

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CANDIDATES**

### **FELLOWSHIP OF THE FACULTY OF PAIN MEDICINE EXAMINATION**

---

Success in the Faculty of Pain Medicine examination is a requirement for admission to Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine by training and examination.

The examination consists of written and oral sections and covers the theory and practice of Pain Medicine.

As the Fellowship of the Faculty of Pain Medicine is an “add-on” qualification, it implies a set of knowledge and attitudes, not necessarily global skills. Competencies related to this knowledge and attitudes will be tested at the examination.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate “knowledge of”, or “attitudes to”, and “form opinions about” all treatment modalities used in Pain Medicine. It is not expected that all candidates will be qualified to administer all treatment modalities however for guidance, candidates should refer to the Training Manual and the Objectives of Training.

Therefore candidates will be expected to have some 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.

Each of the four parts of the examination focuses on different aspects of the candidate’s knowledge.

A timetable for the examination is forwarded to each candidate.

#### ***Written Section:***

- This will consist entirely of short answer questions, with the duration of the examination being 2½ hours.
- Candidates will be required to answer **10** out of 15 short answer questions.
- Five of the ten questions to be answered will be from a compulsory set of five questions.
- The remaining five questions can be chosen from ten questions which are optional and which provide candidates with an opportunity to choose questions that may be aligned with their particular areas and/or knowledge.
- If appropriate, dot point answers will be accepted although some questions will have a problem-orientated theme, which may require more discussion.
- In developing a bank of short answer questions, the Examination Committee has identified questions, which they regard as being relevant to “core knowledge”, which all candidates must possess. The five compulsory questions will be relevant to this core knowledge.

*Marking: Each question carries an equal mark*

### **Structured Oral Vivas and Investigations**

- Each candidate will do four structured oral vivas of ten minutes each. The structured oral vivas will follow a predetermined format with a scenario.
- Three of these vivas will be aimed at acute, chronic and cancer pain respectively.
- The fourth viva will have diagnostic imaging, test results and/or other materials. Candidates may also be presented with blood results, nerve conduction studies and other investigations applicable to pain medicine.
- If a viva is not in your particular area of expertise, certain knowledge of management is expected.

*Marking: Each question carries an equal mark*

### **Long Case**

- Candidates will have one hour with a patient for obtaining a biopsychosocial history and physical examination.
- Twenty minutes will then be provided for making notes and organising the material.
- There will then be a thirty minute viva with a pair of examiners.
- A candidate's ability at history taking and physical examination must be of the highest standard.
- It is expected that the candidate will obtain a full biopsychosocial assessment of the patient. The candidate should not only take a detailed history about the patient's presenting complaint and their pain history, but should also obtain information about their other medical conditions. There should also be an assessment of their past medical history, family history and psychosocial history.
- The examination should be a full clinical examination.
- Candidates will be marked not only on their history taking and physical examination abilities, but also their ability to make a diagnosis and finally a management plan. When presenting the case to the examiners the candidate should provide a clear, concise presentation and this will be assessed along with the candidate's deductive skills.

*Marking: Each section of history, physical signs, case presentation and management plan carries equal marks.*

### **Short Cases and Role Play (Actor)**

- There will be three stations with patients.
- Each candidate will visit each of the three stations and will spend ten minutes at each station.
- These stations will be a mixture of "cold" and "hot" cases. The "cold" cases will be with patients who have an established condition that has been previously diagnosed and treated. There will be at least one "hot" case which may be a patient brought from a ward or recent clinic who has a condition about to be treated, or is currently under treatment.
- It is expected that, having been led, the candidates will take a very focused history and/or examination of the area that they are directed towards.
- Marks will be allocated for the history, examination, presentation and the deductive skills of the candidate.
- The fourth viva will involve a "role-play" (actor), which aims to evaluate the candidate's communication skills. Candidates are expected to be able to interact with the actor who may be playing the role of the patient or a patient's relative to listen, deal with challenging situations and impart appropriate information.

*Marking: Each question carries an equal mark*

**Court of Examiners' Meeting**

The Court of Examiners will meet at the conclusion of the examination. Results will be announced at the conclusion of the Court of Examiners' meeting. Successful candidates will be presented to the Court of Examiners at the conclusion of the examination. The Court of Examiners will then have a brief social function with the successful candidates.

Partners are welcome to attend the presentation and you are also welcome to bring your camera.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not wear any form of personal identification to the examination, e.g. hospital I.D.
- You are not permitted to have mobile phone/pager on. You are not permitted to bring mobile phones, pagers or programmable calculators into the examination rooms.
- At the beginning of every viva examination you must identify yourself to the examiners by your **candidate oral examination number only**.
- Remember, the examiner is interested in what you know. He or she is not trying to trick you or find out what he or she does not know.
- 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.
- When a written case scenario is used, read it 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.
- Remember, there is no substitute for knowledge.

## KEY WORDS

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

*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
DESCRIBE BRIEFLY	Give a short description of
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)
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