2019 AFOEM Stage A
Written Examination

Australia & New Zealand

Instructions to Candidates
## Table of Contents

**Important examination information** ........................................................................................................ 3  
**Key dates** ............................................................................................................................................... 3  
**Locations** ............................................................................................................................................. 3  
**Fees** ..................................................................................................................................................... 3  
**Applying to sit the examination** ............................................................................................................. 4  
**Purpose of the examination** .................................................................................................................. 4  
  1. Eligibility .............................................................................................................................................. 4  
  2. Examination attempts .......................................................................................................................... 5  
  3. Application period ............................................................................................................................... 5  
  4. Payment ............................................................................................................................................... 5  
  5. Application confirmation ...................................................................................................................... 5  
  6. Final confirmation ............................................................................................................................... 5  
  7. Withdrawal of application .................................................................................................................. 6  
  8. Special consideration .......................................................................................................................... 6  
     8.1 Grounds for special consideration ............................................................................................... 6  
     8.2 How to apply for special consideration ..................................................................................... 6  
**Preparing for the examination** ............................................................................................................... 8  
  9. Format of the examination .................................................................................................................. 8  
     9.1 Multiple-choice questions .......................................................................................................... 8  
**Examination day** .................................................................................................................................. 9  
  10. Timetable ......................................................................................................................................... 9  
  11. Items to bring to the examination .................................................................................................... 9  
  12. Items not permitted in the examination area .................................................................................. 10  
  13. Seating arrangements ...................................................................................................................... 10  
  14. Completing the examination ........................................................................................................... 10  
     14.1 Completing the question booklet and answer sheet ................................................................. 10  
     14.2 Leaving the examination room ................................................................................................ 11  
**After the examination** ......................................................................................................................... 12  
  15. Marking ............................................................................................................................................ 12  
  16. Passing criteria ............................................................................................................................... 12  
  17. Results release ................................................................................................................................... 12  
  18. Candidate feedback .......................................................................................................................... 12  
  19. Re-marking ....................................................................................................................................... 13  
  20. Next steps ....................................................................................................................................... 13
Important examination information

Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination date</td>
<td>Saturday, 7 September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results release (via email)</td>
<td>Thursday, 17 October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications open</td>
<td>Monday, 24 June 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>Friday, 5 July 2019 (5pm AEST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-examination special consideration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requests close: Provisions for examination day</td>
<td>Friday, 5 July 2019 (5pm AEST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination day special consideration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requests close: Technical and procedural issues</td>
<td>Thursday, 12 September 2019 (5pm AEST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-marks requests</td>
<td>Sunday, 27 October 2019 (5pm AEDT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All candidates must meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline. Applications received after the deadline may not be accepted.

Locations

The Australian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) (the Faculty) Stage A Written Examination is held once each year. Venues are selected at the discretion of the College, but the examination will be held in Australian and New Zealand capital cities and regional centres.

Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount (AUD)</th>
<th>Amount (NZD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFOEM Stage A Written Examination</td>
<td>$1,930.00</td>
<td>$2,219.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-mark application</td>
<td>$593.00</td>
<td>$619.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about payment of RACP fees, please refer to the Terms and Conditions of College Fees.
Applying to sit the examination

Purpose of the examination

The purpose of the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination is to assess:

- clinical skills expected of a medical practitioner at completion of postgraduate year 2 (PGY2)
- skills at critical appraisal of general medical literature
- professional qualities
- knowledge of basic physics, chemistry and microbiology
- knowledge of anatomy, pathophysiology and pharmacology as outlined in the curriculum
- knowledge of methods of clinical investigation and treatment as outlined in the curriculum

This examination is a summative assessment.

1. Eligibility

Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) trainees are eligible to apply for the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination only if they are currently registered for the OEM Training Program – Basic Stage. All Stage A trainees must complete a minimum of six months of active certified training (one training period) in Stage A before they can attempt the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination.

To be eligible to sit the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination, you must:

- apply to sit the examination by the due date
- be a Stage A trainee in the AFOEM training program
- have an Educational Supervisor
- have completed an Advanced Life Support course and provided the Faculty with a certificate of completion
- have a minimum of 24 months of postgraduate training
- have current medical registration and be approved for the training term
- have certification in the most recent training period – that is, have completed all teaching and learning activities and formative assessments
- have completed a minimum of six months of active certified training in Stage A (one training period)
- comply with the limit on the number of examination attempts and other requirements for progression through training, which are detailed in the RACP’s Progression through Training Policy and the 2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook
- be fully current with all College training fees. Trainees with outstanding training fees will not be eligible to sit the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination unless they have made an application in writing to the Honorary Treasurer requesting special consideration.
- complete payment of the examination fee by the due date in order to guarantee a place at the examination.
2. Examination attempts

Limits on the total training time allowed is specified in the *Progression through Training Policy*.

Limits on the number of examination attempts allowed are specified in the *2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook*.

For more information, see both the *Progression through Training Policy* and *2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook* for eligibility criteria and examination attempts.

All enquiries relating to AFOEM Stage A Written Examination eligibility and examination attempts must be directed to the OEM Training Program.

**Email:** OccEnvMed@racp.edu.au  
**Phone:**
- Australia – 1300 MY RACP (1300 697 227)  
- New Zealand – 0508 697 227  
- Overseas – (+61) 2 9256 5444

3. Application period

The AFOEM examination dates are advertised in the eBulletin during the month of June. Application forms for AFOEM examinations are uploaded to the *Exams* page on the College website.

You can download and complete the application form online, and then submit it by email to examinations@racp.edu.au.

Late applications may not be accepted.

Closing dates are listed in the ‘Important examination information’ section in this document and are published on the College website.

4. Payment

Once the application period has closed, you will receive an email with a link to pay the examination fee and any outstanding fees due to the College. If you have outstanding training fees, you will not be eligible to sit the examination unless you have made an application in writing to the Honorary Treasurer requesting special consideration.

5. Application confirmation

You will receive an email confirming your application has been received, and a receipt of payment will be available in your MyRACP account. If you do not receive a confirmation email, then please contact examinations@racp.edu.au. You should also make sure you have checked your junk/spam email folders.

**Note:** The confirmation email indicates only that your application and payment has been successfully received. It does not confirm that your registration for the examination has been finalised.

6. Final confirmation

Once your eligibility for the examination has been finalised, you will receive a candidate allocation letter by email. This letter will confirm your registration for the examination and also provide details of your examination venue.
7. **Withdrawal of application**

If you wish to withdraw from the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination, you must advise the College by email at examinations@racp.edu.au. Withdrawals are not counted as examination attempts. You may withdraw up until the commencement of the examination.

Refunds of application fees will be provided according to the following rules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of withdrawal</th>
<th>Refund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 July – 11 August 2019</td>
<td>50% of application fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 August 2019 onwards</td>
<td>No refund available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To request a refund outside of these rules on medical or compassionate grounds, you must submit an application under the RACP’s *Special Consideration for Assessment Policy* (see below).

If you withdraw from the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination, you may re-apply to sit the examination in the following year, provided you meet the eligibility criteria. Application fees will not be rolled over from one year to another.

8. **Special consideration**

8.1 **Grounds for special consideration**

The College will take the following circumstances into consideration for the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination:

- circumstances occurring before the examination, including
  - permanent and longstanding impairment
  - temporary impairment – medical grounds
  - non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption
  - essential commitments (religious, cultural, societal or legal obligations)
- circumstances occurring after you have commenced the examination, including
  - technical or procedural issues encountered during the examination.

Candidates should refer to the *Special Consideration for Assessment Policy* for possible outcomes of an application for special consideration.

8.2 **How to apply for special consideration**

1. Read the *Special Consideration for Assessment Policy*.
2. Confirm the grounds for your request and the outcome you are seeking.
3. Collect the appropriate supporting documentation for your category.
4. Submit your request in writing to: examinations@racp.edu.au.

If you need to request a pre-examination special consideration after the specified closing date, you should contact the College immediately to discuss by calling 1300 697 227 or emailing examinations@racp.edu.au.
Requests for post-examination special consideration for events occurring on the examination day cannot be accepted after the specified closing date. Closing dates are listed in the 'Important examination information' section in this document.
Preparing for the examination

9. Format of the examination

The AFOEM Stage A Written Examination is a summative assessment consisting of a three-hour paper of 120 multiple-choice questions (MCQs).

The examination content is based on the AFOEM training curriculum:

- Domain 10: Clinical practice (50–60% of total questions)
- Domain 20: Workplace hazard assessment – only Theme 20.1 (7–10%)
- Domain 30: Critical appraisal of information (10–12%)
- Domain 60: Professional qualities (20–25%)

To view the OEM curriculum, please click here.

To view the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination learning objectives, please click here.

The AFOEM Stage A Written Examination has been designed by the Faculty Assessment Committee as an assessment of clinical competence.

In order to construct a Stage A examination that is both fair and relevant, the Faculty has developed a question bank of multiple-choice questions covering the necessary areas. The examination includes a wide selection of questions that are relevant, have a good ability to discriminate (between good candidates and poor candidates), and are broad in scope, extending across basic and general medicine.

9.1 Multiple-choice questions

This paper consists of 120 multiple-choice questions (MCQs).

All questions are single-answer MCQs, each with four (4) options.

You should choose only one (1) option and fill in the corresponding bubble on the answer sheet provided.
Examination day

10. Timetable

You are advised to arrive at your allocated examination centre by **8.15am**.

**Note:** This is an example of the typical timetable. It may vary on the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15 – 8.30am</td>
<td>Candidates arrive and sign in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.40am</td>
<td>Pre-examination announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Reading time commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15am</td>
<td>Examination commences. Candidates may commence writing candidate name, candidate number and other details on question booklet and answer sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.05pm</td>
<td>Announcement to candidates that there are 10 minutes remaining in the examination, and that candidates cannot leave the examination room until 12.15pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15pm</td>
<td>Examination finish time – question booklets and answer sheets collected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Items to bring to the examination

You are required to bring the following items to the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination:

- your candidate allocation letter (hardcopy or email) showing your candidate name, number and examination location. This letter is sent to you in August and will also outline your examination venue details. You cannot sit the examination without this letter.
- current photographic identification that shows your full name and signature – for example, passport or photo driver licence
- blue or black ballpoint pens (no pencils or gel or felt-tip pens are allowed)
- one (1) ruler.

During the examination, all mobile phones/pagers/electronic devices are to be switched off, placed on the floor under your desk and visible to the Invigilator at all times. Any candidates found with their mobile phone/pager/electronic device on their person during the examination will be automatically disqualified and immediately escorted out of the examination venue. Any phones or pagers that sound during the examination will be subject to an incident report.

Electronic watches are to be switched off and placed under your chair.
12. Items not permitted in the examination area

The following items are not permitted in the examination area:

- written material (other than your candidate allocation letter)
- calculators/electronic devices (including ‘smart’ watches and/or any devices)
- food or beverages (other than water)*
- all other belongings (e.g. bags).

* You may bring bottled water into the examination room. If you require other beverages or food during the examination for medical reasons, you must submit an application for special consideration by Friday, 5 July 2019. No other food or beverage may be consumed during the examination without pre-approval. See ‘How to apply for special consideration’ above in these instructions for special consideration application procedures.

13. Seating arrangements

Examination seating is allocated. Seating lists showing candidate names and seat numbers will be displayed near the entrance of the venue.

Any enquiries about seating on the examination day must be discussed with the Chief Invigilator as soon as possible.

If you require specific seating arrangements during the examination for medical reasons, you must submit an application for special consideration by Friday, 5 July 2019. See ‘How to apply for special consideration’ above in these instructions for special consideration application procedures.

14. Completing the examination

14.1 Completing the question booklet and answer sheet

You will be provided with the following items:

- a question booklet
- an answer sheet.

On your question booklet and answer sheet, you must write your name, candidate number and examination city. These details are on your candidate allocation letter. You are not permitted to commence filling in your details until the examination has commenced and you are instructed to write by the Invigilator.

Use only a black or blue ballpoint pen to mark the question booklet and answer sheet, as your answer sheet will be computer-marked. Please keep the answer sheet clean and neat when filling in the response bubbles to ensure that the marks for the examination are produced without delay.

If you need to change an answer, put a cross through the incorrect answer and mark the correct answer. If you wish to reselect a previously crossed through response, circle the answer to mark the correct answer and ensure any incorrect answers are crossed through. Anything out of the ordinary will be manually reviewed.

You should ensure your chosen response is obvious. See the following examples.
It is your responsibility to ensure that you correctly transcribe your answer from the question booklet to the answer sheet.

### 14.2 Leaving the examination room

You must not leave the examination room without the approval of an invigilator. If you require a toilet break, an invigilator will escort you to the facilities. If you wish to leave the examination room before the end of the examination, please remain seated and raise your hand to alert an invigilator who will then check your materials and release you.

When you have finished the examination, you may leave the examination room from 30 minutes and up until 10 minutes before the end of each exam paper. Please ensure your question booklet and answer sheet are collected by an invigilator before leaving. You are not permitted to leave the examination room during the last 10 minutes of each paper.

On completion of each paper, your question booklet and answer sheet will be collected.

All content contained in these documents is considered confidential examination material and must not be removed from the examination room. You are not permitted to reproduce or distribute the contents of examination material at any time or in any way. Reproducing or distributing examination material is considered a breach of the College’s [Academic Integrity in Training Policy](#).
After the examination

15. Marking

All candidate scoresheets are processed twice to ensure all responses are recorded accurately. Where any variation occurs, scoresheets are reviewed manually. All scoresheets that have a fail result are reviewed a third time to ensure that results are accurate.

16. Passing criteria

The AFOEM Stage A Written Examination consists of 120 multiple-choice questions (MCQs). For each question answered correctly, one (1) mark is awarded. Marks are not deducted for incorrect answers. To pass the examination, candidates must achieve a score equal to or higher than the pass mark.

To set the pass mark, the College uses the Modified Angoff method. In this process, a number of subject matter experts (SMEs) are asked to estimate, for each question, a percentage of minimally competent candidates who would answer the question correctly. The SMEs’ ratings are averaged per question and this average rating is the Angoff score for each question. The pass mark for the examination then is determined by averaging all the Angoff scores. Given this process, the pass mark may vary from year to year according to the difficulty of the paper.

The College reviews the examination before the release of results. All MCQ answer sheets are scanned, and any anomalies are reviewed. The performance of each of the examination questions is analysed and the pass mark reviewed to determine each candidate’s result. During this process, one or more questions may be removed from the examination and the pass mark adjusted accordingly.

17. Results release

You will be notified of your examination outcome by email. Please log on to MyRACP or contact memberservices@racp.edu.au to ensure that both your email and contact number with the College are current. You can update your details yourself simply by logging on to MyRACP and going to ‘Edit details’.

Results release (after 3pm AEDT): Thursday, 17 October 2019

If you have not received your results by 8am the day after the results release date, please:

- check your junk/spam email folder
- identify whether you are using a computer with a firewall.

If you still have issues, please contact the Examinations unit at examinations@racp.edu.au and request that your results notification be re-sent.* You may also contact the College by phone at 1300 MY RACP (1300 69 7227), (+61) 2 9256 5444.

* Please note that the Examinations unit is unable to discuss examination results with candidates over the phone or by email.

18. Candidate feedback

You will receive a results letter via email. It will include a summary of candidate performance across the range of topic areas.
19. Re-marking

If you are unsuccessful in the AFOEM Stage A Examination, you may request a re-mark.

The re-mark process is for candidates who believe that there has been a computer error made in the reading of their answer sheet. The re-mark process is a manual review of your answer sheet responses. The College advises those who are considering a re-mark to first discuss their performance with their Educational Supervisor.

To request a re-mark, contact examinations@racp.edu.au. A fee of $593.00 (AUD) or $619.95 (NZD) applies to re-mark applications. Requests must be received by Sunday, 27 October 2019 (5pm AEDT). The College is unable to accept late applications for a re-mark.

20. Next steps

Trainees must take and pass the AFOEM Stage A Written Examination in order to progress and undertake Stage B Training.

Refer to the eligibility criteria and exam attempts set out in the 2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook.

Please see the College website for the following important information on the AFOEM training program and important education policies:

- AFOEM 2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook
- AFOEM Training Curriculum
- College education policies.