

Guidance notes for completing CEC checklist

Breadth and level of the examination as a whole (all components including written practical and oral)

Are the questions focused on middle to higher level tasks such as creation, evaluation, analysis and application?

Questions should assess higher level learning outcomes such as the ability to create, evaluate, analyse and apply knowledge and skills. Refer [Examiner Handbook](#), Principles of College Assessment, fig 1.

Are the questions at the right level of difficulty?

There is a match between the depth of knowledge and degree of skill (both practical and cognitive) required to answer the question, and those specified for the topic in the learning outcomes.

Demanding tasks are provided for topics in which a high degree of skill or knowledge is required; less demanding tasks are provided for topics in which a lower degree of skill or knowledge is required.

Whether the exam is a fellowship or membership exam must be considered.

Do the questions provide the right breadth of coverage and relative weighting of the subject guidelines?

As a whole, all 3-4 components of the examination (writtens, practicals and orals) should sample from all the learning outcomes specified in the subject guidelines and with the most important topics and skills given the most weighting in the examination. There should be nothing in the examination that does not fall within the learning outcomes as specified in the subject guidelines.

Examination structure

Do the examination materials follow the exam structure format as described in the current guidelines?

The Subject Examination Committee representative is responsible for reviewing and editing the submitted examination paper and answer key prior to its submission to the College Office by the Head Subject Examiner. This will usually involve liaising with examiners to ensure examination papers and marking schemes conform to Subject Guidelines and College requirements

Does the content come from the recommended reading list?

The questions should be able to be answered from content in the recommended reading list.

Are marks allocated to each question and separate subpart?

All questions must have a mark allocation indicated. Subparts of questions should have marks indicated if they would be answered and marked separately. If subparts would form part of an integrated answer and marked holistically marks for subparts do not need to be indicated.

Are the marks allocated to each question and each sub-part appropriate?

Do the marks allocated reflect the relative difficulty, importance and time required for each question and subpart?

Do the marks add up to the expected total?

The total marks for the paper should be easy for candidates and examiners to follow so that it is easy to plan the time allocation for each answer. In general, 1 mark per minute of exam time is allocated, ie a 20 mark question will take 20 minutes to answer.

Is there sufficient time to answer all the questions?

Candidates should only need to write 20 words per minute or less to give a complete and correct answer.

For short or long answer questions 20% of the questions in this written or practical examination are not substantially similar to questions offered in the previous three examinations for this subject.

No more than 20% of the short or long answer questions in any written or practical examination can be substantially similar to questions offered in the previous three examinations offered in the same subject.

For multiple choice questions no more than 50% within each examination component may be reused per exam cycle.

Question structure

Is it clear for what is required in terms of scope for each question?

The scope needs to be well defined so it is clear to candidates what an answer should include and what it does not need to include.

Does each question contain an instructional verb that explains the task required to the candidate?

Instructional verbs (eg: discuss, explain, critique) must be provided to indicate to candidates what they need to do to demonstrate their knowledge.

Are the questions worded as a statement?

Aside from multiple choice questions, there should be **NO** questions marks in the written papers.

Does each question avoid the use of the second person (you/your)?

Questions that use the second person are indefensible. Allowable exceptions include 'Justify/explain your approach'.

Is signalment provided and complete for clinical scenarios?

All of the relevant material must be provided for the candidate to answer the question.

Is each question worded so that it can be answered by candidates living either in Australia or NZ?

Unless specified otherwise in the learning outcomes, questions should be framed so that they can be answered using a knowledge of either Australian or NZ legislation, climate, geographical features etc

Have prompts/cues been appropriately planned for the oral examination?

Prompts and cues should be planned in advance for the oral examinations so that all candidates can be treated equitably.

If the oral exam spans multiple days, do the questions on subsequent days cover different aspects of the same learning objectives?

The learning outcomes covered by the questions should be the same on subsequent days.

Are any ancillary materials used (images, radiographs, histopathology slides etc) fit for purpose, clear, legible and of good quality?

All materials used in written, practical and oral examinations should be checked by examiners and the SEC Chair. It is especially important to check that all agree on the interpretation and that the quality is sufficient that what is supposed to be seen can be seen. The level of difficulty in making the interpretation should also be appropriately aligned with the specified learning outcomes for the subject.

Are radiographs, ultrasounds, CT/MRI images displayed on a black background and correctly oriented with only 1-2 images per slide?

It is important that images used in oral and practical examinations are displayed appropriately.

Are images appropriately de-identified and labelled (eg L/R markers on radiographs, magnification of cytology slides)?

It is important that all images are appropriately labelled and displayed.

Are all the images relevant (ie. Are they required to answer the questions)? If not, suggest removing them as they may be distracting.

Irrelevant images can increase the candidate's cognitive load.

If there are multiple choice questions:

- Do they comply with the College MCQ policy?
- Do they comprise less than 50% of the marks for each exam component?
- Do they assess higher learning outcomes?
- Is there a clear testing point for each question? (ie the MCQ should not be a series of multiple true-false questions).
- Are the questions worded positively?
- Have all references to the second person (you/your) been removed?
- Are all the distractors plausible?
- Are the options in each key homogeneous in content and length?
- Are the questions and answers clear and unambiguous?
- Do they pass the 'cover test' (ie the questions should be answerable without needing to read the options)?
- Have all the 'clues' been removed from the stem (ie. Avoid repeating terms in both the stem and key)?
- Is there only one correct answer (and no option to select all/none of the above)??
- Do you agree with which answer is correct?

Marking guides

Is a marking guide provided which indicates the agreed standard by which candidates' answers will be judged and marks awarded?

How marks will be awarded and what constitutes a clear pass, borderline answer and fail should be discussed and agreed upon by examiners and recorded in a marking scheme for review by the SEC Chair and BoE. The marking scheme must be used by all examiners during marking.

Does the information provided in the marking guide address the question that is being asked?

Check the question is clearly worded so it asks the question the examiner wants answered, including all parts the marking guide awards marks for.

Do you agree with the marking guides?

Does the marking guide reward answers you consider are correct?

Have holistic marking rubrics been included for higher order questions?

Holistic marking rubrics allow factors such as logical approach, clinical reasoning, contradictory information etc to be rewarded or penalized. Please note that this is mandatory for all questions/subparts worth 6 or more marks (Membership) and 10 or more marks (Fellowship).

Grammar and spelling

Is the language used in each question clear and grammatically correct?

The meaning of the question is clear so there is no confusion about the task or scope. Abbreviations should be spelled out unless testing the knowledge of the abbreviation is a key part of the question (which would rarely be the case). Be aware that terminology may vary in different areas of the world.

Are there any spelling mistakes (particularly discipline specific words)?

The Macquarie Dictionary provides standard spellings to be used.

Are units given as SI units?

All imperial units should be converted to SI units or those in standard use in Australia and NZ.

Are any numerical values used realistic and correct?

For example are there any errors in scale such as the value is in the hundreds when it should be in the thousands?