

Faculty of Pain Medicine Examination Committee

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES AND SUPERVISORS of TRAINING

Structured Oral *Viva Voce* (SOV) and Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE)

1. PREAMBLE

The Faculty of Pain Medicine Training Handbook states that, in the course of the examination day each candidate will undertake eight viva voce stations. These will be undertaken in two rounds consisting of four OSCE stations (10 minutes each) and four vivas (15 minutes each). Each station attracts equal marks.

The following qualities of a medical expert are assessed:

- clinical judgement
- the application of principles of acceptable and safe pain medicine practice
- prioritisation
- scholarly interpretation of complex clinical situations
- an ability to make decisions based on changing clinical situations
- anticipation of clinical actions and their sequelae
- effective communication
- the capacity to collaborate, advocate and administer in the health system context

2. OSCE DESIGN

The OSCE stations assess the above skills and attributes 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.

3. WHAT IS AN OSCE?

The observed structured clinical examination is an assessment approach 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 candidate may be asked to comment on imaging studies or other investigations in the course of the OSCE.

Generally, but not always, a real or simulated patient may be the subject of the station. Photographs, video or audio capture may be used instead. The OSCE may involve an exploration of a hypothetical administrative or organisational scenario.

The examiners will expect the candidate to provide specific pre-determined responses to the situation in order to achieve the marks available for the scenario. Any questions put to the candidate will be scripted, along with the timing of such questions. Examiners cannot provide candidates with questions, prompts or responses which are not scripted to be given to all candidates.

4. HOW IT WORKS

Each candidate will move through a series of eight (8) examination stations (4 OSCEs and 4 SOVs), and each station will pertain to a given scenario, in relation to which specific responses are required in order to satisfy the requirements of that station. The questions posed, and responses required, are closely scripted to ensure standardisation of the examination across the candidature.

The eight stations will be divided into 2 sets of four active stations, with the possible inclusion of an inactive “Bye” station which may need to be included depending on rostering requirements.

A candidate will have two minutes immediately prior to the start of the station, to consider a short scenario which will be posted outside the station. You will be permitted to make notes.

At the announcement, the candidate will enter the booth and spend the specified time with the examiners (15 minutes for VIVAs and 10 minutes for OSCEs). At the end of each session an announcement will indicate that the candidate will exit the booth and proceed to the next station to repeat the process.

After completion of 4 active stations (with the possible inclusion of a “Bye” Station depending on logistics), the candidates and examiners will have a brief intermission.

5. GENERAL NOTES TO CANDIDATES

The use of written notes or electronic devices is strictly prohibited. Candidates are advised that the Faculty staff will request candidates to surrender electronic devices, including “smart” wristwatches prior to the examination.

Count down clocks are displayed in each station.

Candidates will be provided with blank notebooks.

Candidates with special needs, and particularly those with hearing or visual impairment, should discuss their situation with the Chair of the Committee for Examination, via their Supervisor of Training (SOT), at the time of submitting their application.

All examination stations are administered by a pair of examiners. At least one of the examiners will have had significant experience in the role. The purpose of having two examiners is to promote the standardisation of the examination process. Wherever possible, the Faculty endeavours to ensure that candidates are not examined by an examiner to whom they are well known. That is not always

achievable across the breadth of all stations. Be aware that, should you encounter such an examiner, the lead role will be taken by the other examiner.

From time to time, an observer may be present. That person may be an examiner in training, an external observer, or an SoT. Observers are prohibited from taking any active role in the examination process and may make no comment whatsoever which might influence the assessment provided by the examiners.