SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING THE ROYAL COLLEGE RADIATION ONCOLOGY EXAMINATION

The comprehensive objective examination in Radiation Oncology assesses candidates’ competence to function as a radiation oncologist across the CanMEDS domains of medical expert, communicator, collaborator, manager, health advocate, scholar and professional. The topics covered on the exam have been aligned with the Objectives of Training in Radiation Oncology. The questions are typically based on the knowledge necessary for the practicing radiation oncologist. Candidates do not need to pass the written component in order to take the oral component. Success or failure is based on consideration of all components of the examination. Candidates who are unsuccessful at this examination must, if within their period of eligibility, repeat all components of the examination.

WRITTEN COMPONENT

The written component consists of two, three-hour papers, of short-answer questions. Questions will cover the principles and practice of radiation therapy.

Paper 1: consists of approximately 8 clinical scenarios
Paper 2: consists of approximately 40 questions on general oncology and basic sciences of radiation oncology

Marks are only given for correct answers; no marks are deducted for incorrect responses. When a specific number of answers is requested, any answers over and above that number will not be marked (e.g. if four are requested, only the first four will be marked). Answers should be written or printed legibly and be as succinct as possible.

ORAL COMPONENT

The oral component consists of two parts:
1) Clinical Practice
2) Treatment Planning

All scenarios cover domains related to the practice of radiation oncology.

1) Clinical Practice
The candidate will be examined at approximately five stations for approximately 12 minutes each. Typically there are one examiner per station and candidate may be presented with an oncological situation and clinical information and asked questions dealing with the broad field of medicine and radiation oncology relevant to the cases presented. Additionally, the candidate may be examined during this hour on the assessment and interpretation of clinical findings and imaging studies.

2) Treatment Planning
The candidate will be examined at approximately five stations for approximately 20 minutes each. Typically the candidate will be provided with material to evaluate and then engage in a discussion with one examiner. The stations typically include topics such as: target volumes definition, critical organ identification, normal tissue tolerance, dosimetry, radiotherapy planning techniques, palliative radiotherapy and skin cancer radiotherapy.
Candidates are encouraged to remain calm during the stations taking time to collect and organize their thoughts. The examiner(s) may interrupt during the station to seek information or to move the station forward to ensure that candidates have an opportunity to cover all of the material in the limited time available. This does not reflect on the answers given. Examiners will keep notes on their scoring sheets during the examination, and may refer to their watches.

There will be indication instructing when candidates should exit the room, move to the next station or enter the next room. There will be time allocation between stations to allow examiners to complete their marking and candidates to move to the next station.

You may encounter other candidates in the corridor between room changes or in the waiting room area. It is imperative that you do NOT communicate with each other during the oral examination process. Communication between candidates, in the corridor, or in the waiting room area may be construed as irregular behavior and may result in an invalid examination for the candidate, as well as potential denial of entry to future examinations. You may not take any electronic devices, for example, PDA, cell phone, Blackberry, into the examination with you.

An approved observer may be present in the examination room during the oral examination. This observer will not interact with the candidate or the examiners; he/she would be there to observe the examiners and to ensure fairness of the examination process.

Note that no feedback will be given by the examiners and your results will only be available via the Royal College website.

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