

Interim Guideline on Memory Aids in Entry-to-Practice Certification Exams (the “guideline”)

1. Purpose and Scope

This guideline establishes a formal process for the request, review, approval, and use of memory aids as a disability-related accommodation within CAMRT entry-to-practice certification examinations (the “exam”). It aims to ensure consistency and fairness, and is intended to be in compliance with:

- The *Canadian Human Rights Act* and relevant provincial human right codes;
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and equivalent accessibility legislation throughout Canada; and
- CAMRT’s evolving Accommodation Policy and associated procedures (subject to review and update as legislation, regulatory standards, jurisprudence, emerging evidence, and best practices in accessibility, assessment, and professional certification evolve).

This guideline supplements CAMRT’s general Accommodation Policy by providing specific procedures and standards for memory aid requests.

2. Definitions

- *Memory Aid (also referred to as a “memory cue sheet”)*: An accommodation that may be provided to support the recall of learned information. It is a tool designed by and for the candidate to cue or trigger their memory to recall information they have previously learned. Memory aids are distinct from “cheat sheets” as they do not contain exam-specific material or answers. Instead, they consist of personalized cues or triggers. These cues are intended to be meaningful only to the individual who created them, and do not contain any information that may be found on the exam. While a memory aid is designed to support the recall of learned information, exam candidates still require a solid understanding of learned material.
- *Accommodation*: Any reasonable modification of the testing conditions on the exam that is necessary to allow candidates to overcome a barrier to equitable participation on the exam that is caused by a professionally-recognized diagnosis of a disability, impairment, condition or disorder (or any other ground listed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or provincial human rights legislation), also referred to as a “protected characteristic”.
- *Disability*: Most accommodation requests that CAMRT receives are on the basis of the protected characteristic of disability. Candidates with disabilities who may be entitled to accommodation are individuals who:
 - a) Have requested an accommodation from the CAMRT following our defined process;
 - b) Have a diagnosed temporary or permanent physical impairment, or persistent cognitive, psychological, sensory or learning impairment, or any condition that is defined as a disability under the applicable human rights legislation; and
 - c) Can show that their ability to write the exam would be clearly impacted as a result of their disability.

3. Memory Aid Specifications

To ensure fairness and exam integrity, approved memory aids must follow standardized formatting:

- **Size:** Maximum one (1) single-sided sheet of 8.5" x 11" (letter-sized) paper (typed).
- **Font:** Minimum 12-point, sans-serif font (e.g., Arial, Calibri). No condensed fonts are permitted.
- **Written in English or French**
- **Layout:**
 - May use bullet points, simple charts, tables, or acronyms.
 - No images and diagrams unless explicitly approved.
 - May be organized in a variety of ways, including chronologically, by modules, themes, chapters, theories, and applications
- **Length:** Limited to one standard page; candidates cannot substitute multiple smaller sheets.
- **Standardization:** Once approved, the finalized memory aid will be re-typed and/or formatted by CAMRT staff. Candidates will have the opportunity to review the final formatted version during the finalization stage, and this version will be the one provided to them on exam day. No personal or last-minute submissions will be accepted after 10-business days before the exam.

A memory aid **can include** coded memory “cues”, such as acronyms, lists, and mnemonics, as long as these cues are not related to the exam material. The memory aid **must be** customized for the exam candidate who created it, such that if anyone else were to read the memory aid, the memory cues would likely be completely meaningless.

A memory aid is **not**:

- a substitute for studying or exemption from mastering exam material;
- answers to exam questions;
- a study or answer sheet;
- lists of specific facts, details, or concepts upon which exam candidates are being tested for their recall;
- definitions, formulas, or facts directly tested in the exam;
- verbatim exam content, answers, definitions, or essential exam knowledge;
- worked examples or solutions to exam questions; or
- professional standards or guidelines required as examinable knowledge.

The following examples may assist candidates in determining the format for acceptable memory cues to be added to their memory aid:

- To assist in recalling the colours of the rainbow, the well-established acronym, ROYGBIV, would **not** be acceptable, as the acronym stands for the names of the colours of the rainbow.
- To assist in recalling the eight chemical reactions of the Krebs cycle in biology, you may associate each chemical reaction with a song and add the name of the singer to your memory aid. The list of singers would likely be acceptable.
- On a history examination, to assist in recalling the year that Christopher Columbus first voyaged across the Atlantic ocean, you may write the word “blue” on your memory aid, as “blue” rhymes with 1492.

- To remember a sequence of actions, a candidate might write: “Red square, blue triangle, green circle”. These shapes and colors could correspond to steps or categories, but without context, they are meaningless to others.
- To remember the steps in a legal process, a candidate might write: “Grandma’s garden party had five guests and one left early.” This could represent a sequence of six steps, where each “guest” corresponds to a step. The story is personal and abstract, and the meaning is only known to the candidate.

4. Exam Day Procedure

- The finalized, CAMRT-approved memory aid will be provided to the candidate at exam start by the proctor or CAMRT representative.
- Candidates may not bring personal versions of the memory aid to the exam.
- The memory aid must be returned to the proctor at the completion of the candidate’s exam.
- Any alterations, unapproved additions, or attempts to use personal copies will be treated as exam misconduct.

5. Request Process

a) Candidate Accommodation Request:

- Candidates who wish to use a memory aid must submit a completed *Exam Accommodations Request Form* within three (3) weeks of registration opening, in accordance with CAMRT’s [Registration Period](#).
- Requests must include a completed *CAMRT Disability Information Form* dated within the past 12 months from a relevant and qualified medical or other appropriate professional. The documentation must emphasize the functional impairments or limitations that impact memory/recall and provide a clear rationale that specifically address why a memory aid is required.

b) Memory Aid Draft:

- Following receipt of approval to use a memory aid, candidates must submit a draft memory aid to CAMRT for review within 10 business days.
- CAMRT staff will communicate any questions or recommendations in advance of the finalization deadline.
- CAMRT advises that only finalized, approved versions are permitted on exam day.

c) Finalization Deadline:

- All approved memory aids must be finalized, formatted, and on file with CAMRT staff no later than 10 business days prior to the exam date. This ensures sufficient time for verification, standardization, and secure distribution. **Memory aids not finalized by this deadline will not be permitted in the exam.**
 - NOTE: Non-finalized memory aids, or situations where the parties were unable to reach finalization by the deadline, will not be considered a valid ground for a post-exam appeal.
 - NOTE: Each exam sitting requires a new request. Candidates must renew their request for subsequent sittings if accommodations are still required

6. Review and Approval Process

Reviewing Authority

The Exam Accommodations Committee (or equivalent body/professional) reviews all memory aid requests, with input from psychometric and accessibility experts as required.

Nine Criteria for Evaluation of Memory Aid Requests

A memory aid will be considered appropriate if it meets all six of criteria adapted from Harrison, Holmes & Pollock (2020), plus three CAMRT-specific criteria recognizing the high-stakes nature of the exam:

- I. **Objective Evidence of Validity:** The candidate's reported memory complaints must be credible and supported by professional documentation that includes validated performance validity test (PVTs). Clinical judgement alone is insufficient; well-validated measures must be used to confirm that reported memory deficits are genuine.
- II. **Assessment Based on Long-Term Memory, Not Working Memory Alone:** Supporting documentation must demonstrate difficulties with long-term memory retrieval, not just low scores on working memory tasks. While measures such as Digit Span or Letter-Number Sequencing may highlight attentional or short-term processing challenges, they are not sufficient on their own to justify a memory aid. The assessment must show that the candidate is able to encode information but has difficulty retrieving it later – the type of functional limitation that memory aids are designed to address.
- III. **Demonstrated Learning During Assessment:** When recommending a memory aid, the supporting assessment must demonstrate that the individual actually learned the material under standardized conditions and was informed that recall would be required. This ensures that any memory difficulties are due to retrieval deficits, rather than problems with initial attention or encoding. For example, tests that do not control for attentional focus or encoding (e.g., the Rey Complex Figure, where examinees may not actively attempt to learn during the copy phase) are not appropriate as the primary basis for recommending a memory aid.
- IV. **Differentiating Learning from Retrieval Deficits:** Supporting documentation must demonstrate that the assessor has distinguished between the candidate's difficulties with initial learning/encoding and a true retrieval deficit. This requires accounting for how much material was learned initially and how much was retained or recalled after a delay. Tools such as "percentage retained" calculations or validated measures that control for initial learning may be used to demonstrate this distinction. Without such evidence, low delayed recall scores could simply reflect poor initial learning, not retrieval problems, and would not justify a memory aid.
- V. **Demonstrated Benefit of Cues:** Supporting documentation must show that the candidate's recall improves significantly with cues, beyond the improvement typically observed in peers. This demonstrates that a memory aid would provide equitable support for a documented retrieval deficit, rather than an unfair advantage.
- VI. **Contextual Appropriateness of Memory Aids:** Memory aids may not be universally appropriate and must only be used where they do not interfere with essential outcomes or examinable knowledge. In certification settings, memory aids must be carefully vetted to ensure they do not cross into examinable competencies.

Note: Memory aids approved in other contexts (e.g., academic courses, clinical education, or institutional exams) may not be appropriate or approved for use in CAMRT certification testing, where the stakes, constructs measured, and public protection mandate differ.

- VII. **Alignment with Entry-to-Practice Competencies (CAMRT Criterion):** Memory aids must not substitute for, or diminish the requirement to demonstrate, entry-to-practice

competencies. Essential knowledge, skills, and professional judgements that define safe and effective MRT practice must remain examinable and cannot be transferred to a memory aid.

- VIII. **Preservation of Exam Validity (CAMRT Criterion):** Memory aids must not alter the construct being measured or compromise the psychometric validity of the certification exam. The exam must continue to assess what it is designed to measure – the knowledge, skills, and decision-making required for safe entry-to-practice – without being transformed into an open-book format.

For example, if the exam is testing procedural knowledge and the candidate is expected to demonstrate the correct sequencing of steps, a memory aid that lists those steps (e.g., donning personal protective equipment) would compromise the validity of the construct being tested. In such cases, the memory aid would provide answers to examinable competencies rather than supporting equitable access.

- IX. **Defensibility in High-Stakes Assessment (CAMRT Criterion):** All approved memory aids must withstand external scrutiny – legal, regulatory, and psychometric. They must be demonstrably fair, maintain public protection, and preserve the credibility and integrity of the CAMRT certification process.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

- *Duty to Accommodate:* CAMRT recognizes its responsibility to accommodate candidates to the point of undue hardship, consistent with Canadian human rights legislation and principles of dignity, individualization, and fairness.
- *Review and Oversight:* Requests for memory aids will be reviewed using the published criteria. Candidates may request reconsideration of a decision if new documentation or relevant information becomes available.
- *Accountability:* CAMRT's accommodation decisions and processes are subject to applicable human rights law. The organization will ensure that policies and decisions remain consistent with evolving legislation, jurisprudence, regulatory requirements, and best practices in high-stakes credentialing.
- *Use of Approved Aids:* Approved memory aids are granted only for the specific exam sitting in which they are approved. Candidates must renew their request for subsequent sittings if accommodations are still required.
- *Misuse and Integrity:* Any suspected misuse, alteration, or unauthorized introduction of a memory aid will trigger an investigation under the Exam Misconduct and Integrity Policy, which may result in disciplinary action.
- *Continuous Improvement:* The guideline will be reviewed on a regular cycle, and earlier if prompted by changes in legislation, human rights case law, or best practices in exam accommodations.

8. Principles

- *Equity and Accessibility:* Ensure candidates with documented disabilities are provided with equitable opportunity to demonstrate required entry-to-practice competencies.
- *Construct Integrity:* Accommodate candidates in a manner that must not alter the essential knowledge, skills or judgement the exam is designed to assess or have the potential to negatively impact future patient or workplace safety.

- *Consistency with Credentialing Best Practices:* Ensure consistency with credentialing best practices while being informed by human rights legislation, regulatory requirements, psychometric standards, and emerging best practices in high-stakes professional certification examinations.
- *Evidence-Informed Approach:* Guided by Harrison, Holmes & Pollock (2020), recognize that memory aids may reduce disability-related barriers when appropriately designed and applied.

9. References

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10. Document Control

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