

Transition principles for the ANZCA Primary Examination

With the introduction of the Revised ANZCA Curriculum for the 2013 Hospital employment year

Changes to the Primary Examination

ANZCA Council recently approved changes to the Primary Examination, which will take effect following the introduction of the Revised Curriculum at the start of the 2013 hospital employment year. These include changes to the eligibility criteria, the validity of partial and full passes and a capping on the number of attempts possible.

What will the “new” Primary Exam assess?

Recommendations arising from the Curriculum Review Project included ensuring “that all aspects of the exam have practical/clinical relevance” and that “the content of the exam directly reflects the content of the ANZCA Training Programme”.

In response to these recommendations, Council has approved the syllabus topics for the “new” Primary Exam. These will be applied physiology, pharmacology, anatomy, measurement, equipment and quality and safety as outlined in those Learning Outcomes for the Clinical Fundamentals in Introductory and Basic Training. The exam will also include those Learning Outcomes for maternal and paediatric physiology and pharmacology from their respective Specialised Study Units (SSUs).

Examination content will be adjusted, to achieve a balance between the Primary and Final. This will take into consideration the relationship of some of the topics and the timing and availability of the associated clinical experience.

There will be a change in the way statistics is assessed and this topic will no longer be included in the “new” Primary.

When can I sit the “new” exam?

The “new” primary examination will be introduced in 2013, along with the Revised Curriculum. There will be two sittings of the “new” exam in 2013.

The “new” primary examination must be taken and passed as a whole, with no carrying of partial passes allowed. Council has previously agreed that the primary examination may only be taken whilst in training and after the Introductory Assessment of Anaesthetic Competence (IAAC) has been passed. (Some trainees may be deemed exempt from the IAAC during the transition period).

How many times can I sit the “new” exam?

From 2013 onwards, there will be capping at a maximum of five attempts for the Primary Examination. There will also be a compulsory remediation interview after three failures or after successful completion of all other aspects of Basic Training except the Primary Examination. This requirement will apply to the “new” Primary only. There will be no carry-over penalty for trainees who have failed to pass the current Primary. For the purposes of capping the number of attempts at the Primary Examination, no attempts at the current Primary will be counted.

What will happen to the current Primary Exam?

The current primary examination will be phased out during 2013. There will be two sittings of the current exam during 2012 and the last sitting will take place during the first half of 2013. The last sitting of the current exam will only be open to candidates carrying a partial pass from 2012 or earlier.

Candidates with a partial pass who are unsuccessful at the last sitting of the current exam, will need to sit the whole of the “new” primary exam, as their partial pass will no longer be valid.

What happens if I pass the current Primary Exam but I cannot get a training post?

Primary Examination passes will remain valid for a further 7 calendar years only, from the date of introduction of the Revised Curriculum, for those candidates who have passed the current exam before entering training but have not yet obtained an Anaesthesia training post in an ANZCA accredited department. After this time the pass will no longer be accepted as a substitute for the “new” Primary examination.

Transition Arrangements for the Primary Examination

Exam	2012		2013		2014	
	First sitting	Second sitting	First sitting	Second sitting	First sitting	Second sitting
Current Primary	Yes	Yes Last chance to complete both parts of the current Primary	Yes Only for candidates who are carrying a partial pass. Last chance to complete current Primary	N/A	N/A	N/A
“New” Primary	N/A	N/A	Yes BTY1 (>3-6/12 with IAAC or exemption or 6-12/12 with IAAC or exemption from IAAC) and BTY2 or BTYE	Yes	Yes	Yes

The above table replaces that previously published in the June 2011 edition of the ANZCA Bulletin