have the following with you during the examination:

- Personal watches/timers
- Mobile phones and electronic devices such as audio-recording wrist bands, pens, spectacles, mp3 players, iPods, iPads, etc. These should be handed in at registration.
- In the examination room only: notes/books/textbooks or blank paper – other than papers supplied.
- There will be a secure area where you can leave your coats, bags and suitcases for the duration of your examination.

The Examination

- A briefing will be given by the Examination Coordinator just prior to commencing the examination and they will answer any final questions you may have.
- The Clinical Examination is an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) consisting of 16 stations.
- There are four stations for each of the following categories:
 - physical examination
 - non-technical skills
 - history-taking
 - procedural skills
- You have 3 minutes reading time and then 5 minutes with the examiner. Bells are used to signal the beginning/end of each period.
- The station instructions are on the door of the station and in the examination room.
- If you are required to answer one or two specific questions after completing the task, this will be clear in the station instructions. The Examiner will guide this and may interrupt you to ensure there is adequate time for you to answer. These are standard questions asked for all candidates.
- Many of the stations will have a surrogate acting as a patient or a patient's relative.
- Photographs may be used to convey additional information about the situation and the surrogate patient may be marked to indicate the site of pathology.
- You are not permitted to make notes outside an examination station; if you do, the notes will be confiscated and a report will be made to the Clinical Examination Committee.

Rest stations

- Depending on the number of candidates sitting the examination, you may have one or more rest stations during the examination.
- If this is the case, you will stay at this station for the full 8 minutes.
- If you need to use the bathroom whilst at a rest station you must first obtain permission from a staff member, or assistant.

Special Consideration

- Applications for consideration of special circumstances relating to an incident during an examination such as noise disturbance, sudden illness or family emergency must be brought to the attention of the invigilator or RACS staff member at the time of the event.
- In addition to this, an Application for Special Consideration form must be submitted within 24 hours of completing the examination.
- Application forms will be available from RACS staff or the RACS website.
- If you would like to seek advice at any point during the examination, please see the Examination Coordinator or a RACS staff member.
- Please refer to the Special Consideration policy for full details.

Examination tips

You should extend the normal courtesies you use in the workplace to the surrogate by introducing yourself and where appropriate explain what you need to do.

You should dress in formal business attire.

Ensure that you wash your hands or use alcohol gel in view of the examiner prior to examining or performing a procedure on the surrogate patient.

Some questions will set clear limits for the candidate (e.g. *“Do not examine for...”* or *“Assume that..”*). No marks will be awarded for performance outside the stated boundaries of the question.

Take into consideration the type of station it is; eg. If a communication station, you do not need to take a history.

Aim to perform the required task in a logical order.

For more detail regarding the structure and content of the Clinical Examination and how the scoring is done, please see the RACS website or [exam policy](#).