



CMSA

**CMSA MEMORANDUM
GUIDELINE`FOR EXAMINERS**

JOHANNESBURG

May 2020

CMSA MEMORANDUM GUIDELINE:

The only “guideline” which is currently given for memoranda is in the CMSA EXAMINER ROLE POLICY in 2.1.2, as extracted below:

Recognising that it is an honour to be invited to be an examiner and that all colleges have the power to remove examiners from the panel if they do not adhere to the CMSA standards, as per the following policy document. This policy document outlines the role of the examiner and should be read in conjunction with the other policy documents of the CMSA.

2.1 Setting of questions

2.1.1 *Set all questions in English.*

2.1.2 ***Provide a “bare-bone” memorandum for all questions selected to be used by the convenor.***

2.1.3 *Adhere to the guidelines and regulations of the constituent college in setting of the examination questions.*

In the interest of providing clearer instructions regarding memoranda, this guideline has been drafted.

Many CMSA Colleges now make use of MCQ (Single Best Answer) assessments in examinations, where narrative Memoranda are not required and standard setting principles are utilised.

Some (mainly smaller) CMSA Colleges still opt for (some) short essay- and/or short open-ended questions, because such questions challenge candidates to create a response rather than to simply select an answer from a number of given options.

Short essay- and/or short open-ended questions have the potential to reveal candidates’ abilities to reason, create, analyse, synthesise, evaluate and reach conclusions. In some medical specialities, it is considered imperative to evaluate candidates’ higher order critical, systematic and in-depth thinking abilities relating to question topics at hand, while simultaneously assessing their ability to express themselves.

As with MCQ’s, open-ended questions need to be appropriately constructed by examiners, to reflect the blueprinted learning outcomes or objectives to be assessed, thereby ensuring valid and reliable assessment processes:- validity is represented by the extent to which a question measures what it intends to measure and reliability is represented by the consistency of results.

Assessment processes must also be informed by the requirements of the Higher Education Qualification Subframework (HEQSF), which for postgraduate CMSA candidates are set at an NQF Exit Level 9, with the following descriptors (as extracted):

Successful completion of a coursework programme requiring a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence as well as demonstration of the ability to relate knowledge to the resolution of complex problems in appropriate areas of professional practice. In addition, a professional Master’s degree must include an independent study component that comprises at least a quarter of the credits at NQF level 9, consisting of either a single research or technical project or a series of smaller projects demonstrating innovation or professional expertise.

Master’s graduates must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise analytical writing, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a professional orientation, and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to a particular profession.

This places significant responsibility on examiners, to be very clear in their setting and formulation of valid open-ended questions, with concise memoranda / model answers and appropriate mark allocations to support their reliability.

CREATING THE ASSESSMENT MEMO OR MEMORANDUM AS AN EXAMINER:

- Prepare a document with your formulated proposed questions with appropriate marks assigned and label the document with the Semester and your CMSA College Exam abbreviation, Questions and your surname e.g. **SS2020 - FCForPath Part II – Questions – Chauke**
- Prepare a separate document with the Memoranda for your Questions and label the document similarly e.g. **SS2020 - FCForPath Part II – Memo – Chauke**
- In some Colleges, convenors will first select the questions for a paper, before requesting memoranda for the selected questions from the relevant examiners on the panel.
- Ensure that your selected question numbers correspond to the relevant answer numbers in the memorandum.
- Use a model answer outline for each question you've set – when we say “rubric” it really means an outline with headings and salient facts / issues which need to be covered.
 - Do NOT copy and paste entire book chapters or journal articles as “model answers”.
 - Please ensure that model answers are properly referenced.
- Because of the qualitative nature of an essay question, answer marks can be assigned as follows:
 - If a candidate covers at least all the facts / issues in their answers but are lacking in their ability to express this well from a qualitative perspective, they can be awarded a passmark of e.g. 55%;
 - If the facts / issues are all covered and the qualitative narrative and higher order thought processes around a topic are addressed in a well thought through manner, this mark can be improved to e.g. 65%;
 - If the facts or issues are all covered and the qualitative narrative and higher order thought processes around a topic are addressed in a brilliant manner, this mark can be improved to e.g. 75% or even higher.
- This will facilitate re-marking of questions, knowing that the “bare-bone” memorandum is more focused on **minimum** facts / issues to be addressed for a pass mark to be awarded.

FOR CONVENORS TO NOTE:

- When you submit your completed question papers to the CMSA Exams Office, please ensure that the relevant examiner's surname appears with his or her question and label your document appropriately e.g. **SS2020 - FCForPath Part II – Question Paper I – Convenor**
- When you submit your memoranda to specific papers to the CMSA Exams Office, please ensure that your memoranda answer-numbers correspond to the relevant questions in the papers submitted and label your document appropriately e.g. **SS2020 - FCForPath Part II – Question Paper I – Memorandum**
- If any numbering of questions is changed after a question paper and memorandum has been submitted, the convenor must ensure that the question paper numbers and memorandum numbers are adjusted to still correspond appropriately and submit these to the Exams Office.

FINAL NOTE:

- The CMSA Exams Office Staff are unable to facilitate / expedite re-marking processes, when memoranda answer-numbers do not correlate with question paper question numbers.
- All questions, question papers and memoranda documents must be encrypted with a password, before emailing or dropboxing.
- These passwords are generated by the CMSA Exams Office and shared with convenors, moderators and examiners before e-mailing of documents.