Answering Written Examination Questions
Exam Basics

• Keep calm and take a moment to think about what is being asked in each question.
• Look carefully at how much each section of the question is worth and apportion your time appropriately.
• Make sure you answer all aspects of the question.
• Don’t spend too much time answering sections you know well at the expense of questions you may not know so well.
• Never just proffer generic facts about a broad subject area. Always carefully tie what you say to the scenario or issue at hand.
• Time is a big issue in the exams so practice writing answers under time pressure.
Epidemiology

• Epi makes up a large portion of the exam marks
• Know the basics well and this should be easy marks
  – p values, confidence intervals, relative risk, odds ratio, the study types and their relative pros and cons, levels of evidence and what they mean, 4 by 4 tables and all the things you can calculate from them, Bradford Hill criteria etc.
• Practice critical appraisal throughout the year so you become very familiar with the process.
Use the Curriculum

• The scope of occupational medicine and the examination is very broad and using the curriculum as a topic study guide will help you focus on what areas are important and not miss out on areas you might not consider as important.
Frameworks vs Specifics

• Frameworks for answering common types of questions can be very useful.
  – Structured answer
  – Helps you cover all aspects of a question
  – Helps with time

• But make sure you tie your answers to the scenario presented and your are not just writing down the generic framework!
Some common question scenarios

• Return to Work
• Fitness for Work
• Workplace Assessment
• Environmental Assessment / Risk Management

Develop your own frameworks for these then practice using them when practicing questions.
Risk Assessment / Management

- Within the workplace
- Environmental issues
I.A.M.A.

- Identify
- Assess
- Manage
- Audit/review
Identify

• Identification (of hazard)
  • historical
  • previous monitoring
  • hazard register
  • work site assessment
  • task / materials inventory

• Identification (of exposed population / individual)
  • particularly vulnerable individual / groups
Assess

• Exposure information
  • Route
  • Concentration
  • Duration

• Dose response information
  • Literature review
  • internet (NIOSH / TOXNET)
  • MSDS

• Risk characterisation
  • Relate points above
  • prioritize risks / form a risk matrix
  • consider risks to various populations

• Risk communication
Manage

• Hierarchy of controls
  – Eliminate
  – Substitute
  – Isolate
  – Minimise
    • engineering controls
    • organisation controls
  – PPE

• How to prioritize individual hazards (risk matrix)
Audit

- Effectiveness of controls
  - environmental monitoring
  - personal monitoring
- Whole system
Rehabilitation / RTW

• Balance between the demands of work and the capabilities of the person
• Interplay between medical factors - psychosocial factors - work factors
Assessments

- Workplace Assessment
- Occupational Medical Assessment
- Functional Capacity Assessment
- Psychosocial assessment
Key personnel

• Client
• GP
• Case manager
• Employer
• Assessors – Physio / OT / Social Worker / Occ Doc / psychologist
• Family
Aim to Identify and Address Barriers to RTW

• Injury factors
• Personal factors
  – medical, physical, psychological / transferrable skills
• Work/task factors
  – Job demands, alt duties, job satisfaction
• Workplace factors
  – Employer/supervisor attitudes, support, transport
Rehab Plan should involve:

- Signed contract
- Documented plan
- Clear short and long term goals
- Clearly established roles for key personnel (management, health workers, injured person, co-ordinator)
- Appointing overall coordinator
- outcome / end point
- strategies
- hours
- tasks / alternate duties
- monitoring – client / GP / ACC / co-ordinator / workplace
- co-ordination
- timeframes
- review protocol
- evaluation
Fitness for Work

Aim to ensure individual is fit to perform alternate work effectively and without risk to health and safety of others.

- The job
- The worker
- The workplace
Job task demands

- Physical requirements
  - movements and power required, ergonomics, duration or work / endurance required, rate of work and ability to take breaks, mobility and postures needed
- Availability of alternate duties / ability to make accommodations
- Aptitudes (dexterity / coordination)
- Sensory requirements
- Intellectual requirements
- Hazards
Individual Work Capacity

What are the workers functional capabilities?

- Capacity for specific tasks
- General fitness / stamina
- Mobility / posture / muscular / locomotor
- Coordination
- Cardio respiratory fitness
- Liability to unconsciousness
- Sensory
- Communication / speech
- Cognitive
- Mental state
- Motivation
- Treatment factors / special needs
Workplace / Environment Suitability

- Access to plant, work area, facilities, emergency exits
- Environment (lighting, noise etc)
- Specific hazards
- Organisational / social aspects
- Temporal aspects
- Travel