



Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

FEEDBACK ON CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE FELLOWSHIP EXAMINATION

The following is an outline of the examination process, information on how the examination is marked, what the Examiners are looking for and information on the assessment of candidates' performance in the individual segments of the examination.

Outline of the Examination

The benchmark for the examination is to assess a level of competency equivalent to that of a consultant or specialist surgeon in his or her first year of independent practice. The nine surgical competencies espoused by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons are used as a guideline for the Examiners.

The nine competencies are as follows:

- Medical Expertise
- Judgement & Clinical Decision Making
- Technical Expertise
- Communication
- Management & Leadership
- Professionalism & Ethics
- Collaboration
- Health Advocacy
- Scholar and Teacher

Whilst all nine competencies cannot be examined in detail in the written and verbal segments of the examination, the Examiners are asked to consider these competencies throughout the examination process. Examiners are also asked to assess candidate's ability to analyse, synthesise, and evaluate information presented or gathered, otherwise termed "advanced clinical reasoning" or "higher surgical thinking", at a consultant level.

The examination is blueprinted to make sure that a wide range of topics from the syllabus are covered, at what taxonomy level and which surgical competency is assessed. The examination consists of seven separate segments, which will vary according to specialty.

How is the Examination Marked?

Each segment of the examination is marked separately without reference to any other segment. Each of the 7 segments is marked by 2 examiners who agree on a mark at the conclusion of the candidates' assessment in that segment. The results are collated by the senior examiner and the final result or overall performance of each candidate in all segments remains unknown to individual examiners until the meeting of the Specialty Court at the conclusion of the examination.

What are the Examiner's Looking For?

In terms of examination of the surgical competencies examiners are asked to assess within each competency, where applicable, a number of items to achieve a pass mark. In each emphasis is placed on the assessment of advanced clinical reasoning at a consultant level:

Medical Expertise:

- Relevant basic sciences outlined
- Significance of symptoms/ features identified and addressed
- Potential pathologies identified

History taking and examination:

- Exploration of the patient and condition
- Description of physical examination
- Demonstration of clinical signs

Judgement – Clinical Decision Making:

Interpretation

- Significance of clinical signs

Investigations:

- Identification of appropriate investigations
- Justification for selection of investigations
- Analysis of data from investigations

Differential diagnosis:

- Possible alternatives identified and considered
- Justification of possible alternatives from evidence
- Clinical implications of the alternatives considered

Treatment and Management:

- Appropriate selected treatment
- Safe and appropriate management plan that takes into account patient's needs
- Consideration of on-going management requirements
- Consideration of other required professional support

Technical expertise:

Description of procedure:

- Surgical procedure appropriate for the condition and diagnosis
- Significant potential risk factors identified
- Attention to safety of patient, self and others

Communication:

- Clear, complete, and appropriate information for the patient
- Appropriate communication of risks, advantages and alternatives of any management alternatives advocated
- Prognosis reflecting the most likely outcomes

Management & Leadership:

- Reasons for selection of investigations and treatment indicate consideration of patient needs and system constraints

Professionalism & Ethics:

- Clear understanding of medico-legal and ethical issues in relation to the patient and their management
- Demonstrates appropriate patient contact

Collaboration:

- Understanding of other healthcare professionals involvement and roles in patient management
- Demonstrates ability to initiate involvement and assess input of other healthcare workers in the patient's management

Health Advocacy:

- Be aware of access and health care system difficulties. Promote equal access to all on needs basis according to national care priority guidelines.

Scholar and Teacher:

- Espouse lifelong learning and teaching of medical students, interns, residents, trainees and IMG's.

In addition, the following guidelines are used to assess whether a satisfactory performance is achieved. For each question asked the examiners consider the following:

- Was the candidate knowledgeable about the topic?
- Did the candidate have a good understanding of the topic?
- Did the candidate include most of the important ideas related to the topic?
- Did the candidate show a good understanding of the important relationships?
- Did the answer demonstrate good development of ideas and include adequate supporting facts or examples.
- Did the answer demonstrate some organization around big ideas and major concepts/principles in the field?
- Was the response good, detailed, and clear?