



FIRST PART EXAM PREPARATION AND SELF ASSESSMENT OF READINESS TOOL

The First Part Exam drives learning of the basic science knowledge important for the practice of intensive care medicine and ensures the attainment of this knowledge and understanding. This is a significant assessment, and adequate preparation is crucial for success.

This tool aims to support exam candidates in their First Part Exam preparation by providing suggested actions to take in the preparation period and through a guided self-reflection of readiness to sit the exam. Whilst completing these activities does not guarantee exam success, they are tasks that are common in successful candidates' approach to preparing for the exam.

It is recommended that you use this tool when you are beginning your preparation to sit the First Part Exam, and then complete the self-reflection approximately two weeks before applying for the exam. Whilst everyone's circumstances, learning and study techniques differ, it is common for First Part Exam candidates to require at least **9-12 months of preparation.**

When completing the self-reflection, answer the questions honestly and then review the ratios of green, amber, and red. The more 'green' your ratio is, the more likely it is that you are ready to sit the exam. You are also encouraged to discuss your preparation activities and self-reflection with your Supervisor of Training, First Part Exam tutorial or study group, mentor, or peer/s to help you make informed decisions.

CICM wishes you all the best for your exam.



Planning:

Suggested Activities	Self-Reflection: I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
Adequate time to prepare	Yes	No
Whilst everyone's circumstances, learning, and study techniques differ it is common for candidates to prepare for at least 9-12 months.		
Exam information and expectations	Yes	No
Review the exam outline in the T1Z , recent exam reports , and examples of a first part exam paper to know what to expect.		
Attend exam information sessions ¹ about the exam and how to prepare.		
Exam preparation schedule	Yes	No
Construct an exam preparation schedule considering: the time to the exam, life circumstances, realistic available study time ² , and study needed to prepare (see below).		
Factor into your preparation schedule a gradual ramp-up period as you settle into a productive routine ³ .		
Special consideration and reasonable adjustments	Yes	N/A
If you require special consideration or reasonable adjustments due to a medical or psychosocial difference/condition prepare documentation from your treating specialists, doctors, and health staff to include in your application.		

Learning Approach:

Suggested Activities	Self-Reflection I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
An evidence-based approach to study	Yes	No
Use evidence based study strategies in your study.		
Use deliberate practice in your exam preparation.		
Syllabus review and coverage	Yes	No
Review the First Part syllabus to understand the breadth and the depth of knowledge that can be assessed in the first part exam ⁴ .		
Learning resources	Yes	No
Use the recommended texts for exam study, as outlined in the first part syllabus , to support understanding of the depth of knowledge required for success in the exam ⁵		
Attend the Basic Science (COBs) sessions offered by the CICM online education program		
Participate in a study group, if this is your preferred method of learning		

¹ These sessions with the First Part Exam Chair are conducted through the CICM Online Education Program (OEP) in the application period for each exam sitting.

² Consider the impact of shift work/what is achievable around shift work and any planned leave.

³ Leave immediately before the exam is not necessary, however it is helpful to have a period of intense preparation just prior to the exam.

⁴ It is recommended to review the entire syllabus. Detailed notes and summaries on each point may aid your study.

⁵ While online resources (for example Deranged Physiology) can be useful study tools, caution should be used as 'model answers' from these resources may not contain the detail or depth required for the First Part Exam.



Attend First Part Exam teaching sessions and tutorials		
Effective use of time	Yes	No
Engage in 'time limited strategies' when uninterrupted study time is not available (for example, prepare an outline of an answer in one minute, practice definitions and formulas, practice structure to a component of pharmacology, for example, the neurological effects of propofol)		
Practice answering past questions	Yes	No
Use study resources, recent exam reports, and study notes to prepare answers to past exam questions.		

Feedback and benchmarking

Suggested Activities	Self-Reflection I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
Seek advice and guidance		
Discuss your exam preparation plan, progress, and exam readiness with your Supervisor of Training, mentor/coach, exam educator or others who supervise your practice.		
Exam standards	Yes	No
Review the SAQ marking rubric examples to understand how answers are assessed ⁶		
Seek feedback	Yes	No
Practice answering SAQs and ask for feedback on your answers, including how to optimise your answers to reflect your knowledge.		
Seek feedback on practice SAQs and Vivas from current examiners, as they are very familiar with the standard required for success in the exam.		
Attend education sessions	Yes	No
Attend practice Viva sessions and SAQ masterclasses, which are available through the CICM online education program		

Being 'match fit' (exam training):

Suggested Activities	Self-Reflection I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
Practice under exam conditions		
Practice answering timed MCQs (e.g. 20 in 20 mins).		
Practice writing SAQ answers within a 10-minute time limit.		
Practice answering 10 SAQ in 100 minutes ⁷ .		
Engage in VIVA practice with a group, a previous exam candidate or a mentor/educator.		

⁶ Achieving full marks on SAQ can be challenging, therefore it is important to know how answers are assessed

⁷ This is especially important closer to the time of the exam



Social and emotional support:

This is very important for helping to manage exam related stresses.

Suggested Activities	Self-Reflection I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
Create supports		
Engage with peers who are also preparing for the exam for support, as this may help with managing stress associated with exams.		
Plan how you will manage any exam-day nervousness or anxiety that may impact your performance and seek help if needed.		
Create support structures that you can draw on to help you in your exam preparation ⁸ , during the exam period and in the event that you are unsuccessful in your exam attempt. This may include family, friends, mentors, and peers.		
Consider the potential impact of any current life events on your exam preparation, or how these may impact your exam performance (for example, planning a wedding, caring for a sick relative).		
If you need to, use CICM's professional counselling service partner, Converge or another professional counselling or psychological support service.		

Health and wellbeing:

Suggested Activities	Self Reflection I have completed this activity	
	Yes	No
Sense of self-worth and self-forgiveness <i>One of the most important activities in the exam preparation process, and during and after the exam. The exam preparation period and sitting the exam is a period of high cognitive burden, and being kind to yourself is essential.</i>		
Maintain your sense of self-worth throughout the process (including during the results period) and engage with people and activities who support this. If you are struggling with self-worth, depression, or other mental illnesses, seek help. Beyond Blue Lifeline Converge		
Physical and mental health		
Consider how you will maintain your health and wellbeing during the exam preparation period.		
Include in your planning and prioritise in addition to study time away from study to support wellbeing.		
Engage in regular exercise, and ensure you have adequate nutrition which is important for performance.		
Seek support, advice and/or management of ongoing medical conditions, and engage in preventative health programs if needed.		

⁸ You may consider offloading and outsourcing responsibilities such as domestic tasks.



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Exam day strategies	Yes	No
<p>Plan your exam day, and practice your stress management strategies, to minimise exam day stress and ensure you are prepared for any unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>This may include planning where you will stay the night before, how you will travel and who with, what you will do before and after the exams, and your exam day nutrition.</p>		

My self-reflection results	Count	Ratio
Red		/35
Amber		/35
Green		/35