

THE RCPSC EXAMINATION GENERAL PATHOLOGY – 2021

FORMAT, GENERAL INFORMATION &
HOW TO PERFORM AT YOUR BEST

Dr. Linda Kocovski
Forensic Pathologist
Provincial Forensic Pathology Unit, Toronto
Ontario Forensic Pathology Service



Canadian Association of Pathologists
Association Canadienne des pathologistes
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Disclosures

- I have no financial relationships to disclose.

AND

- I will not discuss off label use and/or investigational use in my presentation.

Outline

- Objectives of the examination
- Preparation for the examination
- General Dos and Don'ts
- Format of the examination
 - *Written component (SAQs)*
 - *Practical component*
 - *Oral component*



What are the Objectives of the Exam?

- Comprehensive objective examination in General Pathology assesses a candidate's **practical knowledge and skills** in assessing and interpreting cases and clinical scenarios that could be commonly encountered in daily General Pathology practice.
- Examination assesses a candidate's **competence** to function as a **consultant general pathologist** across the CanMEDS domains.

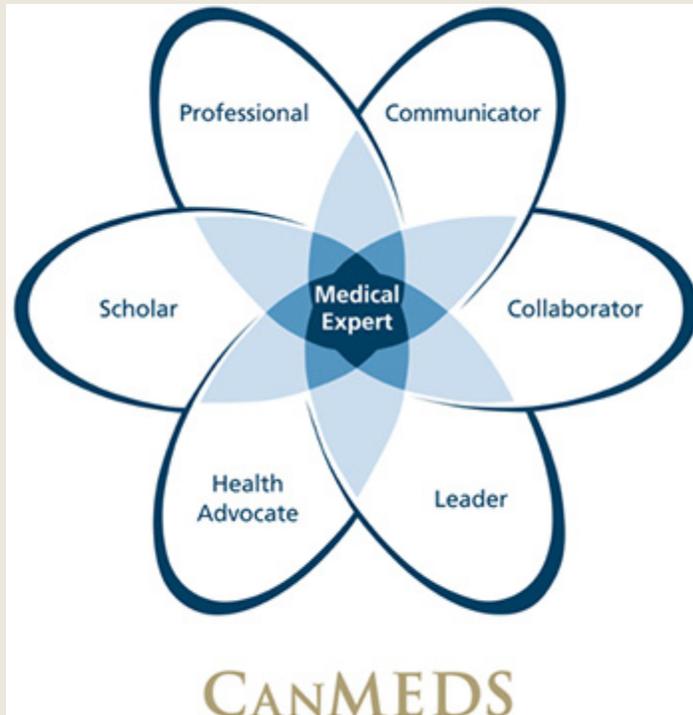


CanMEDS Framework and Roles

A framework that identifies and describes the abilities physicians require to effectively meet the health needs of the people they service.

7 roles:

- Medical Expert (the integrating role)
- Communicator
- Collaborator
- Leader
- Health Advocate
- Scholar
- Professional



CanMEDS Framework and Roles

- Overarching goal of CanMEDS is to improve patient care.
- CanMEDS framework has been integrated into the Royal College's accreditation standards, specialty training documents, final in-training evaluations, exam blueprints and the Maintenance of Certification Program.
- CanMEDS 2015, foundational project for the Royal College's Competence by Design (CBD) program. Includes new competencies, including:
 - *Patient safety*
 - *Quality improvement*
 - *Resource stewardship*
 - *Handovers*
 - *eHealth*

Preparation for the Exam

You should review
RCPSC Information
by Discipline –
General Pathology:

<http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/ibd-search-e>

National Standards for training AFTER 1 July 2019 :

Competencies

Request EPA Guide or Pathway to Competence

Standards of Accreditation for Residency Programs

Training Experiences

National Standards for training PRIOR to 1 July 2019 :

CanMEDS 2015 Objectives of Training Special Addendum

Final In-Training Evaluation Report (FITER)

Objectives of Training (please also see the CanMEDS Special OTR Addendum)

Specialty Training Requirements

Specific Standards of Accreditation for Residency Programs

Examination Information :

Digital Images Practice Site for Examinations

Examination dates

Examination format

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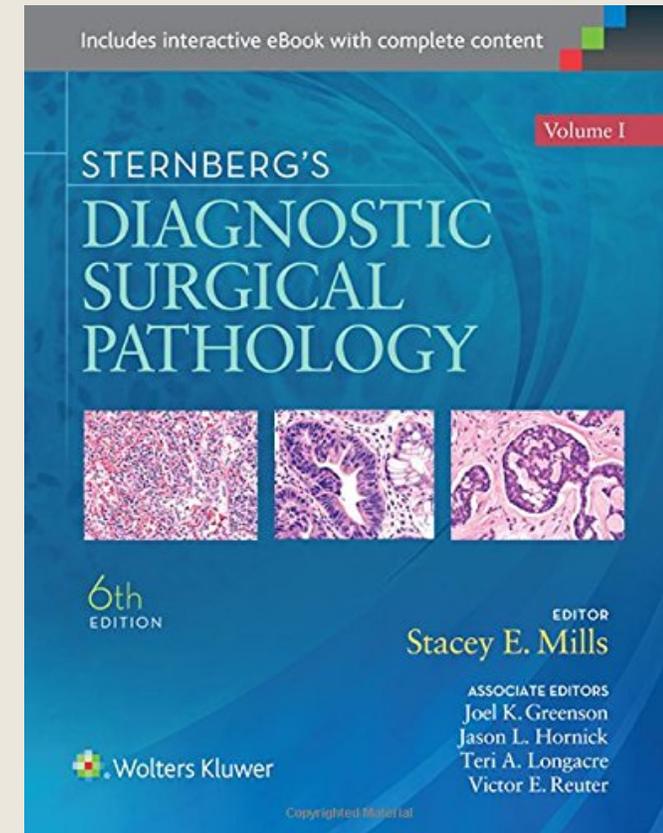
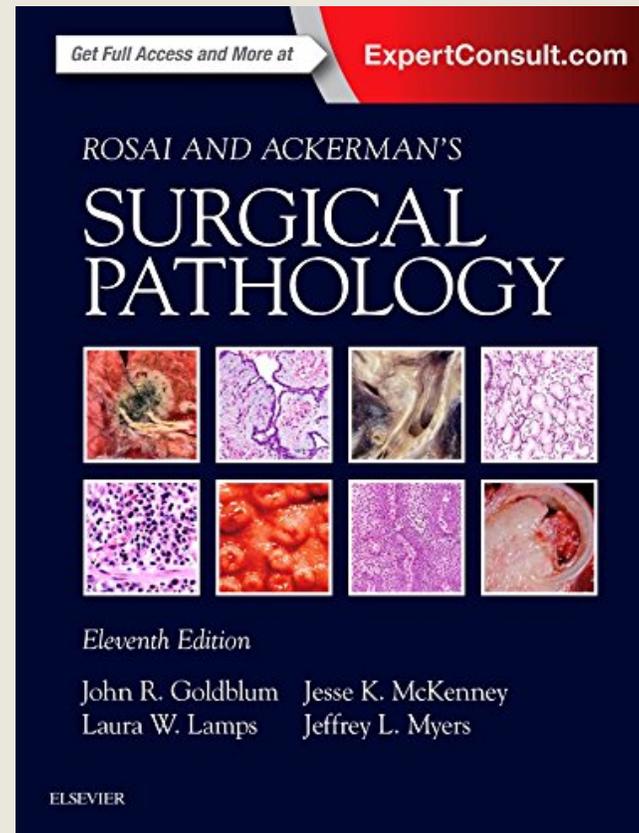
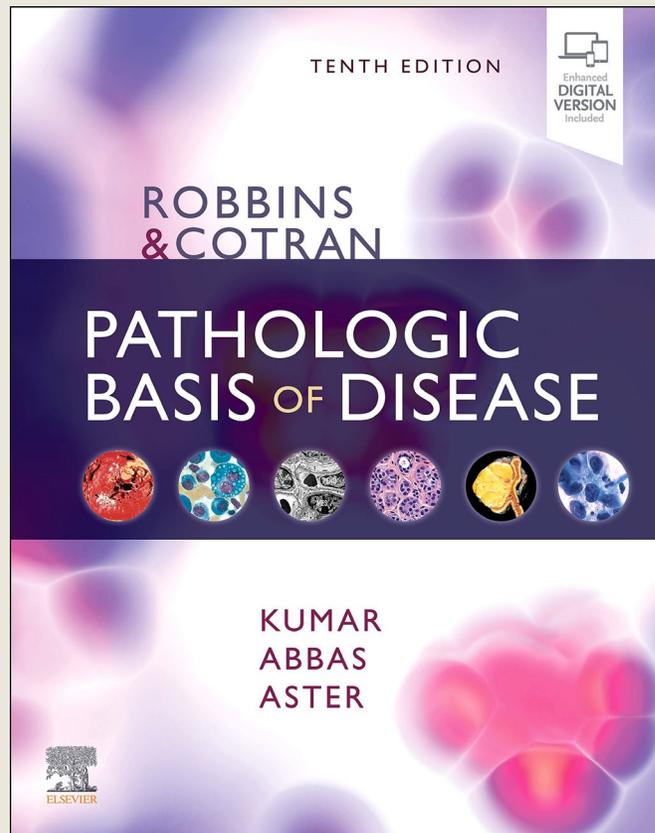
Accredited residency programs and program directors

Candidate Memo Regarding the Use of Digital Images



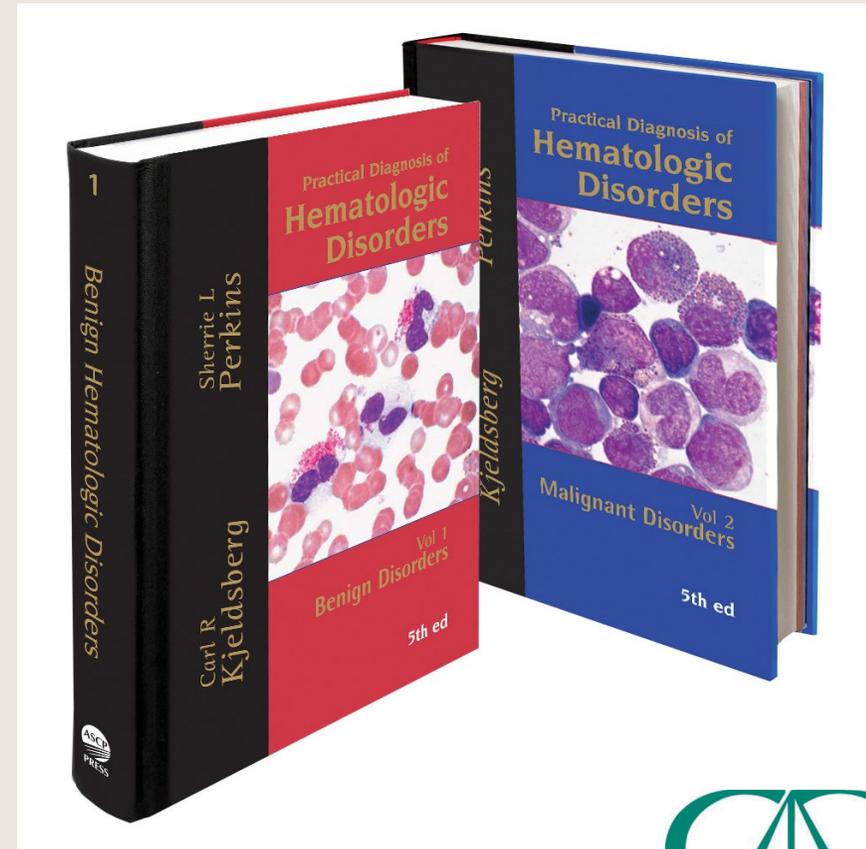
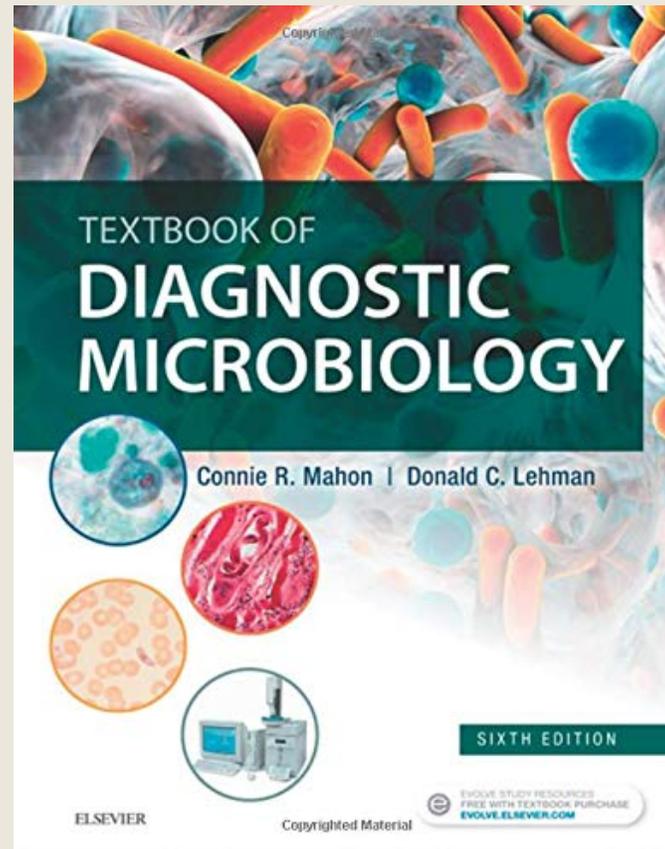
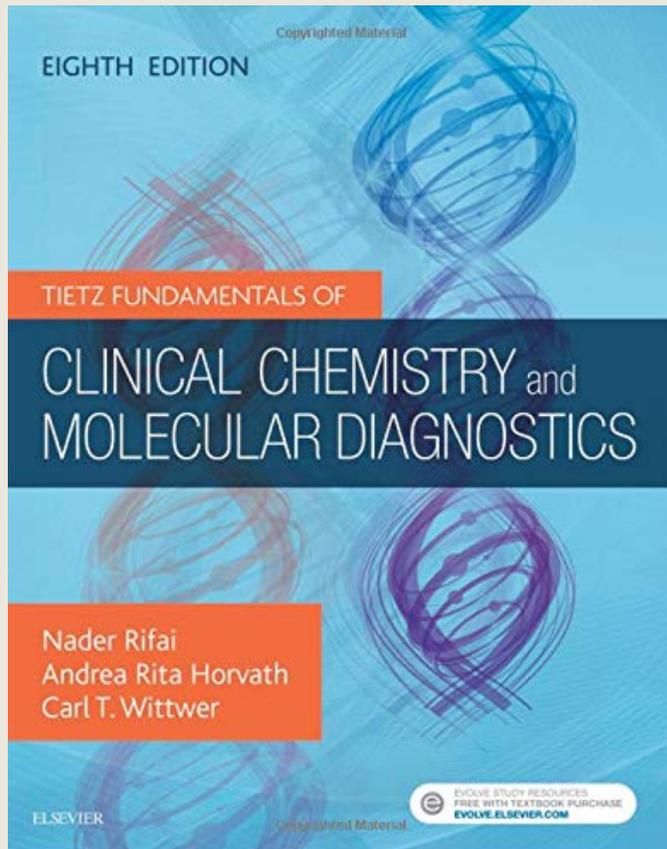
Preparation for the Exam

Recommended Textbooks



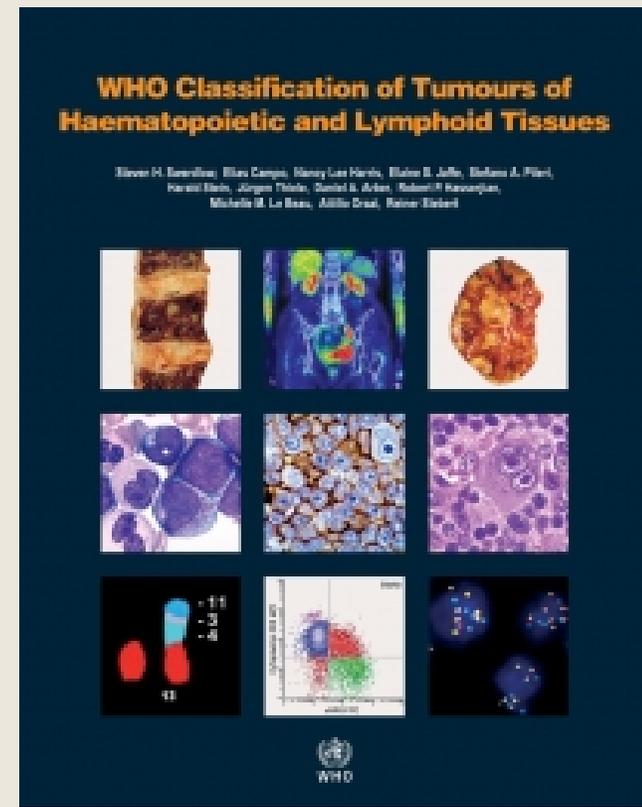
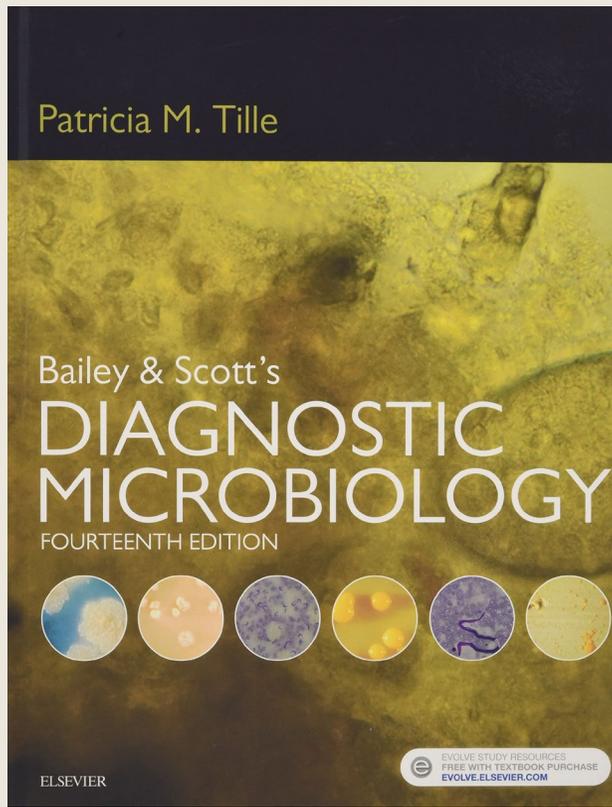
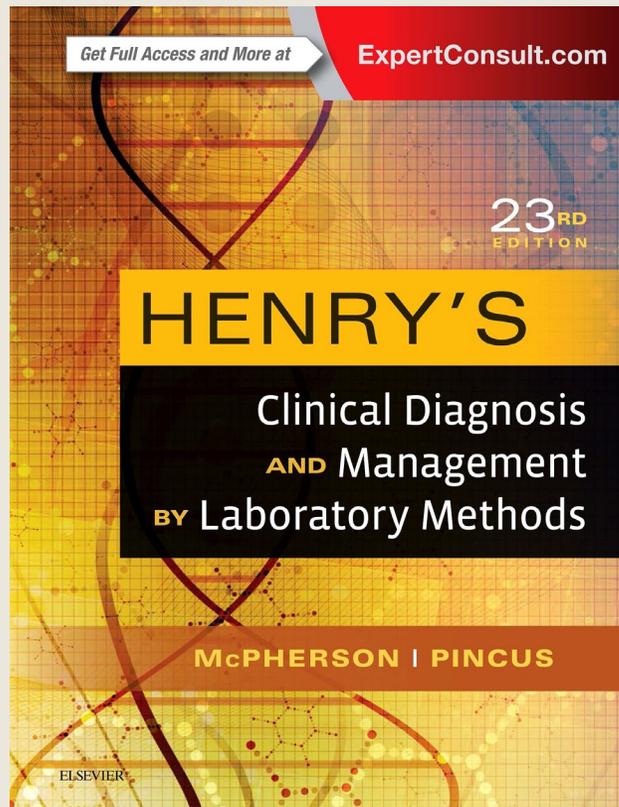
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Recommended Textbooks



Preparation for the Exam

Other Textbooks



Preparation for the Exam

Other Resources

- Review papers in the literature.
- Notes taken your academic half-days.
- Reputable websites such as pathologyoutlines.com and emedicine.Medscape.com

http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/documents/ibd/general_pathology_examformat_e



General Dos & *Don'ts*

- **Do** check out the exam location before your exam date.
- **Do** arrive at the registration area early.
- **Do** dress comfortably; bring a sweater.
- *Don't* bring a microscope – all images are digital.
- *Don't* bring personal electronic devices into the exam room.
- *Don't* communicate with fellow candidates while the exam is in progress.



Format of the RCPSC – GP Examination

- Written component
- Practical component
- Oral component



Format of the RCPSC – GP Examination

- Written component
 - *Held in regional centres around Canada:*
 - Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Halifax and St. John's
- Practical & Oral components
 - *Ottawa, La Cité collégiale*
 - *Microscope NOT required for practical component. All practical microscopic images are now in digital/virtual slide form.*



Written Component

- Designed to assess practical knowledge, in written form, of following disciplines :
 - *Anatomical Pathology*
 - *Hematological Pathology*
 - *Medical Biochemistry*
 - *Medical Microbiology*
- Consists of 4 papers of short answer questions with:
 - *Illustrations (may include photographs, diagrams, diagnostic imaging, simulated patient reports)*
- 45 minutes per paper = total 3 hours
- 65 marks per discipline



Written Component

Questions *may* cover all competencies as described in the **Objectives of Training in the Specialty of General Pathology**

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Tips for the Written Component

- Answering the short answer questions (SAQs):
 - *Answer every question.*
 - *Write legibly and succinctly.*
 - *Use bulleted lists, tables where appropriate.*
 - *Answer space provided gives an indication of the length of answer required.*
 - *Provide number of answers that are asked for.*



Written Component

Sample SAQ exam available with instructions and 5 questions.

http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/documents/ibd/general_pathology_examformat_e

general_pathology_saq_sample_exam_e.pdf



ROYAL COLLEGE
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA
COLLÈGE ROYAL
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA

General Pathology

The following are examples of items that you would find in a short-answer question (SAQ) exam. Model answers are included for your information.

[Date]

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**COLLÈGE DES MÉDECINS
DU QUÉBEC**

Practical Component

- Designed to assess skills at providing **best diagnosis** for various classic pathologic processes.
- Divided into Anatomical Pathology and Hematological Pathology. Practical components of Medical Biochemistry and Medical Microbiology are incorporated into SAQ portions.
- Total of 4 ½ hours,



Practical Component

- Anatomical Pathology, comprised of 2 sessions:
 1. *Histopathology virtual slides (Aperio)*
 - 50 cases, interpreted over 2 hours.
 - Provided with age, sex, site of tissue (rarely more information).
 2. *Interpretation of static images (PowerPoint format) on a computer screen:*
 - 20 cases each discipline (1-2 images each) with 1-2 questions per case, total 60 cases, interpreted over 1 ½ hours.
 - Answer in any order.
 - Cytopathology
 - Forensic Pathology
 - Gross Pathology



Practical Component

- Hematological Pathology
 - *Hematological pathology virtual slides (Aperio), including peripheral blood smears, lymph node biopsies, and bone marrow aspirate/biopsies*
 - 20 images, over approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours.
 - Rotate through stations which consist of one computer with 4-5 images each.
 - Digital images will be presented by ImageScope Viewer software.
 - May include electrophoresis gels or HPLC scans.



Tips for the Practical Component

- Images have been selected so that there is one clear diagnosis.
- No additional studies are needed for the diagnosis.
- Images have been inspected and are diagnostic.
- Write answers legibly and succinctly.
- If you're asked for "the diagnosis", write one diagnosis.
- Make sure you write your answer in the right space.



Practical Component – Digital Slides

general-pathology-digital-
images-info-e.pdf

general-pathology-
candidate-notice-info-e.pdf

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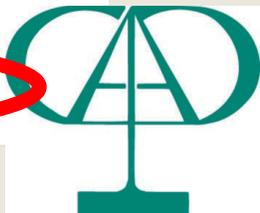
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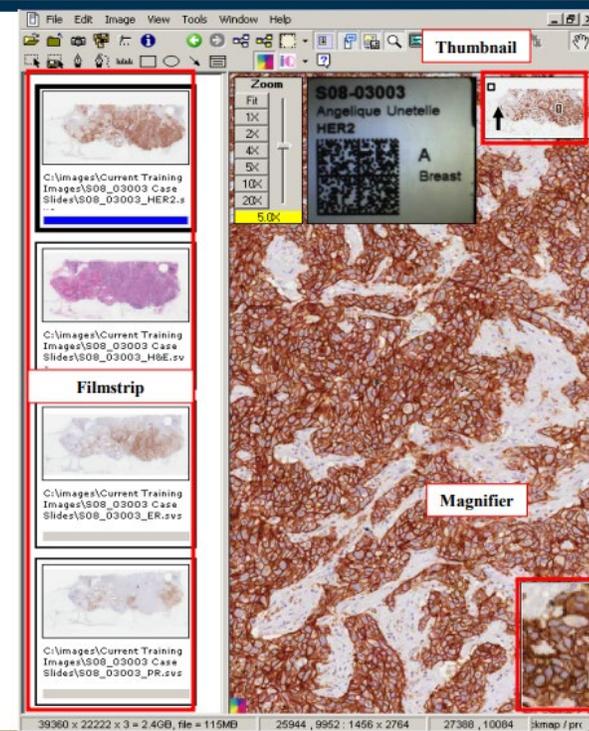


Laboratory Medicine Disciplines
Information regarding digital slides



ImageScope Basic Features

- This demo closely resembles the software that will be used during the Royal College examinations.
- ImageScope Viewing Options
 - **Thumbnail** - displays where you are in the image at higher power in main window. Click in thumbnail (represented by rectangle) to navigate anywhere in slide. Click the bottom-left corner, hold and drag to re-size it.
 - **Filmstrip** - displays all open images. The current slide has a bold border.
 - **Magnifier: is not** required or useful during the examination and is not available on practice site



Oral Component

- Designed to assess candidate's knowledge and skill in assessment and management of various topics and clinical scenarios and their ability to *express these clearly* in an oral format.
- 6 scenarios, assessed over 1 hour.
- ~ 10 minutes/scenario.
- Scenarios and questions may cover disciplines of Anatomical Pathology, Hematological Pathology, Medical Biochemistry, Medical Microbiology, and Laboratory Management.
- Writing instruments and paper provided for use in the room.
- Assessed by 2 examiners
 - *Scenario will be presented (may include use of printed images for review) and discussion will follow, including directed questions.*



Tips for the Oral Component - 1

- Dress and act professionally.
- Look at both examiners.
- Wait for the full question to be asked.
- If you don't understand the question, you may ask for it to be repeated.
- Take brief notes if you like.
- Think about your answer before speaking.
- Answer only what you are asked. (You are on a time limit and don't want to go on tangents...)



Tips for the Oral Component - 2

- If you don't know an answer, say so and outline how you would pursue the answer.
- Do not guess.
- Examiners will take notes and may interrupt you at times for clarification.
- Examiners may alternate who asks questions / takes notes.
- Examiners are not allowed to give feedback.
- Examiners will not comment on how you did at the end of the exam.



Tips for the Oral Component - 3

- Do not ask examiners how you did.
- Do not communicate with any other candidates during the oral exam period.
- You may be sequestered after your exam, in order to allow other candidates time to complete their exams.



Exam Marking & Results

- Examination board meets after the exam is completed.
- Pass/fail decisions are based in consideration of *all components* of the exam.
- Pass/fail decision will be emailed to you.

