

August 2023 CEQ Examination

Post-examination Report



Critical Essay Question (CEQ)

The purpose of the CEQ assessment is to test skills considered essential for consultant psychiatrists. These skills align with CANMED roles, and allow candidates to demonstrate the ability to evaluate and critically appraise a proposition relevant to psychiatry, apply evidence-based assessment and demonstrate a capacity for balanced reasoning.

As usual, the candidates were provided with a prompt in the form of a quote. They were expected to address the quote, critically discuss it in essay form (including a consideration of multiple viewpoints) and provide a conclusion.

The Committee for Examinations followed established procedures to set the August 2023 CEQ Question and to determine the pass mark. Standard setting to determine the pass mark was conducted by the Writtens Sub-committee.

“Place has multiple meanings, all of which are important to health...”

Reference: Fullilove MT (1996) Psychiatric implications of displacement: contributions from the psychology of place. American Journal of Psychiatry 153(12): 1516-1523.
DOI: [10.1176/ajp.153.12.1516](https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.153.12.1516)

The quote used for the August 2023 CEQ examination allowed for multiple interpretations of “place” which could be discussed at many levels. The question also lent itself to talking about history, indigenous issues and refugees.

Candidates’ responses were assessed across six domains of the CEQ Marking Guide. Overall, most candidates had a structure and were open to interpreting the quote which allowed them to show their breadth of knowledge and ability to reflect. However, many struggled with the topic, especially to form a coherent essay structure.

Markers were pleased to see well-constructed essays with clear paragraphs and debate. Markers highlighted the broad concept of the quote which allowed for a number of lines of interpretation and levels of analysis and arguments. Some candidates appeared to have written an alternate preprepared essay, with any link to the quote tenuous.

The ability to communicate clearly in terms of appropriate grammar and vocabulary was at a similar level to previous examinations (62% average score). The ability to demonstrate an understanding of models of health and illness, cultural context of psychiatry performed at a higher level (63% average score). The average performance level in the domain related to the ability to apply arguments and conclusions to the clinical context, and/or clinical experience in the arguments, was lower at 55.6%.

There was a lack of contemporary examples of displacement such as those affected by natural disasters, climate change, wars. Furthermore, in a globalised world with so much movement, the application of the quote to current practice was lacking. Few candidates considered displacement as a defence mechanism. While the quote referred to health in general; there was not one example of the relationship of place and physical health.

The Committee for Examinations reviewed the performance of borderline candidates across the examination, in line with accepted procedures. Please note that, as candidates’ performance is carefully scrutinised by the committee, results are final and will not be reviewed.

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	Aug 2021	Feb 2022	Aug 2022	Feb 2023	Feb 2023
Pass rates:	76%	73%	72%	66%	75%

Candidates are provided feedback as to their performance in identified curriculum areas taken from the syllabus; this appears in their result letter. Result letters were released via InTrain, and MY RANZCP website, on 8 November 2023 for trainees and SIMG candidates respectively. The College is mindful of the significant period of time between an exam and the release of results. Each candidate's CEQ paper is marked at least twice by two separate volunteer markers, with some assessed by a third marker. CEQ marking is done by a small group of markers to ensure good inter-rater reliability. The College aims to ensure a fair and rigorous marking process.

Given below is a summary of data from the August 2023 CEQ examination.

Summary – August 2023 CEQ

	Candidate Nos
No. of candidates enrolled in the CEQ examination	239
No. of candidates successful	178 (74.5%)
No. of candidates passing on their first attempt	77.16%
% of SIMG candidates passing	43%
% of trainee candidates passing	81%

Candidates are reminded of College resources and strongly advised to practice on past examination papers which can be found here ([Critical Essay Question - previous exams | RANZCP](#)). We refer you to the College website for slides from the CEQ pre-Congress workshop conducted on 28th May 2023. [ceq-writtens-congress-2023-for-the-website.pdf \(ranzcp.org\)](#) Candidates are encouraged to use supervision opportunities to discuss consultant perspectives in their daily clinical work and to seek advice and formative feedback on practice answers.

We strongly recommend that candidates are mindful of their handwriting to ensure marks are not missed because of illegibility. CEQ markers are mindful of the time pressure for candidates in this examination and every effort is made to decipher poor handwriting.

Click on the hyperlink for the [August CEQ Marking Guide \(ranzcp.org\)](#) (password required).

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