



Australasian College
for Emergency Medicine

Studying for examinations

Emergency Medicine Certificate, Diploma
and Advanced Diploma

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acem.org.au

Background

The revised Emergency Medicine certificate and diploma training programs, which include the Emergency Medicine Certificate (EMC), the Emergency Medicine Diploma (EMD) and the Emergency Medicine Advanced Diploma (EMAD), were released in February 2021. Changes to the EMC and EMD curricula and the introduction of the EMAD informed changes to the content and format of the examinations.

This document aims to assist EMC, EMD and EMAD trainees and Primary Supervisors with important information and study tips regarding the revised examinations, which are a major component of the EMC, EMD and EMAD training programs.

Contact

If you have any concerns or queries not addressed by this guide, please speak to your primary supervisor or contact the ACEM EMCD team.

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Examination questions

Number, duration and standard setting

Program	Number of questions	Duration
Emergency Medicine Certificate	80	90 minutes
Emergency Medicine Diploma	80	90 minutes
Emergency Medicine Advanced Diploma	50	60 minutes

The passing score of the examinations will be determined by a standard setting process. Standard setting is done by Diplomates, Advanced Diplomates and FACEMs who are in active clinical practice and have specific training in standard setting.

Style

Each examination comprises Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs). Most questions commence with a clinical scenario or vignette, followed by a stem/lead-in question, and four options of which the one best option is to be selected as per the example below. Some questions may not include a vignette, however, still comprise a lead-in question and options.

Worked example (question layout)

Vignette / clinical scenario

A 55-year-old male presents with swelling and redness to his lower left leg. His observations are:

- Temp 37.8°C
- HR 90bpm
- 140/70 mmHg
- 20 RR
- 95% SaO₂ on room air

Stem/lead-in question

What features on assessment most necessitate admission?

- a Anaphylaxis to penicillin
- b Insulin dependent diabetes
- c **Lower leg crepitus** (*single best option*)
- d Suspicion of DVT

The following are some examples of stem/lead-in questions

- Which of the following is the most appropriate investigation for this patient?
- Which of the following is the most appropriate initial treatment for this patient?
- What is the most appropriate next step in the management for this patient?
- What is the most likely diagnosis in this case?
- Which of the following management options has priority?
- What of the following do the results of this test indicate?
- Which of the following outlines the most appropriate approach to this scenario?

All themes in each of the curricula are examinable. This includes questions related to non-medical expertise themes, including (but not limited to) the following.

EMC

- Legal issues and forensic medicine
- Communication

EMD

- Professional and ethical practice
- Management of the daily emergency

EMAD

- Choosing wisely
- Quality assurance, improvement and innovation
- Collaboration with community and hospital

Studying

Examination questions are developed drawing upon the relevant curriculum. As such, trainees are required to combine the knowledge, understanding and skills they develop through 'on-the-floor' training and experience, interaction and consultation with their supervisors, and self-directed learning, in order to best prepare for an examination. ACEM's online modules and resources remain important learning support tools; trainees are strongly advised to continue to use these to support their preparation for the examinations.

Knowledge and skills required

It is expected that before attempting an examination, the trainee will be confident with their knowledge, understanding and skills as articulated in the learning objectives of the curriculum.

Given the nested nature of the curricula, the knowledge, understanding and skills of the programs build upon each other. Hence, the knowledge, understanding and skills of the Emergency Medicine Advanced Diploma (EMAD) is built on and assumes the knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in the Emergency Medicine Diploma (EMD) and Emergency Medicine Certificate (EMC) curricula. Similarly, the EMD is built on, and assumes the knowledge and skills outlined in the EMC curriculum.

Resources to prepare

It is imperative that the candidates guide their study for the examinations by using and referring to the learning objectives in the curricula.

To study for their examinations, candidates should use:

- the curricula
- learning support resources, including:
 - recommended texts
 - eLearning modules
 - recommended additional resources
- relevant clinical guidelines
- on-the-floor training and experience
- feedback from other assessments, such as WBAs and reflection meetings.

Suggested steps to study for the examinations

All EMC, EMD and EMAD trainees, irrespective of when they enrolled in their training program (pre or post-2021), are strongly encouraged to take the following steps to support the preparation for their examination.

Step 1

Refer to the learning objectives in the curriculum of the program you are undertaking. For example, if you are undertaking the EMC, refer to the EMC section of the curriculum. The examination you will be completing will be developed based on these learning objectives.

The EMC, EMD and EMAD curricula can be accessed [here](#).

Note: Trainees who enrolled in the EMC or EMD prior to 2021 should note that there have been changes to the themes in the EMC and EMD curricula. All trainees must refer to the revised curricula [here](#). See section 4 below for summary of new themes in the curricula.

Step 2

Ensure that you acquire the knowledge and skills detailed in the curricula by:

- a Accessing the curricula [here](#)
- b Accessing the eLearning modules, recommended texts and additional resources suggested [here](#) on the ACEM Educational Resources website. (Note: These resources are organised by the themes in the revised curricula.)
- c On-the-floor training and experience.
- d Advice and information provided by Primary Supervisors and Direct Clinical Supervisors.
- e Feedback from other assessments such as WBAs or Reflection meetings.
- f Relevant guidelines.
- g Researching other relevant resources.

Self-directed learning is important. It requires a trainee to identify their own learning needs through a combination of self-reflection and discussion with supervisors, mentors, peers and others with whom they have worked and who can provide informed feedback. The trainee should then undertake independent learning activities targeted to specific learning needs, further self-reflection and accept ongoing feedback until the learning needs are addressed and understanding is consolidated.

These self-directed learning activities may include (but are not limited to):

- reading recommended texts and journal articles;
- researching specific topics online;
- completing the recommended online modules on the ACEM Educational Resources website ([here](#)); and
- participating in targeted simulation-based training.

Theme changes (pre-2021)

Trainees who enrolled in the EMC or EMD prior to 2021 should note that there have been changes to the themes in the revised curricula. It is crucial that all trainees, including those who enrolled prior to 2021, refer to the revised [curricula](#) to study for the examinations.

Emergency Medicine Certificate

The following themes are new to the revised EMC.

- Prioritisation in clinical practice
- Procedures in emergency medicine
- Vulnerable and high-risk patients
- Rural and remote emergency medicine 1
- Legal and forensic medicine*
- Public health*
- Indigenous health*

*Moved from pre-2021 EMD

Emergency Medicine Diploma

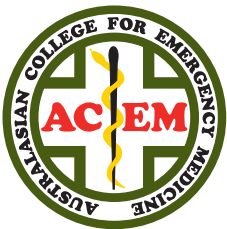
The following theme is new to the revised EMD.

- Rural and remote emergency medicine 2
- Management of the daily ED

Emergency Medicine Advanced Diploma

The following themes are in the EMAD (moved from the pre-2021 EMD).

- Complex burns
- Complex wounds
- Ophthalmological emergencies
- Environmental emergencies
- Quality assurance and improvement
- Disaster management
- Emergency care in a rural and remote context
- Emergency retrieval and transportation
- Referral and transfer
- Leadership and management skills
- Prioritisation and decision making
- Evidence based approach to emergency medicine
- Supervision and teaching



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