

PHARMACY ORAL EXAMINATION (PRACTICE)

CANDIDATE GUIDE

COVID-19 ADDENDUM

The primary role of the Pharmacy Board of Australia (the Board) is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by ensuring pharmacists are competent and fit to practise. We also recognise that it is important to help interns transitioning into the workforce during COVID-19 when their contribution is vital.

The Board has decided to modify some of the requirements for general registration during the COVID-19 pandemic (the pandemic). This addendum to the candidate guide outlines the modifications to the oral examination (practice) and the entry requirements for this examination that only apply during the pandemic. Please also refer to the candidate guide for further information about the examination.

The decisions of the Board to modify some of the requirements were made in collaboration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) in response to the concerns of interns and their preceptors and employers while still ensuring public safety.

Eligibility to undertake the oral examination (practice) during 2020

While the eligibility criteria to undertake the June 2020 oral examination (practice) outlined in the candidate guide were unchanged, the eligibility criteria to undertake the October 2020 oral examination (practice) have been modified.

To be eligible to undertake the October 2020 oral examination (practice):



- pharmacy interns must have completed 75% of the revised 1,575 approved supervised practice hours (i.e. 1,181 hours) required for general registration by the first scheduled day of the oral examination (practice) period, or
- pharmacists seeking to return to practice must have completed 75% of the supervised practice hours set by the Board, prior to sitting the oral examination (practice)



- pharmacy interns do **NOT** need to hold a current pass in the written examination¹ conducted by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) at the closing date for applications for the oral examination (practice).

Interns can therefore:

- sit both the written and oral examinations during October 2020, or
- sit only the oral examination (and not the written examination) if they passed the written examination during the 18 months prior to the October 2020 oral examination (practice).

¹ Further information about the written examination conducted by the Australian Pharmacy Council on behalf of the Board is available at www.pharmacycouncil.org.au.

Validity period for the results of examinations undertaken during 2020

A pass in the written examination and oral examination (practice) will remain valid for 18 months.

An intern who is unsuccessful in the October 2020 oral examination (practice) is required to resit and pass that examination within 18 months of having passed the written examination.

An intern who is unsuccessful in the October 2020 written examination is required to resit and pass that examination within 18 months of having passed the October 2020 oral examination (practice).

Format of oral examinations (practice) held in 2020

The following outlines the format and additional information relevant to the June and October examinations.

June 2020	October 2020
The oral examination (practice) will be delivered through an online video conference platform (e.g. Zoom or Skype).	The oral examination (practice) will be delivered face-to-face (this is subject to change if the government announces further restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic prior to the examination).
The format of the exam has not changed (the type and number of examination questions)	The format of the exam has not changed (the type and number of examination questions)
Candidates are required to complete and sign a declaration form prior to the exam. The declaration form is a confirmation that the candidate agrees to and will abide by examination rules for the videoconference examination.	Candidates are required to complete and sign a declaration form prior to the exam. The declaration form is a confirmation that the candidate agrees to and will abide by examination rules for the face to face examination.
The use of internet, any communication device or online software during this examination is prohibited, except for the purposes of video conferencing to enable the examination to take place.	The use of internet, any communication device or online software during this examination is prohibited.
For Part 4 of the exam, references are permitted but only offline or hard copy references.	For Part 4 of the exam, references are permitted but only offline or hard copy references.
Candidates will undertake the examination at a location of their choosing that meets examination rules (a quiet room). The candidate will connect from their computer via video link; examiners will also connect from their computer.	Ahpra will advise the location of the examination venue where candidates are to attend for the face to face examinations.
The candidate is required to be alone in the room where they undertake the exam.	Examiners will be present with the candidate in the examination room.
Candidates should ensure that they have a glass of water and paper and pen as they may be needed during the exam. Electronic devices cannot be used for note taking.	Examiners will provide the candidate with a glass of water and paper and pen – as they may be needed during the exam. Electronic devices cannot be used for note taking.
In the video conference two examiners will introduce themselves. The candidate will be asked to verify their identity via photo ID before the examination can begin. The examiners will provide instructions about the examination and	Two examiners will introduce themselves and conduct the assessment. The examiners will provide instructions about the examination format, make notes and monitor time. Candidates should also be mindful of the

June 2020	October 2020
the process for participating via an online platform, make notes and monitor time. Candidates should also be mindful of the timeframes for each question to ensure they cover the material during the time allocated. As each part of the examination is introduced, the candidate will be provided with access to the question sheet via screen sharing.	timeframes for each question to ensure they cover the material during the time allocated. As each part of the examination is introduced, a hardcopy question sheet will be provided to the candidate to review.
Candidates will need to ensure they are using a computer or laptop that has video and audio capabilities.	Candidates may bring a laptop or other electronic devices to access electronic (not online) copies of references for use during Part Four of the examination only.
Once completed, an examination part/question cannot be revisited.	Once completed, an examination part/question cannot be revisited.
Depending on the examination time, candidates may be directed to the virtual post-examination waiting area or quarantine room where they will be supervised online by an invigilator.	Depending on the examination time, candidates may be directed to the post-examination waiting area or quarantine room where they will be supervised by an invigilator.

Additional information

Candidates will be provided with further information in their candidate timetable letter, including any additional instructions and FAQ's.

Oral examination (practice) rules – 2020

The following examination rules are issued by the Pharmacy Board of Australia. These rules should be read in conjunction with the Board's *Registration standard: Examinations for eligibility for general registration* and the above format of oral examinations (practice) to be held in June and October 2020.

The rules for the oral examination (practice) are as follows:

1. In order to be granted entry to the oral examination (practice), candidates are required to meet specific entry requirements.
 - Pharmacy interns completing an internship must have completed 75% of their approved supervised practice hours by the first scheduled day of the oral examination (practice) period.
 - Pharmacists completing the recency of practice requirements set by the Board must have completed 75% of the supervised practice hours set by the Board, prior to sitting the oral examination (practice).
2. Candidates may lodge one application per oral examination (practice) period and should apply to sit in the jurisdiction where they undertook their supervised practice. If applying to sit in a different jurisdiction, candidates will need to provide their reasons for doing so.
3. Pharmacy interns are required to pay the application fee for the oral examination (practice) by the application closing date. Failure to pay in full will result in the application not being considered and entry to the oral examination (practice) will be refused.
4. Candidates for the oral examination (practice) who are waiting to be examined and candidates who have completed the examination must not communicate with one another on the day of the examination.

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- 5.** Candidates may bring into the examination room any reference material (electronic or hard copy) of their choice, which may be referred to when directed by an examiner. However, no extra examination time will be awarded to candidates for this purpose. References may contain personal annotations or marks. Electronic reference devices must be set to English language prior to commencement of the examination otherwise they may not be used during the examination. The Board will not provide references for the candidate's use. Candidates will be permitted to have pen and paper to make notes during the examination which the candidate will be requested to destroy in view of the examiners at the end of the examination. Examiners will not use these notes in their assessment of the candidate. Electronic devices cannot be used by candidates for the purpose of note taking.
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- 6.** Candidates are prohibited from communicating externally which includes the use of electronic devices during the whole of the examination (including any pre- and post-examination or virtual waiting areas). Any electronic device used for the open book section (Part 4) such as laptop computers or tablets must not use any online references. Examiners and examination staff shall have the right to inspect any electronic device during the examination at any time to ensure no external communication is being sent or received.
- Any device that is capable of recording (video / sound) must not be used to do so. Any form of recording is strictly prohibited.
- The following devices are prohibited from use during the examination: smartphones, MP3 players, other "smart" accessories such as watches, glasses, or other wearable technology. Candidates must ensure that references used for the open book section (Part 4) of the examination do not rely on internet connectivity.
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- 7.** Candidates must abide by any quarantine times that may be in place and can only leave the examination or any pre-examination and post-examination waiting areas when approved to do so by examination officers or examiners.
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- 8.** After the conclusion of the examination, any communication regarding examinations must be addressed to the AHPRA examination officer and sent to pharmacyoralexam@ahpra.gov.au. Candidates must not communicate with examiners or members of the Board or the Board's committees concerning the examination.
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- 9.** Failure to comply with any rule or instruction by an examiner or supervisor will be regarded as a breach of discipline and may lead to exclusion from the examination and the candidate deemed to be not yet competent.
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- 10.** All results will be notified to candidates via email. Results will not be given via the telephone.
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- 11.** Eligible candidates who are unable to attend the exam due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control can apply for special arrangements in accordance with the procedures outlined.
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