

*Canadian College of  
Microbiologists*



*Collège Canadien des  
Microbiologistes*

## **FCCM Examination Information**

### **Application Deadline**

The FCCM must receive all candidates' complete application packages by November 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the exam year (i.e. for the May 2019 exams, applications must be received by Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018).

### **Exam Structure**

The FCCM exam is composed of 2 sections: a written component and an oral component. As of 2011, the two sections of the exam will be conducted within a 2 day time period, just prior to the AMMI Canada-CACMID conference\*. The written exam consists of 110 multiple-choice questions (for 110 marks). The oral exam is graded out of a total of 90 marks. A total mark (graded out of 200), combining the marks from the written and oral exams, will be calculated for the candidate. In order to be successful, the candidate must (i) achieve 70% on the written exam (ii) achieve 70% overall from the combined written/oral exam marks AND (iii) pass each of the six content areas on at least 2 of 3 questions on the oral exam.

\*Note: For candidates who have completed CCM or CPEP-accredited programs, the written exam may be completed at their training site within the week prior to the oral exam if an appropriate proctor is identified.

### **The Written Exam**

Candidates are allowed three hours to complete the written exam. The written exam evaluates factual knowledge and clinical case interpretations. The content breakdown of the written exam is: 40 – 50% bacteriology, 15 – 20% virology, 10 – 15% mycology, 10 – 15% parasitology and 10 – 15% other (public health, infection control, biosafety and immunology).

### **The Role of the Oral Exam**

As Clinical Microbiologists, we are expected to provide expertise in a large variety of microbiological topics. The dissemination of this information occurs in both a written format, including lab manuals and manuscripts, and in oral format, including interactive situations with clinicians, fellow microbiologists, technologists, students, and countless other individuals. The oral exam is a dynamic, interactive discussion to evaluate how the candidate will convey microbiological information in future discussions in the workplace. The oral exam also evaluates the

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clinical laboratory management skills of the candidate. The oral exam environment provides the candidate sufficient time, structure and appropriate support from the examiners to be successful.

Notably, in the last 10 years >80 % of FCCM candidates, who completed CCM or CPEP-accredited programs, passed the exam on their first attempt.

### **The Oral Exam Process**

The oral examination consists of three cases, each to be addressed by the candidate from the perspective of six different content areas: 1) Diagnostic systems and interpretation of laboratory data, 2) Laboratory quality control, 3) Hospital infection prevention and control, 4) Laboratory management and regulation, 5) Laboratory biosafety, 6) Public health and epidemiology.

In order to pass the examination, the candidate must pass each of the six content areas on at least two of the three questions.

The examination committee is comprised of three examiners, one of whom will Chair the exam, and a Recorder. Each of the cases and the exam questions will be led by one of the three examiners. Once the lead examiner completes each individual case question, subsequent or additional questions may be asked by the other two examiners. A maximum of 60 minutes will be allotted to each case. Candidates are responsible to manage their time such that each case is completed in 60 minutes. The Chair will monitor the time per case and provide feedback to the candidate, as required, in order to complete the exam process within 3.5 hours. The Chair will close the session after 3.5 hours.

### **Sample Questions/ Recommended References**

Sample questions and recommended references are detailed in the FCCM syllabus.

### **Notification of Examination Results**

The candidates have the option to receive a preliminary result by email following the completion of the last oral exam in that year's session. The official results of successful candidates will be presented at the CCM Annual General Meeting, as part of the AMMI Canada-CACMID conference. The official results of an unsuccessful examination will be mailed to the candidate within 3 weeks of the examination process.

All candidates will receive a letter from the Chair highlighting the candidate's strengths and areas requiring ongoing study, as identified by the Chair and the examiners during the oral exam, within a month of the FCCM exam.

## **Repeat Examinations**

If a candidate is not successful in the initial exam attempt, the candidate may complete up to two additional attempts without re-applying. These two attempts must be completed within three years of the original FCCM application approval. Only the exam components that were not completed successfully (written, oral or both) need to be repeated. Candidates must notify the Chair of the FCCM Standing Committee of their intention to re-attempt the exam in a timeline consistent with the application process (i.e. for the May 2019 exams, notice must be received by Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018). A re-examination fee of \$450 will apply for candidates needing to repeat the oral exam and \$225 for those needing to repeat the written exam only. The timing of the repeat written exam will be determined by the chair and candidate. The repeat oral exam will only occur in the spring, based on annual conference scheduling.