Royal Australasian College
of Dental Surgeons

Let knowledge conquer disease

MRACDS(GDP) ASSESSMENT POLICY

Document Information

Nature of Document:	Amended Policy
Document Number:	COU 071-14
Version:	1.2
Policy Area:	MRACDS(GDP) Program
Contact Officer:	Director of Education
Authorised:	MRACDS(GDP) Board of Studies
Approved:	Education Policy Board
Date Effective:	2020
Date of Next Review:	2022
Policy Status:	Approved
Related Policies:	Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy Special Consideration in Assessment Policy

1. Purpose and scope

This Policy prescribes the process of submission and marking of MRACDS Short Answer Question (SAQs), Case Reports and undertaking the *viva voce* examination. The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons requires candidates in the MRACDS(GDP) Program to complete assessments and the *viva voce* within the designated scheduled time. These procedures and policies apply to candidates undertaking written assessments, case reports and the *viva voce* examination in the MRACDS(GDP) Program.

If a candidate has entered into an assessment process and believes their performance is likely to be seriously affected by illness or personal circumstances, they should consult the Special Consideration in Assessment Policy.

2. Vision

To be a respected international leader in the provision of postgraduate dental education and professional development.

3. Mission

To promote the study of the science and art of dentistry; to encourage research in clinical science and the practice of dentistry. The RACDS exists to promote excellence in the provision of dental education, examination and professional development in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

4. Values

In the delivery of our mission the RACDS will demonstrate:

- Patient orientation - understanding and reflecting the views of Members, Fellows and those undertaking College examination and working with them to achieve the best outcome for patients.

- Quality improvement - performing to and upholding high standards.

- Fiscal responsibility and efficiency using the resources of the College prudently.

- Integrity, honesty and propriety - upholding professional and ethical values

5. Background

The MRACDS(GDP) program is a two year modular based educational learning program. Candidates may take up to three years to complete the MRACDS(GDP) Program. Candidates must apply for an extension after two years and pay a third year fee.

Each MRACDS(GDP) candidate is required to satisfactorily complete nine modules (six core and three elective) with at least 120 hours of relevant CPD activities over a two year period.

Assessment is conducted by the College and consists of the following components:

- Eight open book Short Answer Questions (SAQs) for the core modules.
- One case report per elective module, three in total, to be submitted no later than three months prior to the *viva voce* examination for which the candidate intends to present.
- A thirty minute face-to-face *viva voce* examination prior to completion of the MRACDS(GDP) Program.

6. Policy statement

1. Assessments

> Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate access to the required tools to complete assessments. These tools include but may not be limited to: a computer with Microsoft Office (or equivalent) applications, internet connection, and email capability. Failure to have access to these tools does not constitute grounds for special consideration.

1.1. Core Modules – Short Answer Questions
Each of the six compulsory core modules is assessed by a set of eight open book Short Answer Questions (SAQs). For more information regarding the SAQs please see the Handbook for Membership and Fellowship in General Dental Practice.

There are three scheduled assessment rounds per the calendar year. Candidates must enrol for each module within the nominated assessment round, as per the dates set out on the RACDS website (see 2: Applying for SAQ Assessment)

1.2. Elective Modules – Case Reports:
Candidates must choose three out of the six elective modules. Each module is completed through submission of a case report in the chosen elective topic. For more information please see the Handbook for Membership and Fellowship in General Dental Practice.

1.3. *Viva voce* Examination
Once all core and three elective modules are successfully completed candidates are eligible to enrol for the *viva voce* examination. The *viva voce* is the final examination in the program, and successful completion enables eligibility for Admission to Membership (MRACDS(GDP)). The aim of the *viva voce* examination is for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of a case or cases describing a clinical scenario. The candidate is expected to discuss various aspects of the case with the examiners.

CORE MODULES – Short Answer Questions (SAQs)

2. Applying for SAQ assessment

The College sends regular communication to MRACDS(GDP) candidates regarding the annual assessment round schedule. These dates are also available on the College website.

2.1. SAQ assessment rounds are conducted three times a year. Each assessment round runs across five consecutive weekends.

2.2. Candidates are required to submit an Assessment Application Form (MGDP02) one month prior to an assessment round to nominate the date/s and module/s they wish to enrol for.

2.3. Candidates may be asked to resubmit an SAQ assessment and should be available to do so within seven weeks of undertaking an assessment.

2.4. Candidates may enrol for a maximum of one module per weekend for each assessment round.

2.5. Candidates are not required to participate in every assessment round but are responsible for planning their participation to ensure completion of all modules within two years.

2.6. Following receipt of the Assessment Application Form candidates receive a confirmation email from the College providing a summary of the modules for which they have been enrolled in the assessment round.

2.7. Candidates may withdraw from a nominated SAQ assessment at any time by submitting notice in writing, provided the assessment questions have not been electronically available.

3. Undertaking SAQ assessment

3.1. Candidates are enrolled into the LMS module and provided with the eight SAQs for the nominated module by 5:00 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) or Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT) on the Friday of each nominated assessment weekend and responses must be submitted on the LMS module within 48 hours,
i.e. no later than 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the Sunday of that weekend.

3.2. SAQ responses should be submitted as a PDF document with the SAQ topic clearly stated in the title of the document.

3.3. Candidates should use their ID numbers only. Candidate names are not to be included in submissions.

3.4. When preparing for SAQ assessments, candidates should refer to the MRACDS(GDP) Notes for Candidates – Short Answer Questions document.

4. Failure to submit SAQ assessment responses on time

4.1. Candidates who do not submit their assessment responses by 5:00pm AEST/AEDT on the Sunday following receipt of the assessment will receive an automatic fail for the assessment and be required to repeat that module.

4.2. Failure to submit any responses to an SAQ assessment after the questions have been sent to a candidate constitutes a failure of the assessment.

4.3. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they are aware of any time zone differences when receiving their SAQ assessment and submitting their assessment responses, and that all references to timings use Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) or Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT).

4.4. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have access to email and internet to allow submission of assessment responses on time.

4.5. If a candidate has entered into an assessment round and believes their performance or their ability to submit the assessment on time to be seriously affected by illness or personal circumstances, they should notify the College immediately and should consult the Special Consideration in Assessment Policy on www.racds.org.

5. Marking and results

5.1. Candidates will receive the result of their assessment within six weeks of submission.

5.2. Questions are marked on a pass/fail basis. To obtain a pass in an SAQ module a candidate must pass all eight questions.

5.3. Candidates who do not pass up to two questions in a SAQ module will be given the opportunity to resubmit answers to those questions (see 6: Resubmission).

5.4. Candidates who are unsuccessful in a SAQ module will receive feedback in writing within six weeks of the assessment weekend.

5.5. Failed candidates are required to re-sit that module's assessment and must pay a repeat module fee on reattempting that module.

5.6. All resubmissions and failures are reviewed by the Examinations Committee and Registrar/Assistant Registrar.

6. Resubmission

6.1. Candidates who are requested to resubmit assessments are provided with brief constructive comments regarding the level of changes that are required to meet the assessment pass mark.

6.2. A candidate must resubmit their SAQ assessment within seven days of receipt of the notification from the College. Resubmissions must be received by 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the seventh day following notification.

6.3. Candidates who do not resubmit by 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the nominated day will receive an automatic fail for the assessment and be required to repeat that module.

6.4. Candidates will be advised of the result of their resubmission within one to six weeks of resubmission. Candidates may need to factor this in when considering enrolment for additional modules.

6.5. Failure of the resubmission results in failure of the module. The candidate must pass all resubmitted questions to pass the module.

6.6. Where resubmission overlaps with a new assessment module the candidate is encouraged to contact the College to discuss the upcoming assessment.

6.7. If a candidate has resubmitted an assessment and believes their performance or their ability to resubmit the assessment on time to be seriously affected by illness or personal circumstances, they should consult the Special Consideration in Assessment Policy on the College website www.racds.org.

6.8. Candidates are advised and encouraged to contact a mentor if they wish to receive further advice regarding resubmission. If a candidate's mentor is not available, the College will provide another mentor for this purpose. A candidate being unable to contact their own mentor is not grounds for the extension for resubmission.

ELECTIVE MODULES – Case Reports

7. Applying for case report assessment

7.1. Candidates must choose case report topics from the electives offered in the program. A case report submitted under a topic not included in the program will not be accepted or marked. Candidates should ensure that the submitted case is a reflection of the elective subject chosen.

7.2. Case reports should be submitted as a PDF document and the subject of the elective should be clearly stated in the title of the document.

7.3. Candidates should use their ID numbers only. Candidate and patient names should not be included in reports. Correspondence including referral letters and specialist reports should also be de-identified – practice logos/letterheads and names of specialists should be removed.

7.4. Case reports should reflect a completed treatment. If a case has not been completed then the report will be returned to the candidate unmarked.

7.5. Candidates may be asked to resubmit an assessment and should be available to do so within eight weeks of submitting a case report.

8. Undertaking case report assessment

8.1. Candidates are required to submit their first case report within the first 12 months of Orientation Day. Candidates who have not submitted their first case report within the 12 months will receive a fail mark. If the case report has not been submitted within 15 months the candidate will receive their second fail mark. If a candidate has not submitted within 18 months, the candidate will receive their third fail mark.

8.2. The remaining two case reports can be submitted at any time over the course of the Program, however, all case reports must be submitted a minimum of three months prior to enrolling for the *viva voce* examination.

8.3. When submitting a case report, candidates should refer to the MRACDS(GDP) Notes for Candidates - Case Reports document.

9. Failure to submit Case Reports on time

9.1. It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of their expected completion dates and *viva voce* eligibility timeframes.

9.2. If a candidate is unable to submit case reports within the nominated two year timeframe, they must apply for an extension of the MRACDS(GDP) Program.

10. Marking and results

10.1. Candidates will receive the result of their assessment within six weeks of submission.

10.2. Case Reports are marked on a pass/fail basis however in some instances a resubmission may be allowed (see 11: Resubmission).

10.3. Candidates who are unsuccessful in a case report module will receive feedback in writing within six weeks of submission of the assessment. Feedback will include brief constructive comments on their performance.

10.4. Failed candidates are required to re-sit the elective module by submitting a new case report and must pay a repeat module fee on reattempting that module.

10.5. All resubmissions and failures are reviewed by the Examinations Committee and Registrar/Assistant Registrar.

11. Resubmission

11.1. Candidates who are requested to resubmit case reports are provided with brief constructive comments regarding the level of changes that are required to meet the assessment pass mark.

11.2. A candidate must resubmit their case report within two weeks of receipt of the notification from the College. Resubmissions must be received by 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the fourteenth day following notification.

11.3. Candidates who do not resubmit by 5:00 pm AEST/AEDT on the nominated day will receive an automatic fail for the reassessment and will be required to repeat that module and pay the associated repeat module fee.

11.4. Candidates will be advised of the result of their resubmission within one to six weeks of resubmission. Candidates may need to factor this in when considering enrolling for additional assessment rounds or the *viva voce* examination.

11.5. Failure of the resubmission results in failure of the module. The candidate must pass the case report to pass the module.

11.6. Where resubmission overlaps with a new assessment module the candidate is encouraged to contact the College to discuss the upcoming assessment.

11.7. Where resubmission overlaps with *viva voce* enrolment, the candidate is advised to contact the College to discuss the options available.

11.8. If a candidate has resubmitted an assessment and believes their performance or their ability to resubmit the assessment on time to be seriously affected by illness or personal circumstances, they should consult the Special Consideration in Assessment Policy on the College website www.racds.org.

11.9. Candidates are advised and encouraged to contact a mentor if they wish to receive further advice regarding resubmission. If a candidate's mentor is not available, the College will provide another mentor for this purpose. A candidate being unable to contact their own mentor is not grounds for an extension for resubmission.

12. Unsuccessful case reports

12.1. An unsuccessful case report may fall into either of two categories:

I. Marginal – The case is deemed appropriate but the report falls short of the standard required and the candidate is given an opportunity to redeem the report. In this case, the candidate should read through the examiner's feedback and the report very carefully to identify where the problems have occurred and rectify them before resubmission. A mentor should be approached to assist candidates in reviewing the case report.

II(a). Failed - The case is deemed appropriate but the report is failed. The case may be re-used after an extensive re-write of the report.

II(b). Failed (new case required) - Either the case is deemed unsuitable for an MRACDS(GDP) case presentation (this may be because the case was too simple or did not meet the category selected), or, the case itself may be suitable but the course of treatment provided deemed inappropriate and the report not considered to be redeemable. In these instances, the case report must be set aside, and a new case needs to be prepared for assessment.

VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

13. Applying for the *viva voce* Examination

13.1. Once candidates have passed all core and elective modules, they are eligible to present for the *viva voce* Examination.

13.2. The *viva voce* is held on three occasions each year or as determined by the Board of Studies MRACDS(GDP).

13.3. A candidate must enrol for the *viva voce* Examination. It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have successfully completed all assessments prior to enrolling for the *viva voce* Examination.

13.4. Candidates enrolled for the *viva voce* examination will receive a candidate memo containing the timetable and relevant information. This will be available to candidates two to four weeks prior to the *viva voce.*

13.5. Candidates should note that if fewer than three candidates have enrolled to present for the *viva voce* Examination, it may be postponed or cancelled, and enrollment fees refunded.

14. Undertaking the v*iva voce* Examination

14.1. The *viva voce* Examination will be conducted by two examiners nominated by the Chair of the MRACDS(GDP) Examinations Committee for General Dental Practice.

14.2. Prior to the commencement of the *viva voce* Examination, the candidate will be allocated ten (10) minutes to peruse the provided case. If a second case is used, additional perusal time will be allocated.

14.3. The *viva voce* is of thirty (30) minutes duration and comprises:

   a) assessment and discussion of the case/s

   b) assessment of the candidate's knowledge of general practice clinical dentistry

14.4. Candidates may take notes during the perusal time and these may be taken into the examination room. Any notes taken must not be removed from the examination room at the completion of the *viva voce* examination.

14.5. Candidates should be aware that an observer may be present during the *viva voce* Examination. The purpose of the observer is to oversee the examination process to ensure fair and consistent processes are being upheld. Observers will not comment on a candidate's performance during the examination and do not participate in the assessment. *(Refer to the RACDS Observer Policy which can be found on the website at* www.racds.org)

15. Marking and results

15.1. The examination is marked on a pass/fail basis.

15.2. A candidate who does not pass will receive written feedback within three weeks.

15.3. A candidate who fails the *viva voce* Examination must pay a repeat examination fee to re-sit the *viva voce.*

15.4. Failure to attend the *viva voce* examination constitutes a failure unless a successful application is made under the Special Consideration in Assessment Policy.

15.5. Candidates are permitted a maximum of three attempts at the *viva voce* Examination.

15.6. All unsuccessful *viva voce* results are reviewed by the Examinations Committee and Registrar/Assistant Registrar.

15.7. If a candidate does not pass their final *viva voce* Examination, they are expected to sit the next scheduled *viva voce.*

15.8. Candidates may request reconsideration, review and finally appeal of any examination result if they believe they have grounds under the Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy.

16. Submission of CPD

16.1. Candidates must satisfactorily complete nine modules with at least 120 hours of relevant courses over a two-year period.

16.2. Candidates must complete at least six hours of relevant CPD content per module. It is expected that candidates complete twelve hours of relevant CPD content per module.

16.3. CPD activities may be completed at any time over the course of the program.

16.4. Candidates should submit a logbook of completed CPD at the time of enrolling for the *viva voce* examination.

16.5. If a candidate has not accrued the required CPD, Admission to Membership will be postponed until the required completed CPD logbook can be submitted.

17. Three Failed Submissions

In the event of a failure in any one of the SAQ Modules, or Case Reports, a candidate may be deemed eligible to re-sit no more than two times (three submissions in total). In the event that a candidate does not pass on their third attempt, the candidate may be removed from the MRACDS(GDP) Program. This decision will be at the discretion of the Board of Studies MRACDS(GDP) in consultation with the Registrar/Assistant Registrar.

18. Appeals

Decisions relating to assessment outcomes may be appealed in accordance with the RACDS Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy accessible on the College's website www.racds.org.

19. Application to current candidates

Regulations and policies that are extant at the time of a candidate's enrolment will be applicable to that candidate.