



**College of Psychiatrists
FC Psych(SA)Part II
Single Best Answer (SBA)
Training Slides**

July 2019

FC Psych(SA)Part II Written Exams

- As of the **First Semester 2020**, the FC Psych(SA) part II examination will comprise **TWO written papers**
- The 2 papers will be in **Single Best Answer (SBA) format** with each paper consisting of **75-100 SBA** questions
- It is possible that multiple choice questions (MCQs), extended matching questions (EMQs) and very short answer questions will be included
- **Both papers** will include **content from the entire content blueprint**
- Each paper will be of **three (3) hours duration**

FC Psych(SA)Part II Written Exams

- An overall pass mark for both papers combined will be determined by pretest standard setting using the **Angoff method**
- **Negative marking will not be applied**
- Both written papers will be offered for each semester i.e. twice per annum
- Both papers must be written in one sitting of the examination
- Both papers must be written in each sitting of the examination

Why Single Best Answer Format?

- Single Best Answer (SBA) questions:
 - Assess **application** of **clinical knowledge**
 - Sample widely from **multiple learning outcomes**
 - Are linked to **learning outcomes**
- SBAs are:
 - Defensible
 - Valid
 - Reliable
 - Acceptable
 - Affordable

SBA Structure

- Scenario/stem
- Lead-in question
- List of 4 relevant and plausible options (to a borderline candidate)
- Single **best** answer
- 3 distractors

Example SBA Structure

Scenario/stem:

Mrs Dlamini is a 45-year-old woman who presents to the emergency department with sudden onset of confusion. According to her brother she has a longstanding history of alcohol misuse. He reports that for the last two days she has been shaky and sweaty, and she has been terrified of dogs attacking her in her room. They have no dogs in the home.

Lead-in question:

What is the most likely trigger for her symptoms?

List of plausible options with a single best answer:

- A. Alcohol intoxication
- B. Abstinence from alcohol**
- C. Benzodiazepine overdose
- D. Sepsis

SBAAs are **NOT** True False Questions

- SBAAs are **not** a list of correct or incorrect statements

For example: A 71-year-old woman's husband reports that she no longer recognizes her grandchildren, despite being able to clearly see them and even when she is able to recite their names on being asked to.

What term best describes this symptom?

- A. **Agnosia**
- B. Amnesia
- C. Aphasia
- D. Apraxia

- In this question there is one correct answer and 3 incorrect answers, this is **not** a single best answer question format

SBAAs are NOT True False Questions

- In an SBA question **each option should be plausible** given the scenario and lead in question while **a single answer** should stand out as the best to the borderline candidate

For example: A 76-year-old woman presents with a temperature of 38.5°C, muscle rigidity and worsening confusion after hip replacement surgery. She was seen by the doctor on call 2 days ago who prescribed a new medication to manage difficult behaviour.

What is the most likely cause of this presentation?

- A. Lithium toxicity
 - B. MAOI drug interaction
 - C. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome**
 - D. Serotonin syndrome
- In this question **all the answers are possible** given the context described in the scenario but **C (neuroleptic malignant syndrome)** stands out as the **single best answer**

The Cover Test

- When covering the answer options a candidate should be able to answer the question solely from the clinical scenario/stem and lead-in question
- The good candidate should know the best answer without looking at the prompts

For example: A 76-year-old woman presents with a temperature of 38.5°C, muscle rigidity and worsening confusion after hip replacement surgery. She was seen by the doctor on call 2 days ago who prescribed a new medication to manage difficult behaviour. What is the most likely cause of this presentation?

- The candidate should be able to answer this question without seeing a list of options

Question Content

Question content will be guided by the College of Psychiatrist Blue Print and aligned with the identified learning outcomes

- Diagnosis
- History, mental state, physical examination
- Risk factors
- Theories
- Interpretation of investigations
- Complications
- Management- emergency, acute, chronic, palliative, risk
- Follow up
- Prognosis
- Basic sciences and background knowledge (pathology, aetiology, epidemiology)
- Relationship and communication with patients and colleagues
- Promoting health and knowledge of disease factors
- Maintaining good medical practice, professionalism, teaching and training and health leadership

Question Content

- Multiple questions can be set on the same scenario/stem
- For example a single scenario could include questions on diagnosis, management and prognosis
- Each question will be a **stand alone** question in the exam

Question Content

- Questions will be set based on well recognized guidelines rather than university specific practices
- Questions will focus on **common** conditions, **life threatening** conditions and conditions that cause marked **impairment of functioning**
- Questions will cover a range of difficulties: **easy, moderate, difficult**
- Certain competencies and skills are better tested in the OCSE and long case exam formats

Question Length

- It should take about 60-90 seconds to answer an SBA format question
- A 3-hour paper will include 75-100 SBA questions

SBA Structure

- Scenario/stem
- Lead-in question
- List of 4 relevant and plausible options (to a borderline candidate)
- Single **best** answer
- 3 distractors

Scenario/ Stem

- A scenario or stem supplies the necessary information and context for analysis and interpretation

For example: A 38-year-old oncologist spends 80 hours per week at work. She rewrites the registrars notes because she feels the notes have poor grammar and do not meet her standards of care. She has never had a significant relationship and she often finds fault in others. She does not enjoy activities outside of work.

What is the most likely diagnosis?

- A. Narcissistic personality disorder
- B. Obsessive compulsive personality disorder**
- C. Schizoid personality disorder
- D. Social phobia

Clinical Scenario/Stem Content May Include:

- Age, gender
- Site of care e.g. emergency department, outpatient visit, inpatient psychiatric ward
- Presenting complaint
- Duration of presenting complaint
- Patient history
- Family history
- Physical findings
- Diagnostic studies
- Initial treatment
- Subsequent findings

The Scenario/Stem

- The stem will provide **raw data** rather than a formulation/diagnosis
- Actual data better reflects clinical practice and requires candidates to **draw their own conclusions** from clinical data
- With raw data candidates have to interpret clinical information and draw inferences regarding diagnosis and cause

For example:

‘His temperature is 39.1°.’ rather than: ‘He has a pyrexia.’

‘Her body mass index is 35.6 kg/m².’ rather than: ‘ She is obese.’

Lead-in Question

- The lead-in question poses a clear, focussed question
- The lead-in question reflects clinical practice

Examples:

- What is the most likely diagnosis?
- What would be the most appropriate initial plan?
- What is the most appropriate initial diagnostic investigation?
- What is the most important next step?
- What is most likely to have triggered these symptoms?
- What is the most likely factor to impact on prognosis?
- What is the most common risk factor?
- What additional finding is most likely to be present?

Option List

- There are 4 homogenous (same length, complexity, domain) options
- 3 options are distractors that are plausible but less likely
- **One unambiguous best answer** should stand out above the 3 distractors

Standard Setting

- The college has an expert examiner panel to peer review questions and standard set exams
- An overall **pass mark** for both papers combined will be determined by **standard setting** using the Angoff method
- Questions will be set across spectrums of difficulty (easy, moderate, difficult)
- Questions will adequately reflect the learning objects set out in the College of Psychiatrists blue print
- **Negative marking will not be applied**

References

- College of Psychiatrists SBA workshop 2018, 2019 and lectures by Prof Luvhengo and Prof Burch
- Walsh JL, Harris BHL, Smith PE. Postgrad Med J 2016, 0:1-6. Single best answer question-writing tips for clinicians
- Boland RJ, Lester NA, Williams E. Academic Psychiatry 2010; 34:4. Writing Multiple-Choice Questions
- <http://download.usmle.org/IWTutorial/intro.htm>
- Some of the examples have been adapted from http://global.oup.com/uk/orc/medicine/stringer/resources/self_assessment/sbas/ (Please note: not all of the questions on this site are SBA format)