2019 AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination

Australia

Instructions to Candidates
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Important examination information

Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination dates</td>
<td>Saturday, 16 – Sunday, 17 November 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(may be held over two days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results release (via email)</td>
<td>Thursday, 12 December 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>Friday, 5 July 2019 (5pm AEST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requests close:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Provisions for examination day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination day special consideration</td>
<td>Thursday, 21 November 2019 (5 pm AEDT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requests close:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Technical and procedural issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All candidates must meet 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 B Practical Examination is held once each year. It is held at St. Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne in Victoria.

Fee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>AUD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination</td>
<td>$2,888.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about paying your fees, please refer to the [Terms and Conditions of College Fees](#).
Applying to sit the examination

1. Eligibility

Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) trainees are eligible to apply for the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination only if they are currently in the OEM Training Program. All Stage B trainees must complete a minimum of 18 months of active certified training (three training periods) in Stage B before they can attempt the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination.

To be eligible to sit the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination, you must:

- be a Stage B trainee in the AFOEM training program
- have an Educational Supervisor
- have current medical registration and be approved for the training term
- have successfully completed the AFOEM Stage A written examination (if required)
- 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 18 months active certified training in Stage B (three training periods)
- have completed the relevant university graduate diploma or equivalent, and submitted the certificate to the Faculty prior to sitting the exam
- 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 B Practical Examination unless they have made an application in writing to the Honorary Treasurer requesting special consideration
- have completed payment of the examination fee by the due date in order to guarantee a place at the examination

OR

- have been endorsed by the Faculty Education Committee for special consideration (for example, overseas trained physicians).

2. Examination attempts

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

Limits on the number of exam attempts allowed are specified by the 2019–20 Program Requirements Handbook.

All enquiries relating to 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.

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, 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 have 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 as well as details of the examination venue.

7. **Withdrawal of application**

If you wish to withdraw from the AFOEM Stage B Practical 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 – 20 October 2019</td>
<td>50% of application fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October 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 Special Consideration for Assessment Policy (see below).

If you withdraw from the AFOEM Stage B Practical 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 B Practical 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 problems encountered during the examination.

Please 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 exam 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 B Practical Examination is a summative assessment that tests a trainee’s clinical skills in Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) at the end of Stage B training.

The examination may be held over two days and assesses skills across Domains 10, 20, 50, 60, 80 and 90 of the OEM Training Curriculum. It consists of:

- two (2) 20-minute exhibit-based assessment (EBA) stations
- two (2) 15-minute clinical stations, which involve the physical examination of real patients with the synthesis of clinical findings, and may include results of medical imaging, other relevant investigations and/or discussion of diagnoses
- two (2) 30-minute objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) stations, which involve history taking from a simulated patient.

Exhibit-based assessment (EBA) stations. These stations consist of a series of exhibits that may include x-rays, spirometry results, blood tests, audiograms, pathology specimens or the results of biological monitoring tests, occupational hygiene equipment, toxicological or occupation hygiene data, photographs of safety or ergonomic problems, or some safety statistics. For example, an x-ray of a case of pneumoconiosis may be presented along with some air monitoring sampling heads, respirators or dust monitoring data. Candidates may be asked to diagnose the medical condition and select the most appropriate sampling head to use in a workplace air monitoring survey or the most appropriate respirator. A video may be used to demonstrate some aspects of a real workplace.

Clinical/physical stations. The examination format requires candidates to be examined on two short cases. Each case will be scored independently by two examiners, who will then confer and award a consensus score. Short cases are designed to assess the technique of physical examination, the ability to elicit physical signs, and the ability to interpret and place appropriate significance to these findings. As part of candidates’ assessment of the findings, they may be asked to comment on relevant diagnostic tests – for example, x-rays, spirometry and/or nominate appropriate investigations. Where appropriate, candidates may re-position a patient to examine them.

There will be one short case per 15-minute session. During the session, candidates are usually asked to:
- physically examine the short case (up to 10 minutes) – these will be real patients, not actors
- describe and demonstrate the clinical findings
- interpret their findings
- answer questions about their findings
- comment on appropriate diagnostic tests
- nominate appropriate further investigations where necessary.

Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) stations. The history-taking exercises are based on the principles of objective structured clinical examination, also known as OSCE, which has been shown to be a reproducible and standardised method of assessing problem-solving skills.

At each of these stations, candidates will be required to take an occupational history from a simulated patient, who plays a role consistent with an occupational medical problem. The scripts for these roles comprise of a standardised history that includes such factors as clinical symptoms, relationship with work, past occupational history, relevant exposure information, relevant past medical history and other important lifestyle factors. The histories, along with pre-set, standardised marking guides, are developed by the examiners.
In the OSCE stations, clinical scenarios may include the identification of occupational causes of a medical problem, assessment of impairment for return to work, a pre-employment medical or a rehabilitation problem.

There will be two (2) examiners for each station. In addition, a Fellow of the Faculty may be present, conducting a quality assurance activity. However, the quality assurance Fellow will only act as a silent observer throughout the examination process.

10. Examination preparation

The standard required in the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination is the ability to:

- perform a competent clinical examination
- demonstrate competence in taking an occupational health history
- interpret general medical and surgical conditions in the context of occupational settings
- demonstrate competence in areas specific to occupational and environmental medicine, such as workplace assessment, health surveillance and industrial hygiene.

You should refer to the Stage B Domains in the AFOEM curriculum in preparation for the examination, and aim to obtain experience in relevant areas of OEM.

Attendance at the AFOEM Annual Training Meeting (ATM) is strongly encouraged. Insight into the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination is covered in the educational sessions at the ATM.

10.1 Pre- and post-examination contact

You should be aware that the following actions may be perceived as attempting to gain an advantage in the examination, and may lead to disqualification from the examination and/or may affect your progress through training:

- any attempt to gain knowledge of who is examining at your allocated hospital
- any attempt to contact potential examiners to seek guidance on how to improve your performance in the examination
- any attempt to contact the examiners you encounter during the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination day.

All examination preparation enquiries and enquiries after the examination must be directed to the Assessment and Selection team by email at examinations@racp.edu.au.

Please refer to the College’s Academic Integrity in Training Policy.
Examination day

11. Timetable

The AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination is held at one site and may be held over two days. You will be advised in your candidate allocation letter if you will either sit the examination in the morning or in the afternoon.

The following are examples of the typical morning and afternoon timetables. They may vary on the day.

Morning cycle

Morning candidates are advised to arrive at the venue by 9.30am.

The following is a typical overview of the morning examination timetable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td>Candidates arrive and sign in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.40am</td>
<td>Pre-examination briefing by the Chief Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.50am</td>
<td>Candidates are directed to a seat adjacent to their first allocation station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Examination commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.05pm</td>
<td>Examination finish time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10pm</td>
<td>Candidates are de-briefed by the Chief Examiner before leaving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afternoon cycle

Afternoon candidates are advised to arrive at the venue by 12.30pm.

The following is a typical overview of the afternoon examination timetable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.35pm</td>
<td>Candidates arrive and sign in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15pm</td>
<td>Pre-examination briefing by the Chief Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30pm</td>
<td>Candidates are directed to a seat adjacent to their first allocation station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.35pm</td>
<td>Examination commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.40pm</td>
<td>Examination finish time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.45pm</td>
<td>Candidates are de-briefed by the Chief Examiner before leaving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. **Items to bring to the examination**

You are required to bring the following items to the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination:

- your candidate allocation letter (hardcopy or an electronic copy e.g. email or on your mobile phone) showing your candidate name, number and examination location. This letter is sent to you in August by email and will also outline your examination venue details. You cannot sit the examination without this letter.
- current photographic identification that displays 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) stethoscope
- one (1) standard analogue wristwatch (no ‘smart’ watches or electronic devices).

Please remember to dress appropriately for the weather conditions. Wear comfortable clothes that will allow for the examination of patients. It is not necessary to wear a suit, but professional attire is appropriate. Casual clothes, such as shorts and thongs, are not acceptable.

During the examination, all mobile phones/pagers/electronic devices are to be switched off and placed in your bag. 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. You will be advised on the day of the examination where your bag will be placed.

All candidates will be provided with a notebook for note-taking only for the OSCE examination stations.

13. **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 communication devices)
- food or beverages (other than water)*
- all other belongings (e.g. bags).

Clinical assessment equipment will be provided at each station as necessary. You will not be permitted to bring your own assessment equipment or aids into the assessment area unless you have been granted special permission before the examination, after submitting a special consideration request.

* 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.

14. **Misadventure**

If you do not arrive at the examination by the scheduled assessment time, you will be admitted up to 30 minutes after the start of the examination. However, the examination time will not be extended.

You will be informed of any variation in the examination procedure on the day at the final instruction before the start of the examination. If further variation in the procedure is required during the examination, you will be informed at the earliest opportunity with as little interference as practically possible.
15. **Conduct**

Candidates who wilfully damage or interfere with any station will be excluded from the examination.

In order to maintain appropriate health and safety standards during the examination, you **must ensure that you wash your hands before and after carrying out any physical examination.** Alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel is provided either outside or inside the stations. Using the gel before entering the room can save time during the examination segment. You should advise the examiners if you have washed your hands before entering the station.

A confidentiality agreement is to be signed by all candidates before the commencement of the examination. Any candidate who breaches this agreement will be excluded from the assessment.

16. **Role of examiners and observers**

One or more Faculty examiners will be present at each station. At all stations, the examiners will check your candidate number before proceeding. At this time, you will hand over the printed stickers with your candidate number to the examiners, who will place them on the marking sheet.

At all stations, the examiners will directly observe and score your performance while you undertake specific tasks. You will be given specific instructions. Ask for clarification of instructions if necessary.

If the examiners judge that you are performing an inappropriate clinical examination to the extent that the patient is at risk of being hurt, the examiners will warn you in explicit terms that you should modify your examination technique. If you continue to conduct an inappropriate clinical examination, the examiners will stop the examination and move on to the next question in the station. The examiners have discretion to give the clinical examination component of the station a zero score. If this occurs, all other questions in the station will be marked on their own merit.

The examiners will notify the Chief Examiner of any technical and procedural problems that may occur during the exam. The Chief Examiner will also meet with all the candidates after the examination to ensure that any technical or procedural issues that may have arisen are noted before candidates’ departure.

AFOEM-approved observers may also be present at a station and will be introduced to you by the examiners at that station. Observers are not involved in examining or contributing in any way to the assessment. You should not communicate with observers.

17. **Role of the quality assurer**

A quality assurance (QA) Fellow will attend at the start of sessions and leave after the examiner discussion. No quality assurance Fellow will enter the room outside of those times.

The role of QA Fellows is to observe that the station is being conducted as per the calibration requirements. The QA Fellow directly observes examiners and patients in line with the guidelines as outlined in the calibration session. If a QA Fellow believes there needs to be further discussion about the concept of minimal competence of candidates, they will discuss this with the examiners.

18. **Leaving the examination room**

On completion of the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination, you must surrender all papers and the notebook used in the OSCE examination stations, as the content contained in these documents is considered confidential examination material.

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.

You are not permitted to discuss your performance or details of the examination with the patients/role players, volunteers, observers, examiners or any examination organisers during or after the examination. Any discussion of this nature may be considered academic misconduct.
After the examination

19. Marking

Examiners rate candidates’ performance by reference to pre-determined standardised criteria.

To pass the Stage B Practical Examination, you must be successful in:

- at least one (1) exhibit-based assessment; AND
- at least one (1) Short Case clinical examination; AND
- at least one (1) occupational history-taking exercise; AND
- at least four (4) examination stations overall.

The pass mark for the Short Case clinical examinations is set to 12/20.

The pass mark for the other stations is established using the Modified Angoff method and the assessment of the stations by subject matter experts.

20. Results

You will be notified of your examination outcome by email. Please ensure that both your email and postal address with the College are current.

Results release (after 3pm AEDT): Thursday, 12 December 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 Assessment and Selection team at examinations@racp.edu.au and request that your results notification be resent.* You may also contact the College by phone at 1300 MY RACP (1300 697 227), (+61) 2 9256 5444.

* Please note that the Assessment and Selection team are unable to discuss examination results with candidates over the phone or via email.

21. Candidate feedback

All candidates will receive a results letter by email. A summary of feedback on general candidate performance will be included.

22. Next steps

A pass in both the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination and AFOEM Stage B Written Examination is required before trainees are eligible to progress to Stage C Training. There is no requirement to take the AFOEM Stage B Written Examination prior to the Stage B Practical Examination.

After successful completion of both the AFOEM Stage B Practical Examination and AFOEM Stage B Written Examination, trainees will need to complete their year of training and any training requirements. The Occupational and Environmental Medicine Training Program Officer will advise the next steps to Stage C 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.**