

Fellowship examination: Guidance for candidates

The fellowship examination consists of two sections; the written and the oral. Each section covers the theory and practice of pain medicine and must be passed in the same sitting.

Competencies related to the knowledge, behaviours and clinical skills pertinent to a specialist medical practitioner in the discipline of pain medicine will be tested at the examination. These competencies are found in section one to three of the [FPM curriculum](#).

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of what treatments/therapies are available and may be undertaken when they refer their patients on to other members of the pain management team and/or other specialist colleagues.

Format

Section	Format	Duration
Written section	10 short answer questions	2.5 hours plus 10 minutes reading time prior to the start of the examination. (15 minutes/ question)
Oral Section	4 structured viva voce examinations	15 minutes/ station (plus 2 minutes reading time)
	4 objective structured clinical examinations	10 minutes/ station (plus 2 minutes reading time)

Preparing to sit the fellowship examination

There are several resources available to trainees to assist with the preparations of the fellowship examination:

- FPM Curriculum
- Past examination reports
- ANZCA library
- Online Essential Topic Area resources
- Trainee support resources
- Centralised trainee tutorials program

Written examination

This section of the fellowship examination is conducted in regional centres as advertised on the [FPM website](#), approximately eight weeks prior to the oral examination.

Key words

In order to emphasise the importance of key words and to clarify their meanings, the following are key words which may be used during the examination.

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
Discuss	Give a detailed account of, including different points of view
Evaluate	Make an appraisal of the worth of something
Explain	Make plain, interpret, account for
Illustrate	Make clear by concrete examples (or use a diagram to clarify)
Interpret	Analyse, with reference to evidence
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

Results

Result of the written examination will be communicated to candidates approximately four weeks prior to the oral examination. Candidates who are successful in the written examination will be invited to the oral.

Conditions of entry to FPM examinations

Candidates are advised that no time-keeping, electronic or audio recording devices are allowed on their person or taken into an examination room, including any pre-exam or post-exam waiting (quarantine) areas. These items include, but are not limited to watches, wrist bands, fitness trackers, timers or alarms, mobile phones, calculators, portable computers, tablets, audio-recording devices, notes, books, textbooks or other learning materials. This requirement is intended to protect the academic integrity of our high stakes examinations

Oral examination

The oral examination is conducted in two rounds of four stations; the objective structured clinical examination and the structured viva voce examination. Each part will be marked by up to two examiners and carries equal marks.

Structured Viva voce Examination

The structured viva voce examination will follow a predetermined format with a scenario. An introductory case scenario may be used to start a viva to enable the candidate to orientate to the particular task.

Objective Structured Clinical Examination

This assessment approach is designed to promote objectivity and standardisation in the testing of skills and competence. A broad range of clinical, professional and communications competencies can be assessed.

The objective structured clinical examination assess the skills and attributes listed for the structured viva voce examination in the context of a series of simulations and discussions. Each station requires attention to specific aspects of a given scenario; these stations are not necessarily designed to assess every aspect of a particular situation.

Candidates may be asked to comment on imaging studies or other investigations in the course of the objective structured clinical examination. The objective structured clinical examination may involve an exploration of a hypothetical administrative or organisational scenario.

A simulated patient (such as an actor or an examiner, playing a role) may be the subject of the station. Photographs, video or audio capture may be used.

General advice

- You are required to follow the instructions of the invigilators at all times during the exam. Failure to comply with the examination condition may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the academic integrity policy.
- Verbalise your actions; the examiner cannot assume that you have carried out an action unless he or she is told.
- Try to manage the situation as you would in your normal pain management practice.
- Read the written scenario carefully and mentally consider your approach to the problem.
- Use the note taking material at any time to jot down reminders.
- Do not hesitate to ask the examiners to repeat any question.
- Be precise. Use statements such as "I will do x". Avoid vague responses such as "I would probably do".
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Listen to the feedback questions carefully.
- You may finish answering the questions early during your Structured Viva voce Examination or objective structured clinical examination. This does NOT necessarily mean you have performed poorly. If this occurs, the examiner will advise that you have completed the set of questions and you will be asked to remain seated. There should be no talking during this time.

Results

Results will be announced after the court of examiners' meeting, usually held at the conclusion of the examination. The presentation of successful candidates to the Court of Examiners will be held on the same day, followed by a social function. Partners are welcome to attend the presentation.

If held online, candidates will be notified of their results the day following the oral examination.

Feedback interviews

Feedback interviews are offered as part of the faculty's additional support to trainees who need to re-sit the fellowship examination. To assist with the organisation of the interview, trainees are encouraged to submit their request, in writing, within three weeks post-examination. Trainees are encouraged to bring their supervisor to the interview.