

Division:	Education Portfolio	Ref. No.	EDA-EXA-026
Department:	Examinations		
Title:	Conduct of the Generic Surgical Sciences Examination for Pre-vocational Doctors		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides the criteria for the conduct of the Generic Surgical Science Examination (GSSE) for a pre-vocational doctor who is not yet on the Surgical Education and Training (SET) program.

The GSSE is a summative assessment of a candidate's knowledge, understanding and application of anatomy, physiology and pathology which is fundamental to safe and comprehensive surgical practice.

2. KEYWORDS

Surgical Science Examination, GSSE, pre-vocational doctor, JDocs

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Format of the Examination

The examination consists of two segments and is conducted over two consecutive days:

3.1.1. Paper 1 consists of 80 generic anatomy questions

3.1.2. Paper 2 consists of 60 physiology and 65 pathology questions.

3.2. Eligibility to Present for the Examination

3.2.1. At the time of application, a candidate must have current and valid medical registration from the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) or Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ).

3.2.2. Current and valid medical registration in Australia is defined as:

- a. Provisional registration
- b. General registration (no restrictions).

3.2.3. Current and valid medical registration in New Zealand is defined as:

- a. Provisional general scope
- b. General scope
- c. General scope restricted to hospital based practice.

3.3. Application

3.3.1. The examination dates and application closing dates are published on the RACS website.

3.3.2. A candidate must apply to present for the GSSE through the online registration system, via the RACS website and pay the examination fee in full at the time of registration.

3.3.3. An application outside the published timeframes will not be accepted.

3.4. Timeframe and Venue

3.4.1. A pre-vocational doctor is permitted to sit the GSSE in February, June and October.

3.4.2. The GSSE is conducted in the following cities:

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Australia: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney

New Zealand: Auckland and Wellington

3.5. Time Limitations and Number of Attempts

3.5.1. There is no limit to the number of attempts a pre-vocational doctor can present for the GSSE.

3.5.2. A successful result has no expiry period.

3.6. Conduct of the examination

3.6.1. The conduct of the examination is the responsibility of the Surgical Science Examination & Clinical Examination (SSE&CE) Committee.

3.6.2. The curriculum for the GSSE is published on the RACS website.

3.6.3. Invigilators play a central role to ensure the security of this examination is maintained at all times.

3.6.4. When necessary, candidates will be segregated in a separate room to avoid contact between candidates who have completed an examination segment and those who have not.

3.6.5. By applying to present for the GSSE, the candidate is agreeing to this policy and the Generic Surgical Science Examination – Rules for Candidates

3.6.6. Disruptive behaviour by a candidate in any segment of the examination will be investigated as misconduct. If a candidate is reported to be causing a disturbance during the examination, he/she will be removed from the examination room.

a. The candidate involved will not be given extra time at the end of the examination for any reason including time taken to address the incident.

b. An examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will complete an incident report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.7. Prohibited Equipment or Materials

3.7.1. Equipment or materials which are not permitted to be taken into an examination room by a candidate (“prohibited equipment or materials”) includes but is not limited to:

a. smart watches mobile phones, calculators, portable computers, tablets or other electronic audio-recording devices (e.g. audio-recording wrist bands, pens, spectacles, mp3 players, IPods, iPads, etc.).

b. notes, books, textbooks or other materials.

3.7.2. A candidate who takes prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room will be informed that he or she must leave the examination room immediately and will not be permitted to take further part in the examination.

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3.7.3. The candidate's result for the examination will not be approved and any examination fees paid will be forfeited as per terms stipulated in clause 3.14.

3.7.4. An examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will complete an incident report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.8. Cheating

3.8.1. Cheating is defined as, but is not limited to:

- a. gaining or attempting to gain access to any materials such as specimens or images, or patients involved in the examination, prior to an examination;
- b. copying, or allowing another candidate to copy, answers during the course of an examination;
- c. disseminating or making available questions or answers to another candidate or prospective candidate relating to the current examination;
- d. procuring knowledge of the questions, and their answers, from anyone before the examination.

3.8.2. An invigilator, examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will, upon identifying suspected cheating during the examination, complete an Examination Incident Report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.9. Report of prohibited equipment or materials or cheating

3.9.1. Upon receipt of an Examination Incident Report of the taking of prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating, the Chair of the SSE&CE Committee will transmit the report to the Education Board.

3.9.2. If a report on the taking of prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating is received by the SSE&CE Committee, or if the Education Board receives the report directly:

- a. prior to the examination taking place; the candidate's application for presenting to an examination will be withheld until such time an investigation has concluded; if an allegation is upheld, the candidate's application will not be valid and the entire examination fee paid will be forfeited as per terms stipulated in clause 3.14 of this Policy.
- b. during the examinations and prior to the examination results being made available to candidates - the examination result will be withheld until such time as an investigation has concluded; if the allegation is upheld, the examination result will not be approved and the candidate will be regarded as having an unsatisfactory performance.
- c. after the examination results have been made available to candidates; if the allegation is upheld, the examination result will be withdrawn and the candidate will be regarded as having an unsatisfactory performance.

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3.10. Privacy and Confidentiality

Any person involved with the GSSE and a candidate presenting for the examination shall treat as strictly confidential any materials, images, content or discussions of any examination component viewed or discussed for the purposes of conducting the GSSE. Any breach of confidentiality by any candidate may be treated as cheating and dealt with according to RACS process

3.11. Special Circumstances and disability

Refer to policies EDA-EXA-034 Special Consideration for an Examination and EDA-EXA-035 Reasonable Adjustments for Disability.

3.12. Marking System

An overall pass standard for each examination is based on a standard setting evaluation and on the difficulty of the questions in each examination.

3.12.1. To achieve an overall pass, a candidate must achieve all of the following:

- a. a minimum pass standard in each discipline component (anatomy, physiology and pathology) during the same sitting, and
- b. a combined discipline component score equal to or exceeding the overall pass standard.
- c. Achieving a minimum pass standard in each discipline may not equate to achieving the overall pass standard for the examination.
- d. a discipline component pass from a previous exam attempt cannot be carried forward.

3.12.2. Minimum Standard Pass

A candidate, who falls within the following criteria in any two attempts at the examination, will be elevated to a pass on the second occasion.

- a. a minimum pass standard in each discipline component (anatomy, physiology and pathology) during the same sitting, and
- b. a combined discipline component score no less than one error width below the overall pass standard.

3.12.3. Component Failure

Failure to achieve the minimum pass standard in any discipline component constitutes a component failure resulting in a failure of the entire examination regardless of the overall score achieved.

3.13. Results

3.13.1. The results of the GSSE are approved by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.13.2. A candidate will be awarded a result of pass or fail only.

3.13.3. Both segments (Paper 1 and Paper 2) of this examination are considered to determine the overall examination result.

3.13.4. The candidate will be informed of his/her result via email.

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3.14. Withdrawals and Refunds

- 3.14.1. A candidate who wishes to withdraw from the examination must do so via the RACS website and online withdrawal form.
- 3.14.2. A percentage of the examination fee will be refunded in accordance with the following timeline.
- a. A candidate will be refunded 95% of the examination fee if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received prior to the application closing date.
 - b. A candidate will be refunded 50% of the examination fee if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received after the application closing date and more than 10 business days prior to the commencement of the first scheduled day of the examination.
- 3.14.3. A candidate will not receive a refund if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received fewer than 10 business days prior to the commencement of the first scheduled day of the examination.
- 3.14.4. A candidate will not receive a refund for non-attendance at the examination.
- 3.14.5. A candidate will not receive a refund if he/she is prevented from participating in the examination as a result of taking prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating or misconduct.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

EDA-EXA-034 Special Consideration for an Examination
 EDA-EXA-035 Reasonable Adjustments for Disability
 EDA-EXA-036 Gordon Gordon-Taylor Medal

Other

Application for Special Consideration
 Application for Reasonable Adjustments for Disability
 Examination Rules for Candidates
 Examinations Incident Report

Approver Education Board
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