

The Development of Assessment and Examination



Dr Hung-chiu Chan
Chairman of the Board of
Conjoint Examination,
since 2004

The Development of the HKCFP Examination (1984-1986)

*T*he Hong Kong College of General Practitioners was inaugurated in 1977. In 1984, after initiating the Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes in Hong Kong and establishing a preliminary Vocational Training (VT) programme for members, the College developed a system of assessment to measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of fellow general practitioners.

The First Local Fellowship Examination

The first of the College's three local Fellowship Examinations was held in May 1984 for all members of the College who had been in active general practice and had acquired at least 400 credit points since the inception of the College. Professor David Todd, head of the Department of Medicine in the University of Hong Kong, was the first Chief Censor of the College to supervise the whole examination process.

The External Examiners were Professor Hamish Barber, Professor of General Practice, Norie-Miller Chair, University of Glasgow; Professor Neil Carson, Founding Professor in the Department of General Practice, Monash University, Australia; and Dr M K Rajakumar, Founding President of the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia. The Local Examiners included Dr Peter C Y Lee, Founding President of the College; Dr Henry Li, Chairman of the Interim Council of the College; and Dr Natalis C L Yuen. Dr Stephen K S Foo was the Chairman of the Board of Examination.

Format of Local Fellowship Examination

The examination consisted of two oral segments, each examined by two different pairs of local and external examiners. The venue for the examination was the College premises in Wanchai. Out of the 29 participating, 15 general practitioners satisfied the requirements and were elected Fellows of the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners (FHKCGP). Similar examinations took place in 1985 and 1986. Altogether 61 general practitioners were made Fellows after three local Fellowship Examinations.

Conferment

The first Conjoint Fellowship Conferment Ceremony took place at the City Hall in 1987 on the occasion of the WONCA Asia-Pacific Regional Conference hosted by the College.

Recognition of FHKCGP

In June 1990, the Medical Council of Hong Kong officially recognized the title FHKCGP as a quotable higher qualification, making the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners the first local academic college granting recognizable postgraduate medical qualification.

The Birth and Development of the Conjoint HKCFP/ RACGP Examination (1987-present)

Negotiations by Dr Stephen K S Foo with the President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) took place during the 11th World WONCA Conference in June 1986. It was followed by the official visit of two observers from the RACGP, namely Dr Wesley Fabb, the National Director of Training, and Dr Lindsey Knight, a State Censor, to audit our local examination held the same year. Despite controversial recommendations by the two observers, the Chief Censor of RACGP, Dr Clarke Munro, finally agreed to proceed with the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination in 1987. Dr Natalis C L Yuen was responsible for preparing the content of the examination, which was approved by the RACGP.

To prepare for the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination with RACGP, Dr Maxwell Tse, Dr Paul Lam, Dr Donald K T Li, and Dr Kitty K C Chan were invited to Melbourne in 1986 to attend the examination seminar for the purposes of gathering information and exchanging views concerning the conjoint HKCFP/ RACGP Fellowship Examination.

The First Conjoint Fellowship Examination (1987)

Format

The examination consisted of two parts, one written and one clinical component. Part 1 included Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), Modified Essay Questions (MEQ), and Clinical Interpretations (CI), and Part 2 included Case Commentaries (two), Oral Examinations (two), and Clinical Examinations.

Eligibility

Category I candidates must have completed the vocational training programmes organized by the College. Category II candidates must have been predominantly in general practice for not less than five years.

Coordinators

MCQ	Dr Maxwell Tse
MEQ	Dr Paul Lam
Clinical Interpretation	Dr Donald K T Li
Case Commentaries	Dr John T N Chung
Diagnostic Interview	Dr Maxwell Tse
Management Interview	Dr Kitty K C Chan
Log Diary	Dr Paul C H Siu
Case History	Dr Natalis C L Yuen



Venue

The written segments took place at the Hong Kong Federation of Medical Societies on 7 June 1987, and the clinical segments at the GP Unit of Hong Kong University (HKU) at the Violet Peel Health Centre from 29 - 31 August 1987.

Examiners

The RACGP Visiting Examiners were Dr Wesley Fabb, Director of the Examination Research and Development Centre, and Dr Clarke Munro, Censor-in-chief. Local examiners included Dr Freddie Y T Lau, Dr E M Stevenson, Dr Kitty K C Chan, Dr Paul Lam, Dr Angela Ng, Dr Paul C H Siu, Dr J F Mackay, and Dr Maxwell Tse.

Pass Criteria

Candidates had to obtain a minimum mark of 55% in every segment of the examination and a minimum of 65% of the total marks of the whole examination in order to obtain a pass in the examination. Of the 15 candidates who sat for the examination, six passed the written segment and were eligible to sit for the clinical part of the examination.

Candidates who passed the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination included:

- Dr Hung-chiu Chan
- Dr Kwok-wai Chan
- Dr Sui-po Chan
- Dr Yuk-tsan Wun
- Dr Heung-wah Wai



Dr Eric Fisher, President of RACGP at the Conjoint Fellowship Conferment Ceremony in 1987

These successful candidates became the first batch of Fellows of the HKCGP and RACGP.

Conferment of the fellowships of both the HKCGP and RACGP took place on 6 September 1987 at City Hall, with Dr Eric Fisher, President of the RACGP, and Dr Peter C Y Lee, President of the HKCGP, officiating at the Ceremony.

The Second Conjoint Fellowship Examination (1988)

Dr Lindsey Knight, Chief Censor of the RACGP, was invited to conduct a pre-examination course for the candidates and organize an examination workshop for the local examiners in March 1988.

The written segments of second Conjoint Fellowship Examination took place on 12 June 1988 at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Federation of Medical Societies. 13 candidates participated and seven passed. Of the seven successful candidates, only three were eligible to attend the clinical segments, as the other four were vocational trainees who had not yet completed their vocational training. The clinical segments took place on 24 - 25 September 1988 at the General Practice Unit of the Department of Community and Family Medicine of the Chinese University at the Lek Yuen Health Centre. The RACGP Examiners were Dr Wesley Fabb and Dr Lindsey Knight.

The successful candidates for the second Conjoint Fellowship Examination were

Dr Pang-fei Ip

Dr Hung-wai Wong



The Second Conjoint Fellowship Conferment Ceremony in 1988

They were conferred with their conjoint fellowships during the Spring Festival Party of the College on 5 March 1989 at the Sheraton Hotel. Officiating at the conferment were Dr Natalis C L Yuen, our College President, and Dr Clarke Munro, representing the RACGP.

Professor David Todd resigned as

Chief Censor of the College in 1989 and Dr Clarke Munro was appointed by College Council to be the Chief Censor. Dr Munro was also appointed Chief Examiner.

The Third Conjoint Fellowship Examination (1989)

The pre-examination course was conducted by our local examiners, including Dr Clarke Munro, Dr Sui-po Chan, Dr Kwok-wai Chan, Dr Yuk-tsan Wun, Dr Paul C H Siu, Dr Cindy L K Lam, and Dr Cynthia S Y Chan.

A total of 15 candidates were eligible for the third Conjoint Fellowship Examination, of whom five were vocational trainees. The five successful candidates for the third Conjoint Fellowship Examination were Dr Tse-fang Bien, Dr Chun-bor Ng, Dr Chun-chiu Shek, Dr E M Stevenson, and Dr Siu-man Tong.

From this year onward, competence in Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) was a prerequisite for a pass in the examination. The CPR Courses and Assessments were then regularly organized by the Board of Education.

The Fourth Conjoint Fellowship Examination (1990)

A total of 19 candidates, four of whom were vocational trainees, participated in the examination. The pass list included: Dr Florence Cheung, Dr John T N Chung, Dr Andrew K K Ip, Dr Yung-chee Lam, Dr Glenn K L Lee, and Dr Gilbert C S Lui.

In that year, Dr Peter C Y Lee was appointed Chief Censor of the College to succeed Dr Clarke Munro who had come to the end of his three-year term. The Chief Examiner was Dr Nang-fong Chan.

The Fifth Conjoint Fellowship Examination (1991)

Starting from 1991 examination, the Physical Examination became a separate clinical segment, with role-playing examiners were used for the first time in the diagnostic interviews. Dr Maryse Badawy was appointed the Segment Co-ordinator.

Successful candidates were: Dr Kin-ling Chan, Dr Kwok-tat Chan, Dr Daniel W S Chu, and Dr Betty K M Kwan.

Dr Stephen K S Foo had been first chairman of the Board of Examination from 1984 when the College conducted its local examination for three consecutive years. His chairmanship continued with the establishment of the first Conjoint HKCFP/RACGP Fellowship Examination until the fifth Conjoint Fellowship Examination, when Dr Ian Marshall took over as the succeeding Chairman. (See table for Chairman and Chief Examiner of various years thereafter)

Subsequent Major Modifications

Over the years major changes have been implemented to improve the validity and reliability of the examination. The Physical Examination (PE) segment in 1993 was added in response to a general deficiency in physical-examination techniques among candidates observed during the past years.

The merging of the Case Commentary Segment with the Orals segment in 1999 afforded increased opportunities for candidates to present and demonstrate their patients care in their own practice.

During the first few conjoint examinations, the Diagnostic Interview (DI) segment initially used actual patients for the interview and physical examination, but then switched to the use of role-playing examiners in order to provide better standardization.

The long DI case was cancelled in 1999 to prevent candidates from using purposeless 'fishing-net' questioning. Instead, three short cases were used to emphasize the relevant bio-psycho-social issues in patients' problems.

In 1992, as required by the RACGP, the language medium for the Management Interview (MI) segment was changed from Cantonese to English, after which in 1997 one of the cases reverted to a Cantonese option to suit the needs of local doctors and patients.

In 2003, the written papers were changed to consist of MCQ and a new 'key feature problems' (KFP) paper to replace the MCQ and MEQ. In 2004, the three clinical components (MI, DI, and PE) were combined and modified to form a 14-20-station OSCE examination.

Number of Candidates and Pass Rate

Until a few years ago, only some twenty to thirty candidates took the examination. In recent years, with the advent of the structured vocational programme supported by the health authorities, the number of candidates has risen dramatically, exceeding 100 in last two years (see attached table showing number of candidates and the passing rate in all the past examinations).



Examiners of the Conjoint Fellowship Examination meeting at their annual social dinner in 2007

The Structure of the BCE

The **Board of Conjoint Examination** consists of: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Examiner, Co-ordinators of each examination segment, College Censors, College President, College Vice-President, and College Honorary Secretary.

The **Panel of Examiners** is a group of members of the profession qualified in family medicine, with higher professional qualifications in general practice or family medicine. To remain on the active list, examiners are required to undergo training and to attend various examiners' workshops.

Quality Assurance (QA) Examiners include a group of senior examiners nominated by the Board, as well as the visiting examiners from the RACGP. They perform an integral role in calibrating and facilitating the standardization of the Examination.

The College Censors constitute the highest administrative body of the college examination. They are appointed by the college council to supervise the standard and review the results of the examination.

Pass Rates of Different Parts of the College Examination for the period January 1987 - December 2006

Conjoint Fellowship Examination											
Old Format											
	No. of Candidates Sitting Exam	No. of Cat I Candidates	No. of Cat II Candidates	No. of Candidates Passing Exam	Passing Rates	No. of Cat I passed	No. of Cat II passed	Chairman of Board of Exam	Chief Examiner	Visiting Examiner	Panel of Examiners (examiners/ trainee examiners)
1987	5	/	/	5	100.00%	/	/	Dr Stephen Foo	Dr Natalis Yuen	Dr Wesley Fabb & Dr Clarke Munro	16
1988	3	/	/	2	66.66%	/	/	Dr Stephen Foo	Dr Natalis Yuen	Dr Wesley Fabb & Dr Lindsey Knight	21
1989	15	5	10	5	33.33%	3	2	Dr Stephen Foo	Dr Clarke Munro	Dr Wesley Fabb & Dr Lindsey Knight	27
1990	19	4	15	6	31.58%	1	5	Dr Stephen Foo	Dr Clarke Munro	Dr Wesley Fabb & Dr Lindsey Knight	30
1991	23	6	17	4	17.39%	1	3	Dr Stephen Foo	Dr Nang-fong Chan	Dr Lindsey Knight & Dr John Turnbull	30
1992	16	5	11	4	25.00%	1	3	Dr Ian Marshall	Dr Yuk-tsan Wun	Dr Lindsey Knight & Dr John Turnbull	30
1993	29	5	24	5	17.24%	2	3	Dr Ian Marshall	Dr Yuk-tsan Wun	Dr John Turnbull & Dr John O'Sullivan	36
1994	31	12	19	17	54.83%	3	14	Dr Ian Marshall	Dr Yuk-tsan Wun	Dr Ian Wilson & Dr John Turnbull	43
1995	31	10	21	16	51.61%	3	13	Dr Ian Marshall	Dr Yuk-tsan Wun	Dr Ian Wilson & Dr Neil Spike	43/ 10
1996	34	14	20	13	38.23%	6	7	Dr Yuk-tsan Wun	Dr Cynthia Chan	Dr Neil Spike & Dr Tim Flanagan	49/ 9
1997	19	9	10	9	47.37%	2	7	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Cynthia Chan	Dr Neil Spike & Dr Howard Watts	55/ 4
1998	38	22	16	9	23.68%	4	5	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Cynthia Chan	Dr Neil Spike & Dr John Scott	58/ 8
1999	23	32	16	13	56.52%	5	8	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Cynthia Chan	Dr Neil Spike & Dr Beth Jane	67/ 1
2000	25	48	14	15	60.00%	9	6	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Stephen Lew & Dr Beth Jane	67/ 6
2001	41	82	17	23	56.09%	12	11	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Howard Watts & Dr Natalie Old	69/ 7
2002	58	66	29	21	36.20%	16	5	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Beth Jane & Dr Frances Poliniak	76/ 12
2003	84	63	21	37	44.05%	29	8	Dr Hung-Wai Wong	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Beth Jane & Dr Morton Rawlin, Dr Alistair Howitt from RCGP	85/ 7
2004	38	26	12	28	73.68%	18	10	Dr Hung-Chiu Chan	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Beth Jane & Dr Mark Overton	83/ 24
New Format											
Written											
	No. of Candidates	No. of Cat I Candidates Sitting Exam	No. of Cat II Candidates	No. of Candidates	Passing Rates Passing Exam	No. of Cat I passed	No. of Cat II passed				
2003	64	59	5	39	60.93%	34	5				
2004	73	67	6	54	73.97%	51	3				
2005	107	97	10	56	52.34%	52	4				
2006	110	104	6	63	57.27%	62	1				
Clinical/ OSCE											
	No. of Candidates Sitting Exam	No. of Cat I Candidates	No. of Cat II Candidates	No. of Candidates Passing Exam	Passing Rates	No. of Cat I passed	No. of Cat II passed	Chairman of Board of Exam	Chief Examiner	Visiting Examiner	Panel of Examiners (examiners/ trainee examiners)
2003	/							Dr Hung-wai Wong	Dr Pang-fei Ip	Dr Beth Jane & Dr Morton Rawlin	85/ 7
2004	45	37	8	22	48.89%	20	2	Dr Hung-chiu Chan		Dr Beth Jane & Dr Tim Mooney	83/ 24
2005	67	59	8	35	52.24%	33	2		Dr Jan Radford & Dr Mark Overton	92/ 34	
2006	97	92	5	53	54.64%	52	1				105/ 35