

Division:	Education Development & Assessment	Ref. No.	EDA-EXA-025
Department:	Examinations		
Title:	Conduct of the Cardiothoracic Surgical Sciences and Principles Examination		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The policy provides the criteria for the Cardiothoracic Surgical Sciences and Principles Examination (CSSP).

The CSSP Examination is the summative assessment of a candidate's knowledge, understanding and application of the basic sciences relevant to Cardiothoracic Surgery early in their surgical training.

2. KEYWORDS

Cardiothoracic Surgery, CSSP, Examination

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Format of the Examination

The examination consists of two components – CSSP Written and CSSP Anatomy Viva

3.1.1. CSSP Written component consists of two written papers (paper A and paper B) to evaluate cardiothoracic surgical sciences and principles conducted over 2 days and run for 2 ½ hours each.

a. Each paper consists of 100 Type X (true/false) multiple choice questions, covering all aspects of the curriculum.

3.1.2. CSSP Anatomy Viva to examine gross anatomy (25 minutes duration).

3.2. Eligibility to Present for the Examination

3.2.1. All trainees in the SET program in Cardiothoracic Surgery having completed prerequisites in 3.3 are eligible to apply. A Trainee who has interrupted his/her training program and has completed the prerequisites in 3.3 is eligible to apply.

3.3. Prerequisites – CSSP Written

A candidate must be at least a SET 2 trainee and have successfully completed the following:

3.3.1. The Generic Surgical Science Examination (GSSE)

3.3.2. The SET Clinical Examination

3.4. Prerequisite – CSSP Anatomy Viva

3.4.1. A candidate must have successfully completed the CSSP Written component

3.5. Application

3.5.1. The application closing dates and examination dates for the CSSP Written component and CSSP Anatomy Viva are published on the RACS website.

3.5.2. A candidate must apply to present for both components of this examination separately through the online registration system, via the RACS website and pay the examination fees in full at the time of registration.

3.5.3. An application outside the published timeframes will not be accepted.

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3.6. Venue and Dates

Both components of this examination are held twice annually:

3.6.1. CSSP Written component is conducted over two consecutive days in the following venues in February and June:

Australia: Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney

New Zealand: Auckland and Wellington

3.6.2. Following successful completion of the written component, the candidate will be required to apply and present for the Anatomy viva at the first available sitting.

3.6.3. CSSP Anatomy viva is conducted in May and September. The venue will coincide with the Clinical segment of the Fellowship Examination in Australia.

3.7. Time Limitations and Number of Attempts

3.7.1. A trainee must pass this examination to progress beyond SET 4.

3.7.2. The examination is limited to four (4) attempts. Failure to pass on the fourth attempt will result in dismissal.

3.7.3. Each sitting of the examination undertaken will count towards the maximum four (4) attempts, irrespective of whether the trainee is in active clinical training, deferred or on interruption.

3.8. Conduct of the Examination

3.8.1. The conduct of CSSP written component is the responsibility of the SSE&CE Committee.

3.8.2. The CSSP Anatomy viva is conducted by the Cardiothoracic Surgery Court of Examiners.

3.8.3. The Board of Cardiothoracic Surgery is responsible for formulating the syllabus and setting the questions of both components of this examination.

3.8.4. Invigilators play a central role to ensure that security of the written components of the examination is maintained at all times.

3.8.5. When necessary, candidates will be segregated into separate rooms to avoid contact between those candidates who have completed an examination segment and those who have not.

3.8.6. By applying to present for the either CSSP written or CSSP Anatomy Viva of this examination, the candidate is agreeing to this policy and the Rules for Candidates – Written Examination) and Anatomy Viva Examination .

3.8.7. Disruptive behaviour by a candidate in any segment of the examination will be investigated as misconduct. If a candidate is reported to be causing a disturbance during the examination, he/she will be removed from the examination room.

- a. The candidate involved will not be given extra time at the end of the examination for any reason including time taken to address the incident.

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- b. An examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will complete an incident report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.9. Equipment or Materials

- 3.9.1. Equipment or materials which are not permitted to be taken into an examination room by a candidate ("prohibited equipment or materials") includes but is not limited to:
 - a. all watches, mobile phones, calculators, portable computers, tablets or other electronic audio-recording devices (e.g. audio-recording wrist bands, pens, spectacles, mp3 players, iPods, iPads, etc.).
 - b. notes, books, textbooks or other materials.
- 3.9.2. A candidate who takes prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room will be informed that he or she must leave the examination room immediately and will not be permitted to take further part in the examination.
- 3.9.3. The candidate's result for the examination will not be approved and any examination fees paid will be forfeited as per terms stipulated in clause 3.15.
- 3.9.4. An examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will complete an incident report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.10. Cheating

- 3.10.1. Cheating is defined as, but is not limited to:
 - a. gaining or attempting to gain access to any materials such as specimens or images, or patients involved in the examination, prior to an examination;
 - b. copying, or allowing another candidate to copy, answers during the course of an examination;
 - c. disseminating or making available questions or answers to another candidate or prospective candidate relating to the current examination;
 - d. procuring knowledge of the questions, and their answers, from anyone before the examination.
- 3.10.2. An invigilator, examiner or other person supervising an examination segment will, upon identifying suspected cheating during the examination, complete an Examination Incident Report for consideration by the SSE&CE Committee.

3.11. Report of prohibited equipment or materials or cheating

- 3.11.1. Upon receipt of an Examination Incident Report of the taking of prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating, the Chair of the SSE&CE Committee will transmit the report to the Board of Cardiothoracic Surgery for consideration pursuant to the RACS Misconduct policy and the Board's regulations.

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- 3.11.2. If a report on the taking of prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating is received by the SSE&CE Committee, or if the Board receives the report directly:
- a. prior to the examination taking place; the candidate's application for presenting to an examination will be withheld until such time an investigation has concluded; if an allegation is upheld in addition to any penalty imposed by the Board, the candidate's application will not be valid and the entire examination fee paid will be forfeited as per terms stipulated in clause 3.15 of this policy.
 - b. during the examinations and prior to the examination results being made available to candidates - the examination result will be withheld until such time as an investigation has concluded; if the allegation is upheld, in addition to any penalty imposed by the Board, the examination result will not be approved and the candidate will be regarded as having an unsatisfactory performance.
 - c. after the examination results have been made available to candidates; if the allegation is upheld, in addition to any penalty imposed by the Board, the examination result will be withdrawn and the candidate will be regarded as having an unsatisfactory performance.

3.12. Privacy and Confidentiality

Any person involved with the CSSP examination and any candidate presenting for the examination shall treat as strictly confidential any materials, images, content or discussions of any examination component viewed or discussed for the purposes of conducting the CSSP examination. Any breach of confidentiality by any candidate may be treated as cheating and dealt with according to RACS process.

3.13. Special Circumstances and Disability

Refer to policies EDA-EXA-034 Special Consideration and EDA-EXA-035 Reasonable Adjustments for Disability.

3.14. Results

- 3.14.1. The results of the CSSP written component are approved by the SSE&CE Committee.
- 3.14.2. The results of CSSP Anatomy Viva are approved by the Cardiothoracic Surgery Court of Examiners.
- 3.14.3. A candidate will be awarded a pass or fail only.
- 3.14.4. The candidate will be informed of his/her result via email.
- 3.14.5. Results of both components of this examination will be communicated directly to the Board of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

3.15. Withdrawals and Refunds

- 3.15.1. A candidate who wishes to withdraw from the examination must do so via the RACS website and online withdrawal form.
- 3.15.2. A percentage of the examination fee will be refunded in accordance with the following timeline.

Authorised By:	Executive General Manager, Education	Original Issue:	July 2013
Document Owner:	Manager Examinations	Version:	8
		Approval Date:	July 2018
		Review Date:	July 2021

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- a. A candidate will be refunded 95% of the examination fee if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received prior to the application closing date.
 - b. A candidate will be refunded 50% of the examination fee if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received after the application closing date and more than 10 business days prior to the commencement of the first scheduled day of the examination.
- 3.15.3. A candidate will not receive a refund if notification of withdrawal from the examination is received with fewer 10 business days prior to the commencement of the first scheduled day of the examination.
- 3.15.4. A candidate will not receive a refund for non-attendance of the examination.
- 3.15.5. A candidate will not receive a refund if he/she is prevented from participating in the examination as a result of taking prohibited equipment or materials into an examination room or cheating or misconduct.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

EDA-EXA-010	Conduct of the Fellowship Examinations
EDA-EXA-034	Special Consideration
EDA-EXA-035	Reasonable Adjustments for Disability
ETA-SET-007	Dismissal from Surgical Training
ETA-SET-010	Training Registration and Variation
ETA-SET-026	SET Misconduct Policy

Forms

Application for Special Consideration
 Application for Reasonable Adjustments for Disability
 Examination Rules for Candidates Written Examination and Anatomy Viva Examination
 Examination Incident Report

Approver Education Board
Authoriser Council

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