



AANZHPBA Post-Fellowship Education & Training Program in HPB Surgery Examination Policy



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1. Introduction

1.1 Terms and definitions

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------|--|
| AANZHPBA | Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Hepatic, Pancreatic & Biliary Association |
| AANZHPBA PFET program | Structured 2-year program providing post fellowship training in HPB Surgery within AANZHPBA accredited posts according to the curriculum as set by the AANZHPBA Training Committee |
| Board | AANZHPBA board of directors |
| Candidate | AANZHPBA PFET Fellow approved to present for the Exit examination |
| Curriculum | Curriculum for the AANZHPBA Post Fellowship Education & Training Program as set by the AANZHPBA Training Committee |
| Examination Committee | Examination Committee of the AANZHPBA Board |
| Examiner | HPB Surgeon appointed to assess the candidate is safe and competent to practice as an independent surgeon |
| Executive Officer | Executive Officer of AANZHPBA |
| Examination | Examination covering the breadth of the AANZHPBA PFET Program Curriculum, undertaken in the second year of training |
| HPB | Hepatopancreatobiliary |
| PFET | Post Fellowship Education and Training |
| RACS | Royal Australasian College of Surgeons |
| Supervisor | Coordinates management, education and training of accredited trainees in accredited training posts. Monitors performance, completes assessments and identifies and documents performance management. |
| Trainee | AANZHPBA Post Fellowship Education & Training Program Trainee |
| Training Committee | Training Committee of the AANZHPBA Board |

1.2 Purpose and context

1.2.1 This policy encompasses the rules, procedures, administrative processes and principles for the control and conduct of the AANZHPBA PFET Program Examination.

1.2.2 All Trainees, Examination Committee members, Training Committee members and Board members are required to comply with this Policy.

1.2.3 The information in this Policy is as accurate as possible at the time of publication. The Board reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this Policy at any time. As the Policy is subject to change, the most current version is available on the AANZHPBA website. All persons are advised to ensure they are consulting the most current version.

1.3 Administration and ownership

1.3.1 The AANZHPBA is the body that conducts and administers the AANZHPBA PFET program in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

1.3.2 The AANZHPBA Examination Committee is responsible for the preparation, conduct and determination of results, of the AANZHPBA PFET Examination.

2. Examination

2.1 Examination aims and requirement

2.1.1 The purpose of the AANZHPBA PFET Examination is to ensure graduating fellows have reached the required levels of competency in the surgical management of HPB disease as outlined in the AANZHPBA PFET Program Curriculum, to practice as independent HPB Surgeons, prior to certification.

2.1.2 Achievement of an overall Pass in the Examination is a mandatory requirement to successfully complete the AANZHPBA PFET program.

2.2 Examination Faculty

2.2.1 The Examination Faculty consists of an assembled quorum of AANZHPBA Board members. The Examination Faculty may also include ex-officio Board members (e.g.,

retired Board members, past Presidents) or other invited examiners as deemed appropriate by the Board.

2.2.2 All examiners have the necessary experience and training required to perform the role of examiner for the AANZHPBA PFET Examination. Most examiners have undertaken RACS examiner training. At a minimum, 1 of each pair of examiners in the Vivas must have undertaken RACS examiner training.

2.3 Scheduling of the examination

2.3.1 The Examination is undertaken towards the end of the second year of Fellowship Training.

2.3.2 The date for the exam will be advised early, but is usually held in November.

2.3.3 The Examination may be conducted in person within Australia or Aotearoa New Zealand, or online as determined by the AANZHPBA Examination Committee. It is usually held in person in Melbourne.

2.3.4 It is expected Trainees in posts outside Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand will return to sit the examination in person. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Training Committee may allow Trainees to sit their Examination under supervision at the international hospital in which they are placed. Requests must be submitted to the Executive Officer a minimum of 3 months prior to the Examination. Requests outside of this time frame will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

2.4 Structure of the Examination

2.4.1 All Candidates will be required to attend for all parts of the examination on the allocated day.

2.4.2 The format of the Examination consists of two sections.

- i. Section 1 will be 15 written short answer questions to be completed in 2 ½ hours (10 mins/question).
- ii. Section 2 will be two 30-minute VIVAS with a short break between. Each Viva will consist of 2 x 15 minute scenarios.

2.4.3 The Written examination is completed in the morning of the allocated day under standard examination conditions and supervised by invigilators from the AANZHPBA Board.

2.4.4 The Viva examinations are conducted in the afternoon of the allocated day, using parallel examiner pairs, each seeing up to three sequential Candidates. The total number of examiners will vary depending upon the number of Candidates sitting the examination.

2.4.5 The written questions are based on content included in the AANZHPBA PFET Curriculum, including knowledge obtained by participating in the quarterly journal club meetings. The questions span the breadth of clinical HPB Surgical practice to a depth expected of a junior HPB surgical consultant in independent practice.

2.4.6 The VIVAS will involve clinical cases relevant to HPB practice. There will be 1 Liver, 1 Pancreatic, 1 Complex Biliary case scenario, and 1 Imaging Interpretation Viva. The clinical scenarios will take the format of a MDT type discussion - i.e. presentation of clinical case, questioning regarding investigations required, discussion of relevant investigations and imaging, candidate interpretation of imaging, candidate proposal of management plan, questioning regarding technical details of surgery required, outcome expectations, other relevant adjunct treatments etc.

2.4.7 The written questions (along with answer guidelines) and clinical Viva scenarios are developed by members of the Board and reviewed and approved by the Examination Committee prior to being included in the Examination.

2.4.8 Examples of selected past questions are made available to Candidates.

2.4.9 The AANZHPBA will make reasonable adjustments to allow disadvantaged Candidates equal opportunities for participation. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Examination Committee via the Executive Officer.

2.5 Changes, rescheduling and cancellation

2.5.1 Occasionally due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the AANZHPBA, changes may need to be made to the location, format or date of the Examination or the Examination may be cancelled.

2.5.2 Candidates will be notified of any changes as soon as is reasonably practical and provided with options depending on the nature of the change.

2.6 Examination fee and associated costs

2.6.1 The Examination Fee is payable by the Candidate to the AANZHPBA a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the Examination date.

2.6.2 Candidates are responsible for their own travel and accommodation and any other associated costs to undertake the Examination.

3. Eligibility and timing

3.1 Eligibility criteria

3.1.1 To be eligible to undertake the examination, candidates must have:

- i. Successfully completed their first year of the AANZHPBA PFET Program
- ii. Achieved a satisfactory grade in the Mid-term Assessment of PFET Year 2
- iii. Successfully completed all mandatory PBAs
- iv. Submitted the Application for Recognition of Completion of Research Requirement a minimum of eight (8) weeks prior to the examination date

3.1.2 Trainees should refer to the AANZHPBA PFET Training Regulations Handbook for specific details regarding the above requirements.

3.2 Timing

3.2.1 Trainees must undertake the Examination in their 2nd PFET year.

3.2.2. It is the Trainees responsibility to ensure they meet all eligibility criteria outlined in Section 3.1.1 in time to undertake the Examination in their 2nd PFET year.

3.2.3 If a Trainee does not undertake the Examination in PFET Year 2, they will be permitted to sit the examination the following year, however in this instance, only 1 attempt at the Examination will be permitted. Trainees who do not pass on this attempt will not graduate from the AANZHPBA PFET program and will not be permitted to undergo any further training Terms or reapply for the AANZHPBA PFET program in the future.

4. Withdrawal

4.1 Withdrawal prior to Examination commencement

4.1.1 Trainees who wish to withdraw from the Examination, prior to the commencement of the Examination, must notify the Chair of the Examination Committee as soon as is practical.

4.1.2 The Examination fee will be refunded where Candidates withdraw more than thirty (30) days prior to the Examination date. After this date, refunds may be approved at the discretion of the Board under extenuating circumstances.

4.1.3 Should the Trainee wish to remain on the Training program and request another opportunity to sit the Examination, they must apply in writing to the Training Committee via the Executive Officer.

4.1.4 In considering the application, the Training committee will review the Candidates overall performance and Assessments throughout the Training Program and may seek further input from the Supervisor.

4.1.5 The Training Committee will make a recommendation to the Board who will determine either:

- i. The Trainee will be offered the opportunity to undertake the Examination the following year *or*
- ii. The Trainee will be removed from the AANZHPBA PFET Program.

4.1.6 Where the Trainee is permitted to undertake the Examination the following year, only one (1) attempt at the Examination will usually be permitted. In the event the Trainee is unsuccessful, the Training Committee may at its discretion allow a second attempt the year after, however this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Withdrawal during the exam

4.2.1 Trainees who withdraw from the Examination process after the commencement of the Examination must immediately notify the Examination Invigilator or Chair of the Examination Committee of the reasons for withdrawal (prior to leaving the Examination).

4.2.2 The Candidate will be deemed to have attempted the Examination, which will count towards the maximal number of attempts allowed in accordance with Section 10.2.

4.2.3 The Examination fee will not be refunded.

4.2.4 The Candidate may apply for “Special consideration for assessment”, in accordance with Section 11.

5. Conflicts

5.1 Conflicts of interest

5.1.1 Candidates will likely encounter examiners who are known to them or whom they have met on previous occasions. This does not normally constitute a conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest will be considered in circumstances where examiners:

- i. are family and/or personal friends
- ii. have a shared practice
- iii. have some other exceptional relationship

5.1.2 Examiners and candidates are required to notify The AANZHPBA if there is any perceived or actual conflict of interest.

5.1.3 In the event of a confirmed conflict of interest, the Examiner will be excluded from examining the Candidate in the Viva section.

6. Privacy and Confidentiality

6.1 Unauthorised disclosure

6.1.1 Any person involved with the Examination shall treat as strictly confidential, any materials, images, content or conversations of any component or segment, whether viewed or discussed for the purposes of running the examination.

6.1.2 Candidates are not permitted to copy, remove or share examination papers which are the property of the AANZHPBA.

7. Misconduct

7.1 Acts of misconduct

7.1.1 The use of prohibited equipment and materials, cheating and/or disruptive behaviour will be considered misconduct and will be investigated. Candidates

identified as engaging in such activities to gain competitive advantage or assist another candidate:

- i. may be temporarily removed from the examination while the incident is addressed
- ii. may be permanently removed and prevented from completing the examination
- iii. may be reported for misconduct
- iv. will not be refunded or reimbursed for any costs associated
- v. may be removed from the AANZHPBA PFET Program

7.1.2 All incidents must be reported to the AANZHPBA Board.

8. Marking

8.1 Marking process

8.1.1 Written answers are marked by examiners in a blinded manner, according to the answer guideline and marking rubric. Two examiners will independently mark the Candidate's answer and reach a consensus score.

8.1.2 Clinical/viva scenarios rate the candidate's performance on how they assess and manage different clinical situations. Two examiners will independently assess the candidate during a clinical/viva scenario and reach a consensus score.

8.1.3 A marking system is applied in rating performance. Each written answer/viva is marked as:

- a. Excellent pass- for exceptional performance
- b. Pass- where a satisfactory standard is achieved
- c. Borderline fail- where the candidate has failed to reach the standard
- d. Clear fail- where the candidate falls well short of the standard

9. Results

9.1 Determination of results

9.1.1 The Examination Faculty will meet at the conclusion of the Examination (or as soon as is practical thereafter) to determine the results.

9.1.2 The Chair of the Examination Committee is responsible for the collation of the marking and presentation of the results to the Examination Faculty.

9.1.3 Each written question is weighted evenly. To pass the written component, Candidates must achieve either a Pass or Excellent Pass in a minimum of 10 of the 15 questions.

9.1.4 Each of the 4 clinical scenarios in the Viva is weighted evenly. To pass the Viva component, Candidates must achieve either a Pass or Excellent Pass in a minimum of 3 of the 4 scenarios.

9.1.5 Overall results will be determined as follows:

- a. Candidates who have passed both written and viva components of the exam will be recommended to pass.
- b. Candidates who have failed both written and viva components of the exam will be recommended to fail.
- c. Candidates who have passed only 1 component of the exam (i.e., Written or Vivas) will be discussed as outlined in Section 9.2 and the Examination Committee will reach a decision on those candidates as to an overall pass or fail result.

9.2 Discussion of Candidates

9.2.1 The discussion of Candidates by the Examination Faculty, in accordance with Section 9.1.5c, will be Chaired by the Chairperson of the Examinations Committee.

9.2.2 Considerations may include (but not be limited to)

- i. Compensatory demonstrations of proficiency elsewhere in the exam process that may make up for failings/weakness in specific clinical areas.
- ii. Language issues
- iii. Issues of external distractions, candidate anxiety etc. in specific areas

9.2.3 At the conclusion of the discussion process, a vote is to be taken upon each candidate's recommendation to pass or fail. In the case of an equality of votes, the Examination Chairperson shall be entitled to a second or casting vote. The carried vote will be reflected as the accepted Examination result for each candidate.

9.3 Padbury Trophy

9.3.1 On completion of the marking process for all candidates, the Examination Faculty will decide if there is a Candidate whose performance has been exceptional. Such a candidate may be selected for award of the Padbury Trophy.

9.3.2 Where there is more than one potential Candidate in contention for the Padbury Trophy, the Examination Faculty will vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Examination Chairperson shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.

9.3.2 The Examination Faculty may elect not to award the Padbury Trophy at its discretion, should there be no suitable Candidate.

9.4 Notification

9.3.1 The Examination Committee will notify Candidates of the outcome of the Examination within seven (7) days of the Examination date.

10. Examination fail

10.1 Feedback

10.1.1 Candidates who are unsuccessful in the Examination will receive written feedback from the Chair of the Examination Committee within seven (7) days after the Examination and have the opportunity to discuss their performance with the Chair should they wish.

10.1.2 The Supervisor will also be provided with a copy of the written feedback.

10.1.3 The purpose of feedback is to:

- i. highlight areas for improvement including poor performance and safety concerns
- ii. provide insight for the unsuccessful candidate which will aid in review and preparation for a subsequent attempt

10.2 Further attempts

10.2.1 Trainees who are unsuccessful in the Examination on the first attempt in their 2nd PFET year, have the opportunity to re-sit the Examination. In this instance, candidates must re-sit the examination the following year.

10.2.2 It is recommended the Trainee arrange to meet with the Supervisor to review the feedback provided and develop a plan to address deficiencies, should they plan to reattempt the Examination.

10.2.3 A maximum of two (2) attempts at passing the Examination is allowed. Trainees who do not pass on a second attempt will not graduate from the AANZHPBA PFET program and will not be permitted to undergo any further training Terms or reapply for the AANZHPBA PFET program in the future.

11. Special consideration, reconsideration and appeals

11.1 Special consideration

11.1.1 The Examination Committee will consider requests for special consideration when circumstances beyond the control of the candidate may have had an effect on performance.

11.1.2 Applications for special consideration must be submitted in writing to the Examination Committee, via the Executive Officer, no later than three (3) days after the Examination date.

11.1.3 In considering the application, the Examination Committee will review the Candidates Examination result, consult with the Training Committee, review the Candidates overall performance and Assessments throughout the Training Program, and may seek further input from the Supervisor.

11.1.4 For Special Consideration to be applied, the Candidate must have passed either the written or Viva component of the Examination. Special consideration will not be applied where the Candidate has failed both the written and Viva components.

11.1.5 The Training Committee will make a recommendation to the Board who will determine either:

- i. The Trainee will be awarded a Pass *or*
- ii. The Examination result will be recorded as a Fail

11.1.6 Where the Examination result is recorded as a Fail, The Trainee will may be offered another opportunity to undertake the Examination the following year in accordance with the rules outlined in section 10.2.

11.2 Reconsideration

11.2.1 Candidates who believe an incorrect decision may have been made in relation to their examination, may apply for reconsideration.

11.2.2 Candidates should note however, requests related to examination results may extend to an investigation to ensure all steps in the examination marking quality assurance process were executed correctly but will not extend to the remarking of an examination paper.

11.2.3 Applications for reconsideration must be submitted in writing to the Examination Committee via the Executive Officer no later than two (2) weeks after receiving the Examination result.

11.3 Appeals

11.3.1 Trainees have the opportunity for an appeals process by applying in writing to the AANZHPBA Board via the Executive Officer.

11.3.2 Trainees wishing to lodge an appeal must refer to the AANZHPBA Appeals Policy.

12. Associated documents

- AANZHPBA PFET Training Regulations Handbook
- AANZHPBA PFET Program Curriculum
- Appeals policy
- Marking Rubric for written questions (Appendix 1)

13. Contacts

13.1 AANZHPBA – Examination Committee

AANZHPBA Executive Officer

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SA 5067

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Appendix 1: Marking Rubric for written questions

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>CLEAR FAIL</p> | <p>With respect to this question this candidate lacks critical knowledge and perspective to allow safe practise</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate has little knowledge or understanding of the topic • The candidate may include an important idea, part of an idea, or a few facts but does not develop the ideas or deal with the relationships among the ideas • The response contains misconceptions, or inaccurate and irrelevant information • The response is poor and lacks clarity • The candidate left the answer blank, wrote about a different topic or wrote "I do not know" |
| <p>BORDERLINE FAIL</p> | <p>With respect to this question this candidate has some knowledge or understanding but lacks perspective; synthesis of ideas or depth. This candidate would need support in this area of HPB practise as a surgeon.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the topic. However, the overall answer is marginal and may show apparent gaps in his/her understanding and knowledge • The candidate includes some of the important ideas related to the topic • The candidate shows some but limited understanding of the relationships within the answer • Development of ideas within the answer is marginal but includes some supporting facts or examples • The response is satisfactory; containing some detail, but the answer may be vague or not well developed and may include misconceptions or some inaccurate information |
| <p>PASS</p> | <p>With respect to this question this candidate demonstrates a suitable working knowledge of the issues and the relationships between them and clinical practise. This candidate is safe to practise independently in this area.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is knowledgeable about the topic • The candidate has a good understanding of the topic • The candidate includes most of the important ideas related to the topic • The candidate shows a good understanding of the important relationships • The answer demonstrates good development of ideas and includes adequate supporting facts or examples • The answer demonstrates reasonable organisation around big ideas, major concepts/principles in the field • The response is good, has reasonable detail, and is clear |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <p>EXCELLENT PASS</p> | <p>With respect to this question this candidate excels tying together ideas and issues of the subject into a well-formed answer that demonstrates knowledge, expertise and experience in this area.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the highest rating • The candidate demonstrates a level well above the required standard • The candidate is extremely knowledgeable about the topic • The candidate demonstrates in-depth understanding of the relevant and important ideas • The candidate includes the important ideas related to topic and shows a depth of understanding of important relationships • The answer is fully developed and includes specific facts or examples • The answer is well organised around big ideas, major concepts/principles in the field • The response is exemplary, detailed and clear |
|---------------------------|---|--|