

AFPHEM Oral Examination - Guidelines for Mock Examiners

Thank you for assisting public health medicine trainees to prepare for the AFPHEM Oral Examination. The information below is designed to guide you in providing practice sessions to trainees.

For details of the information provided to candidates, please read the 'Prepare' and 'Exam Day' tabs on the [AFPHEM Oral Examination webpage](#).

Exam Procedure

Prior to the exam, candidates will be briefed by RACP staff. The briefing is a summary of key procedural points found on the webpage including invigilator assistance, time management, being prompted by examiners, seeking clarification on the questions, cues used to signal the start and end of a session, and having an observer and/or Quality Assurer present. There is an opportunity for candidates to ask any final questions.

1. Candidates are given a ring-bound folder containing all 8 questions (each on a separate page), pens and spare notepaper.
2. Candidates have 60 minutes reading and preparation time prior to commencing the exam. They can make notes on the folder provided.
3. Candidates address questions 1–4 with the first examining panel of (3) Fellows of the Faculty (30 minutes).
4. Candidates have a changeover period (15–20 minutes) where they may review and continue to make notes for questions 5–8.
5. Candidates address questions 5–8 with the second examining panel of (3) different Fellows of the Faculty (30 minutes).

Within each 30-minute session, candidates can answer the questions in any order.

Candidates are wholly responsible for their time management within each session. Examiners will not stop candidates from moving from one question to the next. They will only alert the candidate if they have 5 minutes or less remaining *and* the candidate has not started the final of the 4 questions.

Examiner Role

Examiners assess the trainee against the skill level of a new consultant for each question independently and provide a mark out of 10 for each question.

Process

One examiner of the panel of 3 will:

- Welcome the candidate and introduce the examiners (and QA or observer if relevant).
- Ask the candidate if they would like to vary the order of the questions.
- Ask the candidate if they require clarification about any of the questions.
- Be responsible for overall timekeeping in the session:
 - Start the timer in conjunction with the candidate; time commences after the above introductions and questions (see box below)

- Alert the candidate when they have five (5) minutes or less left if they have not started the final of the 4 questions.
- If time runs out, advise the candidate that their exam has concluded.
- If there is time remaining at the end of the candidate’s answers to all 4 questions, advise the candidate how much time is remaining and ask if they wish to add to any of their answers.
- At the end of the session, thank the candidate and remind them of what they should do next, i.e., leave the room and that their invigilator is waiting for them outside the door.

Examiner introductory script

“Good morning/afternoon [NAME].

I’m [NAME] and this is [NAME] and [NAME].

Do you need clarification about any of the questions?

Would you like to change the order of the questions?”

When any dialogue in relation to the above concludes:

“Your 30 minutes starts now.”

Body Language

Examiners:

- should be conscious of their body language and remain interested but neutral.
- must avoid telling facial expressions or body language such as frowning or enthusiastic nodding.

Prompting

Prompts are used sparingly and are of a general nature. For example, if a candidate has missed out part of the question: *“You have covered one part of the question. Would you like to respond to the other part?”*, or *“Are there any other aspects you would like to cover?”*

Examiners only prompt in situations where there is likely to be an advantage to the candidate.

Exam Questions

- Usually describe a realistic public health scenario and require the candidate to demonstrate how they would analyse the situation in a systematic way and respond in a practical sense.
- Usually have 1–2 key concepts at the heart of the scenario or question; e.g. evaluation, health promotion or risk management.
- Questions generally provide the employment context, provide a brief background or impetus for the question and then ask the question in one or two parts. Where questions have two parts, each part is weighted to guide the candidate on how much time to devote to each part.

Sample questions are available on the [AFPHM Oral Examination webpage](#).