

## AIMVTiny Talks exam questions transcript

Okay. Hi, everybody. Liz and Kate here with the AIMVTiny talk about exam questions, which are part of your part two application submission.

14:16:03 So this page that is up right now is from the application instructions and it explains what we require of applicants when it comes to the exam questions. So you have to submit three potential exam questions.

14:16:18 And these need to come from your advanced knowledge or some advanced knowledge that you discovered in the process of your application that you think is really important for someone in your specialty to be able to demonstrate their advanced knowledge of.

14:16:35 We have guidelines for writing exam questions and those are on our webpage and the link here takes you to this page, which is all about how to write a test question for AIMVT. Our question formats are primarily multiple choice with four possible answers and you will be required to enter four possible answers in the form, which we'll go to after we go through this. We do encourage the use of images or pictures and videos.

14:17:05 We do have fill in the blank, drag and drop, matching, and a format called hotspot, which is where you can point to something on an image in the exam to demonstrate your advanced knowledge of a topic or of imaging in specific.

14:17:22 We don't yet quite have the ability for you to enter all of these types of formats. So the type of format you're going to be entering is multiple choice, but you can use pictures or videos for those.

14:17:38 Let's go to the form, which is going to show you what's required when you actually enter the exam questions. So I just did a little fake application here where I filled in my information at the top. You'll be prompted to do that, including entering your applicant number, which you got when you passed your part 1 application.

14:18:02 There are links here to the domain list and those exam question guidelines I was just showing. There's a link to those here in this form as well.

14:18:12 We do request if you have a Diplomat available who can review our questions, that is part of the process that our exam goes through to ensure that all of our questions are getting at your advanced knowledge as much as possible. So we have a very rigorous rating system where we use

14:18:35 Not only subject matter experts from AIMVT, but also Diplomates from the various specialties to review the exam, make sure that all of the information is current and correct, and then their ratings actually go to a statistician for us to help set the pass point for the exam. So that's just kind of a little background on the exam questions. Anything else on that?

14:19:00 Kate, before I move to the next slide. Next screen.

14:19:04 No, just have your references that you're doing the up-to-date and current.

14:19:09 Yes, very important. So the stem is the actual question. So it might be something like, which two hormones are responsible for calcium hemostasis or something like that. If you have an image, for example, in Kate's specialty of cardiology, you might want to include an echo image or ECG or something like that.

14:19:34 That you might want to ask the question about. You can do that here. And then we ask you to put in the correct response.

14:19:42 What you have deemed to be the correct response to your question that you're asking. And then these other three responses that we call distractors. So these are the wrong answers and they should be wrong enough and different enough from the correct response that there is one clear correct answer. So this is sometimes

14:20:05 Something that we see with applicants is maybe two or three responses are possible correct answers. And what we really are looking for is one correct answer. And this is where the art of writing an exam question really comes in because it's tricky to write distractors that are

14:20:25 Potentially correct, but not potentially correct enough that someone could confuse it with the actual correct response.

14:20:33 Right.

14:20:33 Don't feel bad if you're frustrated by this process. People spend their entire careers learning how to write good test questions. So what this really is for you is a way for you to demonstrate that you understand the depth of knowledge that is going to be expected for an applicant to know. And we want to see that you have that kind of deep understanding by what kinds of questions you submit.

14:21:02 Here are the places where you'll put your references. We do like to see references that are younger than 10 years. So we don't like to see references that are older than 10 years. The best place for you to look for references for your exam questions will be from the reading list. And the reading lists are linked in the exam info page on our website and we'll go to that in just a second.

14:21:29 Then we want to see the rationale for why this piece of knowledge is really important, why this is an advanced test question, why someone in your specialty needs to know this piece of knowledge or information or be able to identify a structure on an image or something of that nature.

14:21:48 So this shows us and the reviewers that you understand why this is a good test question or why you think it's a good test question.

14:21:59 Then you'll pick the classification, which is generally going to be your specialty.

14:22:03 You can submit a test question for another specialty, but you really want to use this time to demonstrate your advanced knowledge of your own specialty.

14:22:13 Then the domains. So each specialty has its own domains for the exam. And I'm going to go to a screen that shows you all of those.

14:22:25 And you're going to pick which domain your question falls into and then the tasks.

14:22:29 And that, again, is also on the same exam domain list. So when we go to look for those domains, it's on the exam information page And it's under your specific specialty. So let's just go to cardio, for example.

14:22:45 And we go down here to the exam domain slash exam content and we click on that domain list and it shows you all of the different areas that will be on the exam. And not only the specific areas, but what percent of the test

14:23:04 Each of those areas will cover. So you can see here we have anesthesia and analgesia, anatomy and physiology.

14:23:11 Diagnostic and laboratory tests, that's 24% of the test. So, you know, hint, hint what you should be focusing on. Diseases for 14%, pharmacology for 12%, and animal care and management, including nursing, treatment, 23%. So the two biggest percentages are going to be those diagnostic and laboratory tests in the animal care management nursing treatment.

14:23:35 And then you can see there are separate tasks within each of those domains. And so this can help you really guide the question that you're going to write.

14:23:45 By looking at this, you want to include from as many different domains as you can. So really, we recommend three exam questions, three different domains. We don't want to see three anatomy and physiology questions or three diagnostics questions, even though those are big chunks of the test.

14:24:05 We want you to show off the breadth of your knowledge. So that will take us then to how do we actually write the question itself?

14:24:15 And the second part of that anatomy of test question goes through the exact kind of strategies you want to take when you're writing a question. And we have it listed as do this, don't do this.

14:24:30 So for example, a big don't here, don't test more than one point.

14:24:36 So you really want your STEM, your question to be clear and clearly asking about one thing, not trying to ask about 10 different things. Like you wouldn't a good test question would not be something like, what's the differential diagnosis list for elevated ionized calcium?

14:24:56 That's like a huge right now you might say you might have a scenario where you list a potential patient and you list some biochemical findings on their chemistry panel, and then you might list some potential diagnoses that fit with those findings and then there needs to be one clear potential diagnosis and three not so correct diagnoses for that. That might be an example.

14:25:25 Of a good question. What good, Kate, have you seen any particular good questions that you like or

14:25:33 I just, I think a good question is not a trick question and not an easy question. So you try to hit the advanced knowledge point, but not obscure knowledge point.

14:25:44 Yes, such a good point. Yeah, we don't need, it doesn't need to be a super obscure, super crazy thing that you see in your specialty.

14:25:56 Another thing here, this isn't about opinions. It really needs to be like the facts, the true things, things that you can actually find a reference for, which is why we require references. These are for knowledge of meaningful facts and concepts, not just trivia. We do expect appropriate medical terminology in these questions.

14:26:21 Here's a whole section on the multiple choice responses and the options.

14:26:28 This is another difficult thing I think people have trouble with is don't give unintended clues to the correct answer, which we see on tests kind of You can see kind of frequently, make sure the incorrect answers are realistic and plausible, not just obviously wrong.

14:26:46 Because we want that's the real magic of a good multiple choice question.

14:26:53 Everything needs to be grammatically consistent with the stem and all the responses should be in the same tense and terms as each other.

14:27:05 And I love this last bullet. Don't make someone taking the test choose between apples and oranges.

14:27:11 Kind of in the same vein when you're doing this. So this is something actually that the exam committee put together, a really super helpful question writing plan. As we said, go over the content domains.

14:27:28 Pick some specific content areas, highlight those areas that you really want to focus on, and then don't write this down before you figured out what you're trying to test. This is really good because that will actually help you write a better stem.

14:27:45 One clear task, one clear question, be precise, very important. Here are some appropriate question tasks for DVM questions, and you can consider some of these to help you. For example, here's the Which of the following is the most likely diagnosis? That was the example I gave previously. And there are a lot of good things that hopefully will stimulate your thought process there.

14:28:11 Here is a whole section on what's wrong with these questions and you can feel free to read through this and it does show you why each of those is a bad question or a wrong question.

14:28:25 So please feel free to do that at your leisure. Anything else that we have for exam questions before we move on.

14:28:37 I don't know. I would say just play around with it, have fun, maybe make more than three and kind of test them out on your coworkers, see what they like, what they find confusing.

14:28:48 Get some feedback from some people. Have fun with it.

14:28:47 Such great advice. I think that is the best. That is the best advice. Have fun with it. Exactly. Get quizzes for your coworkers if you've created a study group or you have a group of other VTS applicants that you're working with.

14:29:05 Bounce questions off each other. I think that is a very powerful way to study and a great way to get some good exam questions out there.