

# EDRA – CODE OF CONDUCT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Oral examinations allow examiners to assess whether the candidate has an adequate breadth and depth of knowledge over a much broader range of topics than is possible in the EDRA Part 1 (written) examination. They also allow for an interactive exchange between examiner and candidate which can test the candidate's ability to develop and sustain a logical argument, solve problems, demonstrate sound clinical judgement, apply factual knowledge to clinical situations and deal with complications posed by the examiners. The use of carefully thought-out discriminating questions enables the examiner to ensure that these advantages of the oral examination are fully exploited, rather than simply testing matters of factual recall which can be satisfactorily tested in the EDRA Part 1 (written) examination.
- 1.2. EDRA Part 2 exam is divided into part 2A – discussion with examiners (various RA techniques for given procedure, complications of RA) and to part 2B – practical exam (anatomical landmarks, innervation zones and live ultrasound scanning). EDRA Part 2A can be conducted onsite and also online using one of the ESRA approved online meeting platforms.

## 2. STANDARD OF THE EXAMINATION

- 2.1. It is the collective responsibility of the examination committee to establish that the successful candidates have a sufficiently high standard of knowledge and judgement to justify their admission as a Diplomate. Each examiner should use his or her own experience as a practitioner and educator in assessing how candidates should perform within the context of the examination. The examiners should be looking for the candidate's ability to apply his/her knowledge and deal with clinical problems based on the theoretical knowledge gained in preparation for the EDRA Part I exam. Detailed knowledge of the anatomy, ultrasound scanning and identification/management of complications are regarded as essential for success in the examination. Some of the questions may be deliberately controversial in order to encourage discussion and facilitate assessment of clinical judgment.

## 3. GENERAL COMMENTS

- 3.1. Examiners (EDRA Examiners and Examiners in Evaluation)
  - 3.1.1. To ensure that each candidate is accorded a fair and impartial interview, it is imperative that examiners exercise only the highest standards in determining whether each candidate's performance is appropriate for the expected level. To ensure fairness and guarantee impartiality, it is mandatory for examiners to be familiar with exam procedure and to always exercise only the highest levels of behaviour during the examination.
  - 3.1.2. The appointment of a new examiner is provisional and is conditional upon demonstrating both familiarity with the exam procedure, contributing and engaging to the exams preparation work and by demonstrating a professional and sympathetic attitude towards candidates for whom the exam may be extremely stressful.
- 3.2. Examiners in Evaluation (Period) – EIE
  - 3.2.1. Candidates who fulfil the application criteria can apply to be an EDRA examiner. A limited number of candidates who apply for an EDRA examiner position will be selected after face-to-face or online interview by EDRA Chairs or EDRA Board members. These candidates will become Examiners in Evaluation (EIE) for a period of 12 months.
  - 3.2.2. Every EIE will have one of the EDRA Board members allocated as a mentor. During the 12 months evaluation period EIE will be expected to produce 10 SBA questions for EDRA Part 1 exam and attend the EDRA Part 2 exam (section 2A and 2B) as a supernumerary examiner, ideally (not exclusively) together with the mentor.
  - 3.2.3. Travel and Accommodation expenses related to EDRA exams will be reimbursed as per ESRA policy during the evaluation year.
  - 3.2.4. After 12 months the mentor will present the summary of EIE's evaluation to the EDRA Board in order to proceed for EDRA Examiner. EDRA Board will vote for the candidate to become EDRA Examiner by majority of votes.
  - 3.2.5. EIE period may be extended in special circumstances (illness, bereavement, pregnancy ... etc) for maximum of additional 12 months.
  - 3.2.6. Unsuccessful candidates can reapply for EIE position as many times as they wish.
- 3.3. EDRA Examiners

- 3.3.1. EDRA examiners are expected to produce the required number of SBAs for EDRA Part 1 exam and EDRA Part 2A question (procedure or complication) as instructed by the EDRA Board.
- 3.3.2. EDRA Examiners who deliver the expected number of questions for EDRA 1 and EDRA 2 exam will be preferentially invited for the EDRA Part 2 exams at the ESRA Annual Congress.
- 3.3.3. EDRA Examiners are expected to attend all EDRA Part 2 (2A&2B) exams
- 3.3.4. EDRA Examiners with less than 2 years' experience will predominantly be paired with at least one EDRA Examiner with >5 years' experience in EDRA exam.
- 3.3.5. EDRA Examiners with less than 2 years' experience cannot apply for EDRA Board member position
- 3.3.6. After the initial 2 year period, the EDRA Examiners are appointed for the duration of 5 years. In order to maintain their position, examiners have to reapply every 5 years.
- 3.3.7. The EDRA Board will vote by majority of votes for each EDRA Examiner to be reappointed after 5 years
- 3.3.8. Total number of reappointments as EDRA Examiner is unlimited as long as the person fulfil all criteria for being an EDRA examiner (see criteria)
- 3.3.9. Failure to produce the expected number of questions per calendar year for EDRA Part 1 and 2 exam will lead to a reminder letter sent from the EDRA Chairs. In case of no improvement, a second warning letter will be sent. If an examiner fails to produce the questions after second letter, the examiner's appointment may be terminated by EDRA Chair
- 3.3.10. The position of an EDRA Examiner is also terminated when the examiner voluntarily steps down from his/her duties or was unsuccessful in the board reappointment process.
- 3.3.11. EDRA Examiners will be reimbursed for their travel and accommodation according to the ESRA policy for every event related to EDRA exam/training

#### 3.4. Routine Review of Examiners

- 3.4.1. The EDRA Chair, Vice-Chairs or EDRA Board members shall review the performance of all examiners at regular intervals against the following criteria: preparation for the exam, behaviour & dress code, timekeeping during the examination, language ability, conduct of asking questions, marking and Equality & Diversity. Examiners whose performance is considered to be unsatisfactory, may be:
  - Reviewed again after a further period determined by the EDRA Board, possibly with a requirement of what has to be improved and a recommendation of further training
  - Asked to resign
  - Dismissed

#### 3.5. EDRA Examiners - Benefits

- 3.5.1. The EDRA Part 2 examiners examine on a voluntary basis. To compensate this, the EDRA Part 2 examiners receive a free registration to the ESRA Annual Congress in the year in which they have examined. Active examiners also receive compensation to help to cover accommodation and travel expenses incurred in attending the examinations and Congress
- 3.5.2. After each examination in which they participated, examiners will receive certificate of attendance from the ESRA office which will allow them to claim CME credits if applicable in their country.
- 3.6. ESRA membership
  - All EDRA examiners must be ESRA members. Examiners who have not renewed their ESRA membership in a given year cannot be invited to examine during that year.
- 3.7. EDRA Examiners practising outside Europe
  - EDRA Examiners practising outside Europe are only entitled to examine if the EDRA Board, decide to invite them to examine. Invitation is valid for one calendar year and can be renewed as appropriate.
- 3.8. Retirement
  - Examiners may request to extend their examination position for up to three years following their retirement from active educational, research or clinical practice.
  - In exceptional circumstances the EDRA Board may request to extend this period for an additional three years.
- 3.9. Dress code
  - Examiners should dress in business attire.
- 3.10. Examiners meeting prior to an examination session
  - 3.10.1. Before every examination session, the faculty of examiners are expected to attend a meeting chaired by the appointed coordinator for the Part 2 Examination. This is normally held in early

- morning of each day of the examination. It is imperative that all examiners consider this meeting as part of their duties as examiners for EDRA Part 2. At this meeting any queries are addressed.
- 3.10.2. It is also an opportunity to disseminate any last-minute updates or clarifications regarding any GQs (guided questions) that have been flagged up.
  - 3.10.3. If an examiner cannot attend the examination meeting e.g. due to restricted travel arrangements, he/she should alert the EDRA Part 2 Vice-Chair (exam coordinator) as early as possible, so that the coordinator is able to identify those examiners who may need personal updating on the morning of the examination. Examiners who do not make it to the examiners' meeting should contact the coordinator prior to the commencement of the exam to ensure they are indeed updated with any important developments.
  - 3.10.4. Paired co-examiner should report any examiner non-attending the meeting or EDRA exam to the exam coordinator.

#### 4. CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION

- 4.1. Oral examinations have a great personal impact on the candidate and are often vividly recalled for years. Candidates deserve the full attention of both examiners and it is discourteous and distracting to behave otherwise.
- 4.2. Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure that both examiners are present at all times during the course of the discussion. Absence for any part of the examination, by one or other of the examiners, may make the result of the respective examination invalid.
- 4.3. Examiners should:
  - 4.3.1. Decide which examiner will start the exam questioning
  - 4.3.2. Welcome the candidate, introduce themselves and confirm the candidate's name and preferred name.
- 4.4. Examiners are requested **NOT TO**:
  - 4.4.1. Talk to candidates during the pauses or lunch breaks
  - 4.4.2. Engage with the mobile phone in the examination room (take calls, text, browse internet, take pictures )
  - 4.4.3. Discuss the answers given by a candidate with another examiner other than their paired co-examiner even during breaks, to avoid bias
  - 4.4.4. Examiners should not examine or observe candidates from their own departments or those who are personally known to them. If this situation should arise, the coordinator should be informed as soon as possible. An exchange with another examiner must be arranged.
  - 4.4.5. Openly discuss the candidate or any contentious issue pertaining to the candidate while the candidate is still present. Expressing feedback to the candidate at the end of the examination is not allowed. If an area of disagreement persists between the two examiners after the discussion following the examination, it should be brought to and discussed at the post examination meeting.
  - 4.4.6. Candidates must have opportunity to express their conflict of interest (COI) with any of the examiners and state the reason for their COI prior to their allocation to examination committee.

#### 5. REMARKS

- 5.1. The EDRA 2 exam should attempt to discover if the breadth of knowledge and judgement over the range of topics is adequate. The depth of the questions on each topic should, therefore, be sufficient to form that judgement.
- 5.2. It is unreasonable to pursue an area of specialist interest of the examiner which is not published in conventional textbooks or to expect excessively detailed knowledge of a particular area.
- 5.3. No candidate will know all the available knowledge. Try to determine the candidate's overall grasp of the subject. **If a candidate demonstrates lack of knowledge in a given area, do not pursue it.** Besides wasting precious time this is harassing and can so upset even a good candidate as to lead to his or her failure.
- 5.4. Examiners should also beware of pursuing questions requiring a higher level of knowledge than is consistent with the goals of the examination.
- 5.5. Treat every candidate **with courtesy**. Even if you feel your candidate's knowledge is inadequate, remember that a candidate who has been examined fairly and with courtesy will feel more inclined to attempt the exam again.
- 5.6. If an interruption of examination has been noted, the respective examiner must make a note of the details and bring it to the attention of the Chairperson of the examination.

#### 6. GUIDED QUESTIONS (GQ's)

- 6.1. The GQ's are prepared prior to the annual Examinations Committee Meeting. They are pre-circulated to EDRA Board members, who then discuss and approve each question selected for use the following year. Alterations and amendments can be made in the light of this discussion.
- 6.2. The EDRA Part 2 exam should test the candidate's ability *to work out the solution to a given problem and reach a conclusion based on the evidence provided which is safe, logical and justifiable.* **The**

**given answer may be different than the examiner's own practice. The only consideration is, does it meet the criteria set out in italics above?**

- 6.3. The oral examinations are, therefore, about the ability of the examiners to engage in a dialogue with the candidate and come to a conclusion whether he or she has displayed a level of knowledge that makes him or her eligible to be admitted as a Diplomate of the Society.
- 6.4. The use of GQs ensures that all candidates are assessed on approximately the same areas of knowledge. In addition, examiners find it helpful to have aids and "hints" to guide them along the way. It must be stressed that the GQ's are a GUIDE, NOT a list of questions that have to be read out to the candidate. Furthermore, the GQ's are not the views of the examinations committee as to the standard required but are simply a GUIDE to help the examiners assess the competency of the candidate being examined.

## 7. MARKING SYSTEM

7.1. The following "closed marking" scheme is used for every question:

- Excellent – 3 points
- Pass – 2 points
- Borderline – 1 point
- Fail – 0 points

- 7.2. The candidate's performance will be considered "excellent" (3 points): fluent, able to apply knowledge, confident on core, intermediate and advanced topics, able to demonstrate appropriate depth, in both theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills, able to solve unexpected problems presented by examiners in real time
- 7.3. The candidate's performance will be considered "pass" (2 points): fluent, able to apply knowledge, confident on core topics, thorough and able to demonstrate appropriate depth, able to correct own errors.
- 7.4. The candidate's performance will be considered "borderline" (1 point): showing factual knowledge only, book learning with no explanation, showing poor or incomplete understanding, superficial – particularly with core topics, erratic/unstructured/disorganized, illogical but with no dangerous clinical decisions.
- 7.5. The candidate's performance will be considered "fail" (0 points): not answering question asked despite prompting or silence, showing evidence of severe lack of topic understanding, offering multiple answers for examiner to pick, embarking on dangerous clinical decisions.
- 7.6. Section A and B will be evaluated separately.
- 7.7. Maximum amount of attempts for each section (A or B) of the EDRA 2 exam is three
- 7.8. To be successful, the candidate needs to obtain a total of at least 7 points for sections A and B together, however, only one score "borderline" (1 point) is allowed in Section A and Section B together of the EDRA 2 exam
- 7.9. The mark "fail" (0 points) in any of the question for section A or section B result in fail of that particular part of the exam.
- 7.10. Candidates can repeat only the section (A or B) of the EDRA 2 exam which they failed.
- 7.11. Candidates can choose which section (A or B) they would like to retake if they scored one borderline question in section A as well as section B.

## 8. POST EXAMINATION MEETING (PEM)

- 8.1. In every case, when two examiners are unable to agree on a candidate's examination performance, it will lead to a discussion at the PEM. Examiners are therefore requested to keep notes on the questions they ask and the candidate's answers in case this situation should arise. Each examiner should write down brief notes on their own marking sheet and keep them until the meeting. Once the results are ratified, all notes are to be securely destroyed, or in case of failing the candidate, the notes will be sent to EDRA office and forwarded to EDRA Chairs.
- 8.2. The PEM is an integral part of the examiner's duties and every examiner should strive to attend. If a candidate needs to be discussed at the PEM, it is not satisfactory that the examiners involved are not present to defend their marking decisions. If an examiner has to leave early, he/she must delegate a colleague and brief them thoroughly about any candidate likely to be discussed.
- 8.3. Examiners should avoid becoming involved in discussions with failed candidates as to the reason for their failure.
- 8.4. *Any candidate who requires further information regarding to his or her examination performance, or who wishes to make representations about the conduct of the examination, should be advised to write to the EDRA Office.*

## 9. REQUISITES OF A GOOD EXAMINER

- 9.1. A skilful examiner is well-informed, knows what he or she expects from a candidate and is able to elicit information that is meaningful to his or her co-examiner assisting in the assessment. This must be done in a limited time: irrelevant and unproductive questions defeat this purpose. Skills as an examiner has

to be learnt and listening intelligently, not only the content, but also the style of an experienced examiner is the best way of doing this.

9.2. The following points may be helpful:

- 9.2.1. Whilst candidates arriving at the table may be greeted by rising and a handshake, further efforts to put them at their ease by telling them to relax or not to worry are unlikely to be helpful. **The candidate's name should be checked before the start of the question. Do not ask the candidate's country of origin.** This sort of question can be misinterpreted and only produces information of no relevance to the task of assessment.
- 9.2.2. The examiners should have familiarised themselves with the GQ's before the candidate arrives at the table. The examiner should be well prepared with his or her opening question. The reason of using Guided Questions is an attempt to reduce bias in the examination. Bias might arise because of an examiner's particular field of interest or the appearance of a candidate. No examiner can expect to be entirely free of such influences.
- 9.2.3. If a candidate has difficulty with a more complex topic, re-phrasing the question may sometimes create even more difficulties as the candidate becomes distracted by the differences in the way the question is presented. It also opens the door to "clarifying" questions which wastes more time. It is better to start again on a different topic.
- 9.2.4. Avoid "clever" replies and be very careful indeed about jokes! The candidate is not looking for, nor expecting, much humour in the examination. Likewise, remember that the significance of some remark may not be the same to the examiner as to the candidate. A remark that is greeted with laughter by the examiners may be interpreted (erroneously) by the candidate as something worse than incorrect. These potential problems can be exacerbated when the candidate and/or examiner are not using their mother tongue.
- 9.2.5. Examining candidates when either the candidate or the examiners, or both, are not using their mother tongue can be a particularly difficult problem. The only advice possible is that the examiners must take extra care to establish that, what appears as lack of knowledge, is not, in fact, due to a problem of language or communication. eg. avoid acronyms that may only be applicable to a particular country.
- 9.2.6. Changing topics can be the most difficult part of the examination particularly when an answer is incorrect. Whilst this may be obvious to the examiner, a completely incorrect or unacceptable answer given with complete assurance creates a special difficulty. The examiner neither wishes to give the impression that the erroneous answer is acceptable nor to demoralise the candidate by demonstrating the full extent of the error. One solution is for the examiner simply to tell the candidate that he or she is changing to another topic because this is integral part of the examination process.

## 10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1. ESRA appreciates that all examination systems are imperfect and depend upon human individuals. In the final analysis, the Society relies on the integrity and conscientiousness of its examiners. Examiners act as the agents of the Society and of the specialty, in setting standards and it is important. All the foregoing comments usually come to be well-understood with increasing experience and are set out here to assist new examiners to reach a high level of performance as quickly as possible.
- 10.2. The Society hopes that those invited to examine will give this work a high priority in relation to their other commitments. When invited to examine, it is imperative that examiners reply to the invitation **with the least possible delay**. It is both time-consuming and organisationally difficult if prompt replies to invitations are not received since, until a reply is received, other examiners cannot be invited. However, in accepting an invitation to examine, examiners are making a commitment to both candidates and the Society. Please give this commitment priority over other demands as it is extremely difficult to find replacement examiners at short notice.
- 10.3. Please do not hesitate to raise any enquiries you may have, either to the EDRA Chair and Vice-Chairs or the EDRA Board.

Dr Morné Wolmarans

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Dr Peter Merjavý

EDRA Chair

EDRA Part 1 Vice Chair

EDRA Part 2 Vice Chair