



Reflecting on Your Exam Performance

Reflecting on your exam performance can help you identify your problems and plan strategies for improvement. Ask yourself the following questions, and consider the suggestions for answering these questions.

Identifying the Problems

Which parts of the exam went well for you (which areas of practice, functions, types of stations, etc.) Which parts gave you difficulty?

- Look at the sub-scores on your score report. The sub-scores may show that you did well in some content areas and poorly in other content areas.
- Think about your experiences in clinical placements, and your work history. Are there content areas that you are less comfortable with because you lack experience?

For the Clinical Component:

- Ask for a **file review** to help you identify what went well and what did not. A file review will show you how many stations you failed for each area of practice and each function. It will identify stations where you had critical incidents. The review will also give you the trends in your performance and the examiners' comments. (A file review will not show the diagnosis or tasks in any of the stations.)

You can find a sample file review on The Alliance website, www.alliancept.org. We included an application for a file review in your results package. You can also get a copy of the file review application on The Alliance's website. If you have failed the Clinical Component more than once, we strongly encourage you to ask for a file review.

Did you know what you were expected to know for the exam? Were you familiar with the areas of practice, functions, specific tasks and format of the exam?

- Think about the content of the exam. Did you know what might be covered on the exam? Were you prepared for all the content that was on the exam?

How did you prepare for the exam?

- Did you study alone or with other people?
- If you studied or practiced with other people, think about their skills and experiences. Did these people have a positive effect on the group? Do you need to look for people with different skills and experience for your next study group?
- What resources did you use? Are there other books or references that you need to consider?
- Did you have any practicing physiotherapists to help with your studying (e.g., a tutor) or to observe your practice sessions?



How long has it been since you finished your physiotherapy program?

- Have you worked as a physiotherapist (in Canada or anywhere else) since you graduated? What kind of work did you do, and what kind of patients did you see?
- What other experiences have you had that helped you to keep your knowledge up to date? (E.g., courses, teaching experience, research.)

Do you have any experience in the Canadian health care system?

- Have you worked in the health care system in Canada in any role?
- Have you ever observed or shadowed a physiotherapist working in Canada?

Do you have the language skills that you need for the exam?

- Do you generally read for pleasure in English or in another language?
- Did you understand the written parts of the exam?
- Did you finish the multiple choice exam in the time allowed? (Difficulty finishing the exam on time may indicate a slower reading speed.)

For the Clinical Component

- Did you understand the standardized clients, or did you have to ask them to repeat things?
- Did the standardized clients understand you, or did they ask you to repeat yourself, or say that they did not understand?
- Did your file review include any comments about your language skills or your communication skills?

Have you done this kind of exam before?

For the Written Component

- Have you done multiple-choice exams before (e.g., in your physiotherapy program)?
- Do you know the strategies for multiple-choice exams? Did you use these strategies?
- Did you finish the exam in the time available?

For the Clinical Component

- Have you done OSCE exams before?

Were there personal issues that interfered with your performance?

- Did you have any health problems that affected your exam preparation or the exam day?
- Did you have financial problems that made it harder to prepare?
- Did you have family problems (e.g., health problems with a family member, relationship problems)?
- Do you have small children (not yet in school)? Did you have problems with childcare when you were preparing for the exam?
- Did you have to travel to visit family in the months before your exam?



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- If you have ongoing health problems, how are you managing them? Was your problem under control on the day of the exam?
- Were you eating and sleeping well in the days before the exam?
- Do you exercise regularly?

What problems did you identify?

- From your answers to the questions above, identify the problems that you think might have affected your exam performance. You can list them on the last page, in the “problem” column.

Planning for Improvement

- Develop a plan to deal with each problem that you have identified. You can list the plans beside each problem, in the “plan” column on the last page.

Improvement strategies that you should consider

- Taking courses in your areas of weakness
- Job shadowing in your areas of weakness
- Reviewing the Exam Blueprint for information about what might be on the exam
- Reviewing the Orientation Resource for information about the format of the exam
- Finding or organizing a study group
 - Talk to your colleagues and your friends to find study partners
 - Consider the experiences and skills of your study partners – you should aim to have a variety of people in your study group, who each bring different strengths to the group
- Finding a tutor who can help you develop knowledge and skills in your areas of weakness
 - You may need more than one tutor to cover all the problems you have identified
- Buying or borrowing books from the Key Reference list
- Volunteering or working as an assistant in a physiotherapy setting
- Taking language classes
- Practicing your language skills in a variety of social and work settings
- Researching multiple-choice test-taking strategies
 - Most Canadian universities have on-line resources for students. Look for “student services” on the university website
- Doing practice multiple-choice exams from reference books or from exam preparation programs
- Taking a bridging program or an exam preparation program
- Using self-study modules from The Alliance
- Videotaping yourself practicing exam stations



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- You can review the video for your communication skills, your body mechanics, your handling skills, etc.
- Talking to your doctor or another professional about health or personal problems
- Talking to your family about ways that they can help you (e.g., child care, finances)
- Developing a plan for your exam preparation, including a study schedule
- Taking regular breaks for exercise while you are studying

What resources can you use?

- Think about the people, books or other resources that you can use to help you with your plan. You can write this information in the “resources” column.
- Review the Key Reference list (on The Alliance website) for possible resources that will help you.

When will you do these things?

- Think about how long each of these strategies will take to complete, and when you think you finish each strategy. You can make notes about this in the “time” column.
 - You may need to plan ahead for some activities (e.g., job shadowing will probably take time to arrange).
 - You may want to use a calendar to plan your exam preparation activities.

Setting Goals

- Using the ideas you have developed, write your goals for exam preparation. Use SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and have a Timeline
 - Specific: the goal has enough detail
 - Measurable: there is a way to know when you have achieved the goal
 - Achievable: the goal is within your reach
 - Realistic: the goal is realistic for your circumstances
 - have a Timeline: the goal has a clear start and end date
- Examples:
 - Correctly identify landmarks for range of motion assessment of all peripheral joints by March 31.
 - Be able to explain the difference between respiratory and metabolic acidosis and alkalosis with reference to specific blood gas values, and answer questions on this topic from flashcards.

When should you take the exam again?

- Make sure you have enough time to finish your preparation plans.
 - Using a calendar is a good way to see if your plan is realistic.



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- If the next available exam date is too early for you to complete your plan, you can register for a later exam date.
- Candidates normally have 2 years from a failed exam component in which to attempt that component again. You can ask for an extension of eligibility if you need more than 2 years.

If you are registered with a physiotherapy regulator, you may want to discuss the timing of your next exam with the physiotherapy regulator. Be sure you understand the rules for your registration category before you decide on the date for your next exam.



Problem	Plan	Resources	Time

Goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.