

# The Travails of the Chief Examiner

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# Outline

- Responsibilities of the CE related to the discussion in this TOT
- Burden of the examination by Faculty (Focus on the CBT-MCQ primary and membership papers)
- Examination Blueprints
- Travails of the CE
- Solutions and Recommendations

# Responsibilities of the CE

- Setting of examination “questions”
  - Setting of the examination “paper”: All examiners/ course facilitators set questions related to their subject area
- Overall supervision of the organization and conduct of the examination and the assessment of candidates

# Introduction: CE is the gatekeeper

CE saddled with the responsibility of

- Candidate assessment- it is essential to consider
  - Difficulty level- should be adequate- based on what is expected for the candidate's level of training
  - Discriminatory- distinguish between candidates who are competent and those who are not
- Maintaining quality – standards must be maintained over time
- Security of the examination- no leaks/ unauthorized access
- Need for evaluation of the examination papers from time to time as well as vigilance

# Burden of the WACP MCQ Papers

Paper	Community Health	Family Medicine	Internal Medicine	Laboratory Medicine	Paediatrics	Psychiatry
Primaries	200	200	200	140	100	150
Membership Paper 1	150	200	200	200	200	200
Membership Paper 2	150	100	-	200	-	Essay
Total MCQs/ Exam	500	500	400	540	300	350
Total MCQs/ Year	1000	1000	800	1080	600	700

# Examination Blueprint

- A key tool in maintaining standards as well as ensuring examination is fair
  - Maps curricula content to the assessment
- Developed based on knowledge, competence and skills to be acquired on the course
- Describes content to be covered by the examination
  - Ensures content validity
- Specifies weight given to each content category
  - Content/ expectation- Must, Should or May Know
- Publishing the blueprint improve student perception of the fairness of the exam

# Psychiatry Membership MCQ Blueprint

No	Subject	N	%
	<b>GENERAL PSYCHIATRY</b>		
1.	Mood disorders, Anxiety & Related Disorders	10	5
2.	History of Psychiatry	5	2.5
3.	Mental Health Policy & Plans	5	2.5
4.	Interviewing in Psychiatry, Psychopathology	20	10
5.	Personality Disorders	5	2.5
6.	Psychotherapy	10	5
7.	Psychopharmacology and ECT	15	7.5
8.	Rehabilitation	5	2.5
9.	Gender, Perinatal Psychiatry & Psychosexual Disorders	5	2.5
10.	Schizophrenia And Non-Affective Psychosis	10	5
11.	Sleeping & eating disorders	10	5
	<b>SUB-SPECIALTIES</b>		
12.	Addiction	10	5
13.	Child Psychiatry & Developmental Disorders	20	10
14.	Consultation-Liaison	20	10
15.	Forensic	10	10
16.	Neuropsych, Neurology, Neuropathology/ Genetics	20	10
17.	Old Age Psychiatry	10	5
18.	Primary Care, Community and Social Psychiatry	10	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

# The Travails of the CE

1. Setting the examination paper
2. Formatting for computer-based testing
3. Grading of the exam- for MCQs/ CBT- accuracy of the key

# Travails of the CE: Setting the Examination Paper

Require adequate number of good quality, well constructed questions

## Challenges

- Enough questions from each subspeciality/ content areas at set levels of difficulty to meet blueprint requirements
- Expected that all facilitators and examiners submit questions
  - This expectation often not met
- Questions testing knowledge of the subject rather than grammar
- Submission of same questions from year to year
  - merely tweaking a few words

# Formatting for CBT

- CBT exams run with software
- The questions need to be formatted to meet software requirements to upload
- When setting/ submitting questions
  - Use auto numbering function in word
  - Delete extra spaces between words or at end the item or options

# Grading of Exams

- Grading automated using the software
- Need to ensure the key is accurate

# Solutions and Recommendations

- Ensuring the quality of our examinations and turning out well rounded professionals is our collective effort as examiners
- Frequent training is priority
- Appreciate the burden of the exams and need to ensure our subspecialties are adequately covered
- Need for a change in our mindset when it comes to setting questions
  - Questions should examine specified content area
  - Should be clear what is being examined
  - As much as possible avoid negative/ double negatives

# Question Banking

- We need to move beyond just setting question to developing valid and reliable bank of MCQ questions
  - Different faculties are at different levels in this process
- Building a robust bank takes time and
- Persistent concerted effort of the entire faculty

# Steps to developing a question bank

- Develop/ write the item (question) /Evaluate existing questions
- Vetting of the question by content/ sub-specialty experts and another set of experts
  - Editorial review- structure, grammar, punctuation
  - Content review- what the item is intended to test
  - Review cognitive demand
  - Sensitivity and fairness
  - Review the key
- Test the item- seeking the views of the examinees
- Examine the psychometric properties of the test item
- Bank the item- using defined attributes/ psychometric properties

# Conclusion

- Maintaining the standards of our exams require the availability of a pool of good quality questions that the CE can draw from
- It is a collective responsibility
- Need to review our current pool of questions
  - Content coverage
  - Cognitive demand
  - Quality of the items
- Identify gaps and specifically request for questions to fill the gaps
- Constant ongoing review of the psychometric properties of the test items as they are being used

**Thank You**

## References and Further Reading

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