



Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists  
ABN 82 055 042 852

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION SHEET PRIMARY EXAMINATIONS

### GENERAL

The Primary Examination is a test of knowledge and understanding of the basic sciences applied to anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate an **understanding** of the subject matter and their ability to integrate the relevant information so that it is applicable to the practice of clinical anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine. The subject matter is defined in the Syllabus for the Basic Sciences in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care.

For the purposes of the examination the basic sciences are divided into the following two subjects:

- Physiology and principles of measurement
- Pharmacology and statistics

The examination is held twice yearly.

### OVERVIEW

The examination consists of two subjects (Physiology and Pharmacology).

The **Physiology Subject** is divided into:

1. Multiple Choice Question section consisting of 75 questions. The time allocated for this section will be seventy-five (75) minutes. Questions will consist of Type A (select the best answer) and no marks will be deducted for incorrect answers. The MCQ contributes 25% to the final mark.
2. Short Answer Question section. The duration of the SAQ section is eighty (80) minutes and consists of eight questions permitting ten (10) minutes per question. Each question is worth equal marks. The SAQ section contributes 25% to the final mark.
3. The Viva section consists of one twenty minute oral examination in Physiology and contributes 50% to the final mark.

The **Pharmacology Subject** is divided into:

1. Multiple Choice Question section consisting of 75 questions. The time allocated for this section will be seventy-five (75) minutes. Questions will consist of Type A (select the best answer) and no marks will be deducted for incorrect answers. The MCQ contributes 25% to the final mark.
2. Short Answer Question section. The duration of the SAQ section is eighty (80) minutes and consists of eight questions permitting ten (10) minutes per question. Each question is worth equal marks. The SAQ section contributes 25% to the final mark.
3. The Viva section consists of one twenty minute oral examination in Pharmacology and contributes 50% to the final mark.

The Examiners taking part in an examination constitute the "Court".

### **WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS**

The Written section for each subject is held on the same day and consists of a Multiple Choice Question Paper and a Short Answer Question Paper in each subject (Pharmacology in the morning and Physiology in the afternoon).

1. Candidates will be admitted to the examination room ten minutes before the commencement of the examination to:
  - a. complete identification slips.
  - b. peruse the MCQ paper (five minutes will be allotted for this purpose).  
**No writing or scribbling will be permitted during this time.**
2. No candidate will be admitted to the examination room after a period of fifteen minutes following the commencement of the examination.
3. A candidate not wishing to continue with the examination must remain at the examination until its completion.
4. Candidates must remain seated until all MCQ answer sheets and MCQ papers have been collected and checked by the Invigilator to ensure that all answers have been handed in. **Under no circumstances** will an MCQ answer sheet which has left the examination room be accepted for marking.
5. Following completion of the MCQ section there will be a 10 minute break before the SAQ section commences.
6. Candidates will be allocated five minutes to peruse the SAQ paper.
7. Each question must be answered in a separate book, which is provided and identified with the candidate's number.
8. On completion of the SAQ section, candidates must remain seated until all SAQ answer books have been collected and checked by the Invigilator to ensure that all answers have been handed in. **Under no circumstances** will an SAQ answer book which has left the examination room be accepted for marking.

### **Test-Taking Strategies for the Multiple Choice Question Paper**

- Answer all questions.
- Choose the one best answer (no marks will be deducted for incorrect answers).

### **Marking – Short Answer Question Paper**

Marks are awarded for presenting **relevant** facts in a coherent and logical sequence and for the subsequent integration of the information which demonstrates understanding and perspective. General principles should be emphasised.

### **Test-Taking Strategies for the Short Answer Question Paper**

- Apportion your time equally for all questions.
- Read the questions carefully.
- Write legibly.
- Organise your answers.
- Do not use abbreviations without first defining them.
- Ten minutes per question allows the presentation of only a limited amount of information therefore only important and relevant information should be presented and less relevant detail omitted.
- Note form is acceptable.

Attached is a list of "keywords" and their generally accepted meanings.

### **VIVA EXAMINATIONS**

Subject to obtaining a satisfactory score in the written section of a subject (Physiology or Pharmacology or both) candidates will be invited to attend the Viva section of the examination in one or both subjects. The invitational mark is a minimum of 40% in the MCQ section and 40% in the SAQ section.

Each Viva is of twenty (20) minutes duration.

#### **Format**

There are two examiners at a Viva, for each subject, both of whom will independently score the Viva. You will be asked questions by both of them, for approximately ten minutes each. Observers may be present in the room.

#### **Test-Taking Strategies**

- Arrive early to avoid having to rush into the examinations.
- If observers are present pay attention only to the Examiner asking the questions.
- Do not hesitate to ask the Examiner to repeat or clarify any question.
- Do not hesitate to draw diagrams, but where relevant include labelled axes and normal values, and be sure to explain the diagram as it is being produced.
- Try to present a reasoned logical response rather than rush into an answer.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Listen to the question carefully as well as any feedback questions.

- There are no “trick” questions. The examiners are there to help you display your knowledge and understanding.

## **RESULTS**

For the Written section all candidates will be notified by mail, as soon as possible, whether they have achieved a standard sufficient to present for a Viva. To be eligible to attend the Viva Examination candidates must achieve a mark of at least 40% in the SAQ section and 40% in the MCQ section. Candidates who do not achieve a sufficient standard will be provided with a pass/fail breakdown of their Written section.

To achieve a pass in either subject the candidate must obtain a mark of at least 50% in the sum of their MCQ (25%), SAQ (25%) and Viva (50%) results.

To satisfy the Court of Examiners and achieve a pass in the Primary Examination, the candidate must achieve a pass in both the Physiology and Pharmacology subjects.

At the end of each day of the Vivas, the examination number of those candidates who are successful will be posted at ANZCA House following the meeting of the Court of Examiners. Candidates also have the option of collecting their results in sealed envelopes from designated College staff or accessing them on the College website at the time results are posted at ANZCA House.

All candidates are invited to an informal social gathering with the Chair of the Examination and Examiners at ANZCA House after collection of results.

All candidates will be advised, in writing, of their results.

Unsuccessful candidates will be provided with a pass/fail breakdown of the Written sections including a more detailed feedback on their performance in the SAQ paper as well as the Viva section. No other information is given except to those candidates who, in the opinion of the court, failed so badly that they should be notified of the fact.

## **EXAMINATION REPORT**

Following the examination a report is posted on the College website. It is prepared by the Chairman of the Primary Examination Committee from information provided by the Court.

The purpose of the report is to provide feedback to potential candidates and those involved in teaching and training programs. It provides information about the overall performance of candidates in the various sections of the examination and highlights any particular problem areas.

The report is in no way intended to reflect “model” answers, nor should it be construed that inclusion of all the material is necessary to gain either a pass or a maximum score.

In the report, where appropriate, some principles may be clarified or general misconceptions rectified. Specific reference material may also be provided where necessary.

The report also includes a list of topics assessed in the viva section of the examinations.

### **KEYWORDS**

In almost every examination report, the failure by some candidates to act on key words in written questions has been mentioned. In order to emphasise the importance of these words and to clarify their meanings, the Court of Examiners has decided to publish the following list of key words with their generally accepted meanings.

#### **Interpret the Question Correctly:**

COMPARE	Look for similarities and differences
CONTRAST	Set in opposition in order to bring out differences
DEFINE	Give the precise meaning
DESCRIBE	Give a detailed account of
EVALUATE	Make an appraisal of the worth of something
EXPLAIN	Make plain, interpret, account for
ILLUSTRATE	Make clear by concrete examples ( <u>or</u> use a diagram to clarify)
JUSTIFY	Show adequate grounds for decisions
LIST	Catalogue by groups or classes with minimal explanation
OUTLINE	Give the main features or general principles
RELATE	Show how things are connected to each other and how they affect each other