

College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland

Regulations for Membership and Fellowship Examinations



CAI
SALUS DUM VIGILAMUS

College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland

Patron: Michael D. Higgins
President of Ireland

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FOREWORD

The College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland Examination Regulations governs the content and conduct of the examination leading to the award of Membership (MCAI) and Fellowship of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland (FCAI). These regulations specify:

- The requirements which must be satisfied before a candidate is eligible to apply for the examinations.
- The procedure to be followed in order to apply for the examination.
- The duration for which successfully passed examinations remain valid.
- The provision for guidance in the event of failure and the appeals process.
- The procedure for making representations and sanctions for infringements.

Important

Information in this document is accurate at the date of publication, to the best of our knowledge. However Regulations are continually evolving and up-to-date information should be obtained in writing from the College. An updated version of these Regulations will be available on the College website www.anaesthesia.ie.

There is inevitably some repetition in this document as it is intended to be used as a reference. If Regulations are unclear or seem contradictory, the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland will determine the correct interpretation.

College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland Examinations Committee
May 2013

CONTENTS:

1. Membership Examination (MCAI)

1.1	Eligibility Multiple Choice Question Paper	4
1.2	Structure	4
1.3	Marking scheme	4
1.4	Eligibility OSCE/SOE	4
1.5	Structure OSCE	5
1.6	Marking scheme OSCE	5
1.7	Structure SOE	6
1.8	Marking scheme SOE	6
1.9	Overall marking scheme MCAI	6
1.10	Prizes	6
1.11	Membership by Examination	6

2. Fellowship Examination (FCAI)

2.1	Eligibility	7
2.2	Exemption	7
2.3	Structure written paper	7
2.4	Marking scheme written paper	8
2.5	Structured Oral Examinations	9
2.6	Overall marking scheme FCAI	9
2.7	Prizes	9
2.8	Fellowship by Examination	9

3. Disability

3.1	Dyslexia	10
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4. Pregnancy 10

5. Guidance 11

6. Appeals

6.1	Grounds for appeal	11
6.2	Appeals procedure	12
6.3	Outcome of the appeal	12

7. Infringements and Exclusions 13

1. Membership Examination (MCAI)

1.1 Eligibility Multiple Choice Question Paper (MCQ)

- Any registered medical practitioner with a primary medical qualification acceptable to the Irish Medical Council (IMC) will be eligible to sit the MCAI MCQ Examination.
- Has been employed as an anaesthesiologist for 6 months, prior to the date of the particular exam applied for.
- Any candidate who has previously attempted and failed the MCAI MCQ 6 times will not be eligible to sit the exam again.

For a list of acceptable qualifications please see here: <http://search.wdoms.org/>.

1.2 Structure

The MCQ paper is made up of four papers.

- Pharmacology MTF
- Physiology MTF
- Clinical Measurement MTF
- Basic Science SBA

Over the course on the next year the number of MTF questions will remain unchanged but the number of SBAs will increase indicated in the table below

Paper	Jan 2018	June 2018	Sept 2018	Jan 2019
1 to 3	90 x MTF - 3 hours	90 x MTF - 3 hours	90 x MTF - 3 hours	90 x MTF - 3 hours
4	40 x SBA - 1.5 hours	40 x SBA- 1.5 hours	40 x SBA- 1.5 hours	50 x SBA- 2 hours

1.3 Marking Scheme

One mark is awarded for each correct answer. Negative marking is not used in the MCAI MCQ i.e. a mark will not be lost for an incorrect answer. A question booklet and an optical mark sheet will be provided to record your answers; 'Candidates should ensure that marks are **clearly** made on their optical reader sheets as ambiguous or unclear marks will not be processed by the optical reader. Allowances for a candidate who made ambiguous or unclear marks on their answer sheet will **not** be made during the correction process.

The successful candidate's exam numbers are published on the College website within 3 weeks of the examination.

1.4 Eligibility MCAI Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and the Structured Oral Examination (SOE)

An individual is eligible to sit the MCAI OSCE/SOE who fulfils the following criteria:

- Is a medical practitioner with a primary medical qualification acceptable to the Irish Medical Council (IMC) will be eligible to sit the OSCE/SOE.
- Is registered with the Irish Medical Council or other national medical registration body.
- Has been employed as an anaesthesiologist for 12 months, prior to the date of the particular exam applied for.
- Has been successful in the MCAI MCQ.
- Any candidate who has previously attempted and failed the MCAI OSCE/SOE 6 times will not be eligible to sit the exam again.

1.5 Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

The OSCE comprises up to 18 stations in approximately 2 hours (5 minutes per station) there may be 1 or 2 pilot stations. These stations do not contribute to the final mark but are used to ensure validity of the questions before they are used in examinations. There is one rest station. The OSCE comprises the following topics: resuscitation, technical skills, anatomy, history taking, physical examination, communication skills, anaesthetic equipment, monitoring equipment, measuring equipment, anaesthetic hazards, clinical anaesthesia, airway management scenarios and management of critical incidents, interpretation of radiological images, ECGs and biochemistry/haematology results. One of the stations may use a medium fidelity simulator.

1.6 Marking Scheme OSCE

The pass mark for each OSCE station is derived using the angoff method (written stations) or borderline regression (interactive stations).

The overall cut score or pass mark of the OSCE is calculated by aggregating the pass marks for each of the separate OSCE stations.

A candidate must pass 9 OSCE stations.

Up to two additional stations may be included in an examination to pilot new questions for use in future examinations. Neither the candidates nor the examiners will know which stations are pilot stations and the results from these stations will not contribute to the candidate's final mark.

Stations Passed	Grade
14-15	4
11-13	3
9-10	2
<8	1

1.7 Structured Oral Examination (SOE)

From Autumn 2019 : The SOEs are conducted over a 30 minute period with 2 examiners in each subject. Each SOE consists of 6 x 5 minute sections. There are 2 SOEs:

- 30 minutes comprising four questions in pharmacology and two questions in physics
- 30 minutes comprising four questions in physiology and two questions on clinical measurement.

1.8 Marking Scheme SOE

Outstanding	4
Pass	3
Borderline Fail	2
Outright Fail	1

Each SOE is marked independently by two examiners and the final agreed mark agreed at the end of the SOE. Both parts of the examination OSCE and SOE are taken on the same day.

1.9 Overall marking scheme Membership examination

Outstanding	4
Pass	3
Borderline Fail	2
Outright Fail	1

The minimum grades necessary to pass the examination are: 3, 3, 2.

A candidate who obtains a 1 in any part of the examination will receive an outright fail in the examination.

1.10 Prizes

The Membership Medal is awarded to a candidate who on their first attempt achieves a Grade 4 in all sections of MCAI examination. In the event of multiple candidates being eligible the candidate with the highest MCQ/SBA score will be awarded the medal.

1.11 Membership by Examination

In accordance with the Standing Orders of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland, a candidate who has successfully passed the Membership Examination of the College and who has complied with such provisions as determined by the Council shall be entitled to be admitted a Member of the College. On conferring, the Member shall be entitled to use the post-nominal letters MCAI.

2. Fellowship Examination (FCAI)

2.1 Eligibility

An individual is eligible to enter for the Final Examination leading to the award of Fellowship of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland who:

- Has passed within 10 years preceding the current examination date, or is exempt from, the Membership CAI (previously known as the Primary). Please see exemption details at 2.2
- Has completed 36 months in the practice of anaesthesia. Additionally, where the applicant is on the Irish National Anaesthesiology Training Programme, he/she must have completed 36 months within the training programme. A trainee who has completed 24 months on the training scheme can have 12 months' consecutive pre-scheme clinical anaesthesiology experience accredited towards the Final exam as long as it has taken place post internship and in a hospital approved by the CAI.
- Where a candidate has previously attempted the FCAI and is subsequently accepted onto SAT they will remain eligible for the FCAI.
- Any candidate who has previously attempted and failed the FCAI 6 times will not be eligible to sit the exam again.

2.2 MCAI Exemption

A candidate for the Final Fellowship examination shall be exempt from passing the Membership Examination, who within the 10 years preceding the date of application, has obtained one of the following qualifications:

- The Primary or Final Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists (UK)
- The Fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.
- The Fellowship of the College of Anaesthetists of South Africa.
- The Fellowship in Anaesthesia of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.
- The Diplomate Certificate of the American Board of Anesthesiology.
- The Diploma in Anaesthesiology of the European Society of Anaesthesiology.
- The Fellowship in Anaesthesiology of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan since April 1998.
- Overseas Qualifying Examination of the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland.
- Doctor of Medicine (Anaesthetics) University of West Indies since and including November 2013
- Any other degree or qualifications as may be from time to time approved by the Council of the College

2.3 Structure FCAI Written Examination

The written exam includes a Single Best Answer paper (SBA) paper and a Short Answer Question paper (SAQ).

The SBA paper includes questions on:

- Anaesthesia
- Pain Management
- Intensive Care Medicine
- General Medicine
- Surgery
- Anatomy related to anaesthesia practice
- Physics and clinical measurement

One mark is awarded for each correct answer. Negative marking is not used in the FCAI MCQ i.e a mark will not be lost for an incorrect answer. A question booklet and an optical mark sheet will be provided to record your answers, 'Candidates should ensure that marks are **clearly** made on their optical reader sheets as ambiguous or unclear marks will not be processed by the optical reader. Allowances for a candidate who made ambiguous or unclear marks on their answer sheet will **not** be made during the correction process.

The SAQ paper contains 10 questions and is conducted over 3 hours. All questions are compulsory. The 10 Questions on the SAQ paper will have 3 to 6 sub parts. The allocation of marks for these sub parts will appear on the question paper Topics for the examination can be found in the CAI Syllabus of Examinations but may broadly include: principles and practice of Clinical Anaesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Medicine, Physics and Clinical Measurement.

2.4 The SAQ marking scheme

The pass mark for the SAQ is derived using the Angoff method.

The final grade will be assigned based on the number of questions answered satisfactorily.

	Grade
Excellent	4
Pass	3
Borderline Fail	2
Outright Fail	1
No answer submitted	0

Candidates with a score of 3,3 only will progress to the SOEs. Candidates with a mark below 3 in either the MCQ/SBA section or in the Short Answer Questions section will not be invited to attend SOEs.

2.5 Structured Oral Examinations (SOEs)

Clinical case scenario. Case study to be read by candidates (10 minutes) to be followed by 30 minutes of examination during which the candidate is asked to discuss the case including relevant investigations and peri-operative/critical care management. You will be asked to comment on artifacts such as relevant ECGs and chest radiograph.

	Grade
Excellent	4
Pass	3
Borderline Fail	2
Outright Fail	1

SOE 1 - 25 minutes. A structured oral examination on clinical anaesthesia and pain management. Clinical artifacts may be used to direct a discussion.

SOE 2 - 25 minutes. A structured oral examination on Intensive Care topics (Clinical artifacts may be used to direct a discussion), Clinical Measurement and application of Basic Sciences to Anaesthesia.

The SOEs are marked as above.

2.6 Overall marking scheme FCAI

	Grade
Excellent	4
Pass	3
Borderline Fail	2
Outright Fail	1

Minimum grades to pass the FCAI are: 3,3,2.

2.7 Prizes

The Final Medal (William and Jane Brophy Medal) may be awarded to a candidate who achieves a total score of 18 (i.e. 4,4,4,3,3) or above in the FCAI examination. Candidates who have previously attempted the FCAI or FRCA examination are not eligible for this award. In the event of multiple candidates being eligible the candidate with the highest SAQ score will be awarded the medal.

2.8 Fellowship by Examination

In accordance with the Standing Orders of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland, a candidate who has successfully passed the Final Fellowship Examination of the College and who has complied with such provisions as determined by the Council shall be entitled to be admitted a Fellow of the College. On conferring, the Fellow shall be entitled to use the post-nominal letters FCAI.

3. Disability

All requests from candidates with a disability must include a written statement of support from the employer's Occupational Health Department (OHD) and/or College Tutor confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant special examination arrangements. Each request will be considered individually.

3.1 Dyslexia

The following provisions will normally be made:

- (a) MCQ Papers: Additional time 15 minutes per hour.
- (b) SOEs: For the clinical component of the Final there are an additional 5 minutes reading time for other SOEs there are no other special arrangements.
- (c) OSCEs: No special arrangements are offered.
- (d) SAQ: an additional 15 minutes per hour i.e. 3 hours 45mins.

Candidates must supply:

A written assessment within the last 12 months from an educational psychologist which includes a statement confirming that the candidate's difficulties warrant special examination arrangements.

Such an application will be considered by the Chairman of the relevant examination. If a candidate is not able to supply the above documents before the commencement of the examination, the candidate may choose to:

- (a) withdraw without penalty as per the standard procedure, or
- (b) proceed without special arrangements.

4. Pregnancy

Any prospective candidate should notify the Examinations Department as soon as possible of the fact of their pregnancy and the expected date of confinement.

A prospective candidate must advise the College:

- (a) Of any pregnancy related problems or illnesses
- (b) If confinement is due before or around the date of the examination
- (c) If the condition causes significant discomfort for her to consider that it will have a detrimental effect upon her examination performance

In such circumstances, should such a candidate be unable to sit the examination, withdrawal will be permitted and the examination fee will be refunded (subject to deduction of an administrative fee)

A candidate should provide appropriate medical certificates and should notify the Examinations Office in advance if there are any special requirements (e.g. high-backed chair)

5. Guidance

Candidates who are unsuccessful in the examination may avail of guidance from the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland. For the purpose of this Regulation, guidance may consist of:

- Written/ email or oral communication with the candidate.
- Attendance at an interview arranged by the Chair of the Examinations Committee or a nominee e.g. Chair of the Membership or Final Examination.

All requests must be made within 30 days of sitting the unsuccessful examination

- A candidate who has failed the Membership OSCE/SOE or Final Examination on more than one occasion can request an interview
- No special consideration will be given in respect of refunds following interviews.
- Non-request/attendance at an interview will not affect eligibility for future examinations.
- Requests for interview can be made to the Examinations Office on the appropriate form. A candidate applying for interviews must have discussed the requirement with his/her College Tutor.
- Candidates may be accompanied by their College Tutor or a Consultant of their choice.
- A member of the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland administrative staff will also be present and minute details of the meeting.

Please note this process does not seek to recheck a candidate's material or override an examiners judgement. There is an appeals process available below.

6. Appeals

6.1 Grounds for Appeal

Candidates may not appeal against the academic judgement of the examiners.

However, appeals will be considered where a candidate has reason to believe that:

- There may have been an error in the collation of marks e.g. the examiner(s) rejected a correct answer
- There may have been an irregularity in the conduct of the examination organization e.g. incorrect documentation.
- The College may have failed to take into account extenuating circumstances of which it had been informed prior to the examination.
- Malpractice in the marking of the examination may have occurred.
- The College may have failed to make allowance for unusual examination conditions.

6.2 Appeals Procedure

Formal requests for appeal must be submitted in writing by the candidate to the Examinations Department within thirty days of the unsuccessful examination. Any supporting documentation which the candidate wishes to rely on in the appeal should be enclosed along with the appeals fee.

The Examinations Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal. The Chairperson of the Examinations Committee and the Chairperson of the examination will be informed of the request within ten working days. The Chairperson of the Examinations Committee will call a meeting of the Examination Appeals Committee.

The Committee will be made up as follows:

- A chairperson (Chairperson of the Examinations Committee or his/her nominee)
- Two examiners who were not involved in examining the appellant in the examination under appeal
- A nominated non medical person e.g. CEO or lay member of the Examinations Committee.
- An Appeals Committee Secretary who minutes the meeting who does not participate in the decision-making)

The Appeals Committee secretary will minute the proceedings as the only record. The minutes will reflect the facts of the event, i.e. not the intricate details.

6.3 Outcome of the appeal

The Appeals Committee will deliberate in private and may make findings as follows:

- The appeal is dismissed
- The appeal is upheld

They may consult as appropriate with any of the examiners involved in the marking. A decision will be carried by a majority vote.

If the appeal has been dismissed and the appellant has evidence that the appeal was conducted unfairly, he/she may make representations to the Honorary Secretary of the College Council, to review the case.

The College Council may rule that

- the hearing was fair
or
- order a second panel, with a different membership, to hear the case afresh

If the Appeal is upheld the previous examination result will be declared void and the candidate awarded a pass. If the Appeal is dismissed the examination result will be declared valid.

There will be no further consideration of this matter within the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland.

The Appeals Committee Secretary will inform the appellant of the outcome of the hearing.

In all cases where a successful appeal alters the result of an examination the appeal fee shall be refunded.

7. Infringements and Exclusions

During the examination candidates are *not permitted* to have access to any materials or information which may assist them (e.g. any kind of data retrieval device including but not limited to computers, mobile telephones, tablets etc). Failure to comply with these examination regulations will result in disqualification from the whole of that examination sitting.

The College Council may refuse to admit to an examination a candidate who has infringed any of the regulations.

The presiding examiner may refuse to proceed with the examination of a candidate whom they find guilty of behaviour which prejudices the proper conduct and management of the examination.

The circumstances of the infringement will be considered and investigated by the Examinations Committee who will submit a report to Council. If Council determines that an examination result has been secured by cheating, deception or fraud, Council will nullify the result of qualifications resulting from the examination and withdraw any Diploma, Certificate or other award so obtained. Council may decide that the candidate be reported to the Irish Medical Council (IMC) or the GMC (UK).