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8 THE CTA WRITTEN EXAMINATION

8.1 Introduction and Overview

8.1.1 Overview of the Written Examination

The Written Examination, which used to be called the Case Study, consists of four sections:

- A. Self portrayal of the candidate and his or her work as a Transactional Analyst
- B. A report on the learning experience gained during TA training
- C. The client case or project study
- D. Theory and literature. The candidate is required to answer six questions on transactional analysis theory and practice.

8.1.2 The purpose of the Written Examination

The purpose of the Written Examination is to demonstrate that the candidate has integrated the core competencies of his chosen field of application and how she/he works effectively and ethically as a theoretically based Transactional Analyst.

8.1.3 Scoring for each section and final evaluation

Parts A, B, C and D of the Written Examination should be answered. The sections are weighted as follows: A = 20%; B = 10%; C = 35% and D = 35%. An overall percentage score of 100% would indicate a faultless pass. The Written Examination will be deferred if the total score is less than 65% or if it does not meet the requirements set out in 8.4.2.

8.1.4 Field of specialisation

The Written Examination must be within the candidate's declared field of specialisation. The Written Examination marker will decide if this is the case. If the marker is unsure of this, they will refer the Written Examination back to the candidate's Language Group Co-ordinator for a decision. In case of dispute, the Supervising Examiner will make the final decision.

8.1.5 Language and translation

The Written Examination can be written in any language, for which there are examiners available. There is no requirement to translate it for the Oral Examination. (For requirements with regard to translation of documents for the Oral Examination, see section 9.8.2.)

8.1.6 Anonymity

The Written Examination should be anonymous. This is the candidate's responsibility. There should be no indication in the text that might allow the candidate, Principal Supervisor or trainers to be identified. This requirement is to protect the candidate. If the candidate explicitly identifies his/her training institute or trainer in his/her written exam, the exam will automatically be returned to the candidate. The identity of a psychotherapy or counselling Case Study client must be disguised. In other fields, anonymity will be preserved wherever possible.

8.1.7 Total length

English language Written Examinations have a maximum word **limit** of 24,000. In French and Italian the maximum word limit is 26,500. Other language equivalents will be decided by the Language Group Co-ordinator and the relevant Training Standards Committees. When the written exam is sent to the language coordinator the candidate must also send a signed statement of the number of words in the written exam.

Diagrams and the bibliography may be included in the Written Examination in addition to the word limit. In special cases the Language Group Coordinator may give permission also for an appendix to be included; but such an appendix may be only, for example, in clarification of a work context or project. It must not contain information that would normally be included in the exam itself and would form part of the formal evaluation.

8.1.8 Presentation

The Written Examination should

- Be typed or word processed
- Presented on A4 size paper
- Be printed only on one side of each page
- Be double-spaced throughout, but
- The bibliography and any transcripts may be single-spaced
- Be securely bound and professionally presented.

Each page should

- Have good margins
- Be numbered consecutively throughout the examination document.

8.4 The Psychotherapy Written Exam

8.4.1 A) Professional Self Portrayal

This part of the Written Examination is worth 20% of the total marks.

1. What is your professional title?
2. Describe the place where you work or your work setting.
 - What is your job description?
 - Who are your colleagues?
 - What is your place within the organisation?
 - Who are your patients or clients?
 - Who refers them?
 - What different categories of diagnoses you work with?
3. Describe the main focus of your professional practice and what contribution TA makes to your work.
4. Describe your legal status and say how far you fulfil conditions for work as a psychotherapist as they are laid down in your country's/state's laws and statutes.
5. How do you protect yourself and your clients?
 - Describe the clients with whom you would refuse to work and say why.
 - What arrangements do you have for referral of these clients to other professionals?
 - If you are not a medical doctor, what consultation arrangements do you have to provide medical evidence and back-up?
 - What are the criteria by which you determine if such a medical consultation is necessary?

8.4.2 B) Your training and personal development

This part of the Written Examination is worth 10% of the total marks.

1. Describe the importance of TA in your professional development.
2. When and why did you choose TA and what influence did this decision have on your professional development from then on (e.g. did you change from the educational to the psychotherapy field?)
3. What challenging experiences have you had while using TA? How have they affected your personal development?
4. How have these learning experiences influenced you in finding your identity as a psychotherapist?

8.4.3 C) The client case study

This part of the Written Examination is worth 35% of the total marks.

- You do not necessarily have to present the information on your client in the order given below, but it is important that you ensure that the case study as a whole is coherent.
- Provide information under each heading only if it is relevant; e.g. give information on developmental history only if this is important in your case study.

- In your description of the psychotherapy it is of paramount importance for you to clearly show your process and your role as a psychotherapist. The description should concentrate not only on the client in the course of psychotherapy but on the relationship between you and your response to the client.
- Where you refer to a particular piece of TA theory, use a text note or footnote to reference the author or authors. References should be reflected accurately in your bibliography.
- Show clearly how your interventions and the client's process are related.

1. Relevant personal details of the client, including

- a. age
- b. gender
- c. marital status
- d. current family members
- e. job status
- f. social relationships

2. Context of referral

- a. referred agency
- b. reason for referral

3. Working process.

- a. did you work with this client in a group or family, or in individual psychotherapy?
- b. why did you choose this way of working?
- c. at what frequency did you work together?
- d. how long did this work continue, in terms of time and of the number of sessions?

4. At your initial meeting

- a. what problems did the client present to you?
- b. what was their mental and physical condition?
- c. what was their professional situation?
- d. what was your initial or assumed diagnosis?

5. Give historical information about your client in the following areas

- a. family
- b. development
- c. medical
- d. sexual relationships
- e. significant relationships
- f. education
- g. work and employment

6. What was the initial agreement or contract between you and the client?

7. Your diagnosis

- a. give a diagnosis based on transactional analysis, analysing the client's present situation using two or three TA concepts
- b. give a diagnosis on the basis of a non TA system that is familiar to you, for example from the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

c. describe how you arrived at this diagnosis, and show how you made differential diagnoses to exclude other options

8. Define the presenting problem, making a clear distinction between your understanding and your client's point of view.

9. What was the final treatment contract between you and your client?

10. Treatment plan

- a. Describe your overall treatment plan, referring to your diagnoses of the client
- b. What did you envisage to be the stages and final goal of your treatment?

11. The psychotherapy process

Summarise the psychotherapy process, describing its separate stages and using appropriate TA concepts to describe what is happening. Give examples of your interaction with the client, including literal transcripts, focusing in particular on your significant interventions and how the client responded.

- Note any connections between your interaction and the problem you defined at the beginning.
- State to what extent you consider the contract or contracts to have been completed and what criteria you used to assess this.
- Describe difficulties you experienced with transference and counter transference phenomena in your relationship with the client.
- Include a description of your use of supervision.

- With reference to your client, briefly discuss the concept of cure. Link your chosen interventions with your treatment plan and your ideas about cure. Describe to what extent your treatment plan has been realised? If you changed your treatment plan during the course of the psychotherapy, say why.

12. Prognosis

- a. Describe the present state of the treatment process and say whether you are still working with this client.
- b. What is your prognosis?

13. Concluding remarks

Describe your learning experience during your work with this client.

N.B. Ensure that there is a consistency between the way you use and comment on TA theory, literature and the psychotherapeutic process in Sections C and D.

8.4.4 D) Questions on theory and literature

This part of the Written Examination is worth 35% of the total marks.

There are thirteen essay questions. Any six should be answered. It is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate how they use their knowledge of TA theory and literature to guide their work and their capacity to conceptualise the practice of psychotherapy in terms of transactional analysis.

Guidelines

- a. The candidate may choose between
 - ❖ Writing the six essays in Section D
 - ❖ Integrating the six answers into the text of Section C by making digressions (If this option is chosen, indicate clearly where the text of the six answers is located.)
- b. Answers should begin with a very brief introduction to what is to be covered
- c. There should be consistency between the candidate's answers, thereby illustrating a consistent theoretical approach
- d. All concepts should be defined clearly, and the source for the definition acknowledged and referenced appropriately
- e. Candidates should give their reasons for choosing the concepts they write about
- f. Candidates should describe and explain these concepts providing reasons why they consider them useful in terms of understanding and practice using examples from their work with both the case study client and other clients

The Questions

1. Describe your personal style of transactional analysis psychotherapy, referring to the major approaches and those concepts you emphasise.
2. Describe an aspect of recent developments, (within the last 10-15 years), in transactional analysis theory and how it has influenced your thinking and practice.
3. What does psychotherapeutic change mean to you? What TA concepts do you use to facilitate this?
4. Discuss the benefits of formulating an overall treatment plan of the psychotherapeutic process? What do you take into account when you are planning stages?
5. What TA concepts do you use to diagnose or assess your clients, and how does this influence the way you work with different types of client presentation?
6. What TA concepts do you use to understand the origin of psychological problems? Show how this relates to your ideas on psychological well being or cure?
7. Describe how you understand the psychotherapeutic relationship? Show how this relates to TA concepts, and how it influences the way you work?
8. What model or concepts do you use to understand intrapsychic process, and how does this influence the way you work?
9. What model or concepts do you use to understand interpersonal relationships and communication and how does this influence the way you work?
10. How do you use contracting to enhance the psychotherapeutic process?

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13. Describe a research project you are aware of or have been involved in and discuss the implications for transactional analysis theory and/or practice.
11. What concepts do you use to work with couples, families or groups and how do they inform the way you work?
implications for transactional analysis theory and/or practice.
12. Choose a topic or issue in psychotherapy you would like to deal with theoretically using TA concepts and show how this influences your work.
13. Describe a research project you are aware of or have been involved in and discuss the implications for transactional analysis theory and/or practice.

8.6 Marking the Written Examination

8.6.1 Guidelines for markers

The main function of this section is to give Written Examination markers consistent criteria for use in evaluation. Please bear in mind the following recommendations based on previous experience.

The candidate has invested a lot of him or her self in this Written Examination. Respect this, no matter what the result may seem to you to be. While framing your comments, bear in mind the question: 'How would I feel if I were the candidate or the candidate's Principal Supervisor?' Your comments should provide an important guide to the oral Examination Board about specific areas of strength and weakness in the candidate.

The Written Examination Evaluation should not include any diagnosis of the candidate. Evaluation is an educational not a psychotherapeutic process. The marker should avoid unqualified critical

statements and unsubstantiated value judgements. Such words as 'insufficient' or 'adequate' do not carry enough information to give the candidate proper guidance to future progress. Address your remarks specifically to the criteria of the scoring scale based on the core competencies.

The Written Examination Evaluation should include positive strokes. Be specific about your expectations if there is something that is unsatisfactory or if information is missing so that the candidate learns something useful. Address the candidate directly in your comments making the evaluation a respectful and 'I'm OK and you're OK' process. Limit your feedback to three pages. Use the numerical Scoring Scale, and accompanying guidelines, provided by COC.

8.6.2 Rating and Assessing the Written Examination

The Scoring Scale is in section 12.7.9. A separate numerical scale is provided for each of the four sections up to the total percentage for that section. So Section A is marked from 1 to 20; Section B is marked from 1 to 10; Sections C and D are marked from 1 to 35.

The wording gives an indication of criteria to consider when rating each section. The dotted arrow indicates the number of points you would enter to record a pass mark for the section concerned. Any score to the right of the dotted arrow would indicate a performance of below passing standard in that section. The Scoring Scale are designed to assist in the process of balancing one section of the examination against another, and to help ensure reliability of standards between one marker and another.

When you have completed marking the sections on the Scale, add the four marks together. The result will be the overall percentage mark for the examination as a whole. If the score is 65% or more, the Written Examination will normally be graded as a pass. However, the examiner will also take the following into consideration when deciding to pass or defer:

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- The candidate must have attempted all four sections.
 - The four sections must be coherent one with another.

If any one of the criteria listed in the Scoring Scale is consistently of an unsatisfactory standard, this may give grounds for deferral.

Any examination marked without reference to the Scoring Scale will be returned by the Examination Co-ordinator for re-marking.

8.6.3 Evaluation

Evaluators should refer to the Core Competencies and the Oral Exam Scoring Sheet when considering the aspects on the rating scale (12.7.9).

8.6.4 Marking procedures

All CTA exam documentation is in section 12.

1. Evaluation is initially carried out by the candidate's own Principal Supervisor, in the form of a general appraisal of the Written Examination.
2. If it is, in their opinion, of passing standard, the candidate should send it to the Language Group Co-ordinator together with the Submission of Written Examination form giving the candidate's contact details. Put no identifying material on the Written examination. The Principal Supervisor's Endorsement of CTA Written Examination form (see Section 12).
3. The Language Group Co-ordinator sends the Written Examination to a marker that he or she has selected together with the official Letter to the Evaluator of the CTA Written Examination. This will be a Certified Transactional Analyst, preferably a PTSTA or TSTA in the candidate's field of specialisation.
4. The Language Group Co-ordinator will not identify the candidate or the marker to each other.
5. The examiner using the Scoring Scale marks the Written Examination. Before writing his/her evaluation he/she informs the Language Co-ordinator of his/her decision. Where the candidate has passed, the co-ordinator will instruct the examiner to proceed with the Written Examination Evaluation. The Evaluator writes this on identifying notepaper and signs it. The Written Examination and the Written Examination Evaluation are returned to the Language Group Co-ordinator.
6. If it is a pass, the Language Group Co-ordinator returns the Written Examination and the Written Examination Evaluation to the candidate together with an official Letter.
7. If the examiner informs the Language Group Co-ordinator that he/she intends to defer the paper, the co-ordinator will instruct him or her not to write the Written Examination Evaluation. The Co-ordinator will automatically send the Written Examination to a second examiner together with the official Letter to the Evaluator of the CTA Written Examination. The second examiner is not told that the first examiner has deferred the Written Examination.

8. The second examiner follows the procedure described above – he/she informs the Language Group Co-ordinator of his/her decision regarding the examination. At that stage, the Language Group Co-ordinator informs the examiner that he/she is the second examiner and asks the two examiners to confer. If the second examiner also defers the examination, it is deferred. The two examiners agree feedback together and both put their names to the Written Examination Evaluation. The Language Group Co-ordinator returns the Written Examination and the Written Examination Evaluation to the candidate together with an official Letter
9. If an examination is deferred by the first examiner and passed by the second, the Examination Coordinator will ask the two examiners in their discussions to come to a common decision, and to present a joint Written Examination Evaluation. Both examiners should identify themselves on this document.
10. If they come to an agreement and produce a joint Written Examination Evaluation, this and the Written Examination are sent to the candidate together with the official Letter to be sent with Evaluation of CTA Written Examination.
11. If they cannot agree, the Written Examination goes to a third examiner together with the official Letter to the Evaluator of the CTA Written Examination. The decision of the third examiner is final.
12. The Written Examination is marked by the third examiner in consultation with the two previous examiners and returned with the Written Examination Evaluation to the Language Group Co-ordinator.
13. The Language Group Co-ordinator returns the Written Examination and the Written Examination Evaluation to the candidate together with an official Letter.

When a Written Examination is deferred, it may be re-written by the candidate and resubmitted. The Language Group Co-ordinator will accept it for further marking only when the candidate's Principal Supervisor has re-read the examination and signified in writing that they consider the re-written version to be of passing standard.

8.7 Appeals

An appeals procedure is implicitly built into this examination assessment procedure. However, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate may want to appeal the outcome or process. In this case he or she may use the Appeals Procedure in section 9.10.