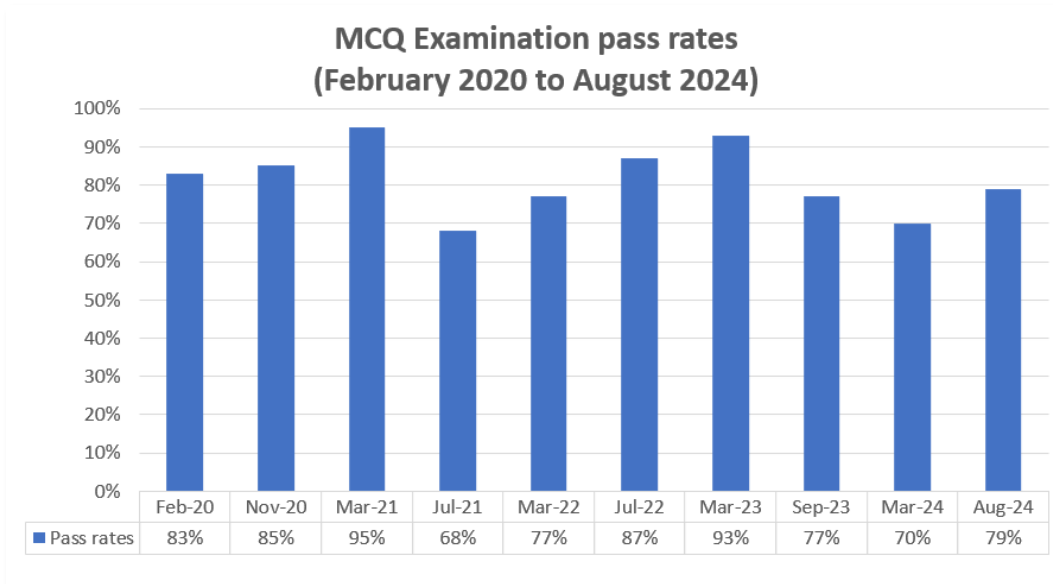


August 2024 Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ) - Post Examination Report

The August 2024 MCQ Examination was held binationally on 2nd August 2024 for 227 candidates sitting across twelve (12) test centers. Analysis of the results showed a pass rate of 79% for the cohort. Table 1 below displays the MCQ Exam pass rates for the last four years.

The Committee for Examinations (CFE) followed established procedures to create the August 2024 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Examination. Fellows from across Australia and New Zealand contributed to the standard setting of each question and the calculation of the final cut score, which determined the pass mark.

Table 1: MCQ Examination pass rates (2020 to 2024).



The exam content covered the foundational knowledge from the Stage 1 and 2 curricula. The pass mark was set to the standard expected by the end of Stage 3 training. Candidates were provided with performance feedback in specific curriculum areas. These areas included:

- Assessment,
- Basic Science/Medical Knowledge,
- Epidemiology,
- Diagnosis & Classification,
- Public Health,
- Ethics and History,
- Phenomenology,
- Psychiatry,
- Philosophy & Psychodynamic Principles,
- Specific Areas of Practice,
- Specific Disorders, and Treatments in Psychiatry.

August 2024 Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ) - Post Examination Report



Questions related to specific areas of psychiatric practice, disorders, and treatments highlighted opportunities for trainees to strengthen their knowledge in these topics. Analysis of questions on ethics, history, and philosophy suggested a greater reliance on guesswork, indicating a significant knowledge gap in these areas.

Between 57% and 68% of the cohort answered correctly across nearly all curriculum topics. However, only 50% provided correct answers to the Ethics, History, and Philosophy questions, which primarily focused on legal reporting and ethical principles.

Table 2 shows a breakdown of exam content and the average percentage achieved for each question content.

Table 2: Average percentage of each question' content.

Question content	Average percentage of marks achieved by cohort
Specific areas of practice	68%
Phenomenology	67%
Psychology, philosophy and psychodynamic principles	66%
Leadership, governance and relevant legal frameworks	65%
Specific disorders	62%
Basic sciences/medical knowledge	61%
Treatments in Psychiatry	61%
Epidemiology, Diagnosis, Classification and public health	60%
Assessment	57%
Ethics, History and Philosophy	50%

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

MCQs cover foundational knowledge in psychiatry and can include areas of knowledge such as (but not limited to) neuroscience, pharmacotherapy, experimental design and critical analysis, history and philosophy of psychiatry, and principles of key psychotherapies. The examination questions from the data bank are continuously reviewed for quality based on the questions' performance when previously used.

The performance of questions in all exams varies, and members of the CFE review any MCQ items that show low performance. A post-examination review of low-performing questions confirmed the quality and robustness of these questions, indicating that a lack of knowledge may have contributed to poor candidate performance. Questions with an unexpected response pattern were individually reviewed.

The Specific Areas of Practice were broken down into the categories of Addiction, Child and Adolescent, Forensic, and Old Age. Analysis showed that this cohort had good knowledge in Addiction Psychiatry as well as Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

The majority of the specific disorders content within the exam covered Organic, Personality, Sleep, Somatoform Disorders, Substance Use Disorders, Trauma/stress-related, and Dissociative Disorders. Despite limited numbers of questions in some specific disorders, curriculum areas where the cohort may benefit from more study include substance use disorders and Organic Disorders.

August 2024 Multiple Choice Question Examination (MCQ) - Post Examination Report

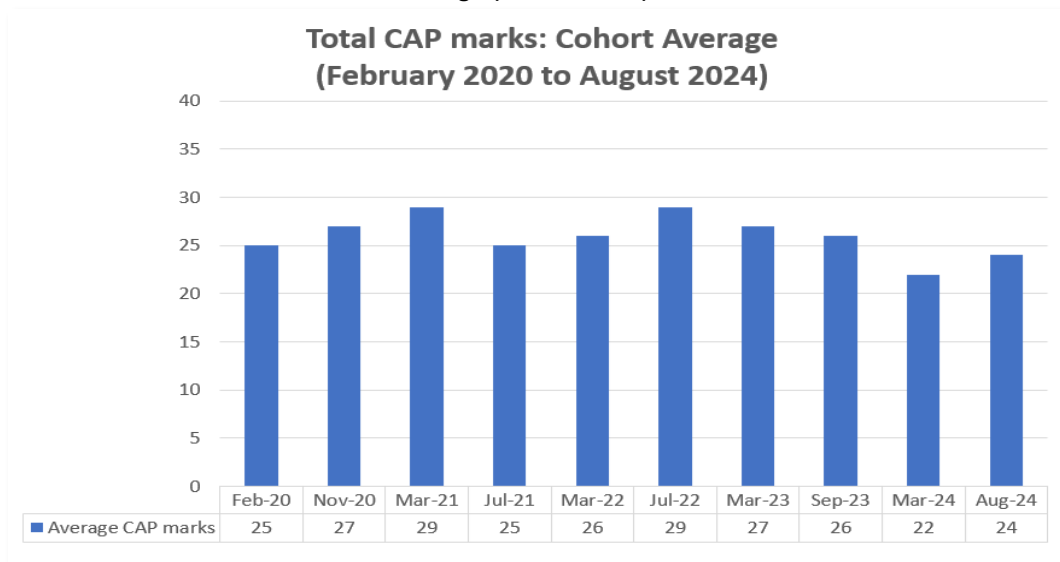
Critical Analysis Problems (CAPs)

The Critical Analysis Problems presented to the cohort were drawn from articles about study results and a systematic review and meta-analysis. All CAP questions are categorized within Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the syllabus, covering basic sciences and medical knowledge.

Comparing the average marks of both CAPs, CAP 1 performed better than CAP 2, suggesting that further study may be required in areas such as statistical tests and types of study samples. Trainees need to carefully read all the information provided, including lead-ins and questions, to answer correctly.

The frequency distribution of answers across both CAPs showed a varied cross-section of responses and confidence in answering many of the questions. Since 2020, the average marks achieved have fluctuated between 22 and 29 marks out of the 40 marks attainable.

Table 3: Total CAP marks: Cohort Average (2020 to 2024).



Final Comment

The CFE emphasizes to all candidates that the ability to read and interpret professional literature is considered a core skill for psychiatrists. Candidates are expected to have knowledge of various types of research studies, controls, sources of bias, basic descriptive and analytic statistics, and the accurate reporting of findings. You can access a detailed guide to the knowledge that may be assessed in the CAP component on the College website: [RANZCP Guidelines for CAPs](#).

The CFE would like to remind candidates that, as the MCQ examination is predominantly knowledge-based, it is important for candidates to ensure they are up to date with basic sciences and medical knowledge.

As demonstrated by previous pass rates, candidates continue to perform well in the MCQ examinations.



Dr Nathan Gibson
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