



GUIDELINES ON THE ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS TRAINED SPECIALISTS

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this document is to provide guidance to the ACEM assessment panel, Board of Censors and College Council on the method of assessment of overseas trained specialists applying directly to the Australian Medical Council (AMC) or Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) for recognition of their credentials as specialists in the discipline of emergency medicine.

PRINCIPLES

1. The Australian and New Zealand communities enjoy a high quality of emergency medical care directed and provided by Australasian qualified specialists in emergency medicine who are Fellows of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM).
2. Overseas trained specialists (OTSs) who have undertaken appropriate specialist training in emergency medicine in their country of origin, and who have accumulated relevant clinical experience in emergency medicine may not need to requalify in their discipline on migration to Australia or New Zealand provided that their training, experience and current standard of practice can be predicted, with a high degree of confidence, to be similar to that of a registered specialist in emergency medicine in Australia or New Zealand.
3. As the relevant medical college, ACEM has an obligation to Australian and New Zealand registration authorities to assist in the assessment of the credentials of overseas trained specialists seeking recognition as specialists in emergency medicine.
4. In undertaking such assessment, ACEM has an obligation to the overseas trained specialist to provide a full opportunity for the doctor to put their case in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Each case must be assessed on its merits and ACEM has an obligation to ensure consistency of recommendations between applicants and over time.
5. ACEM believes that all specialists in emergency medicine should be Fellows of the College. Therefore, where ACEM fully recognises the overseas trained specialist as a specialist in emergency medicine, it will offer its Fellowship to the overseas trained specialist.
6. Where an overseas trained specialist is not considered by ACEM to have training, experience and current practice similar to an Australasian trained specialist, it may provide a recommendation on what additional training, examination or experience would be necessary to achieve such a standard

PROCESS

College Regulation 4.55 governs the ACEM process (see regulation 4.55). The overseas trained specialist seeking to be recognised as a specialist will first apply to the Australian Medical Council (AMC) or the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ).

Where the AMC/MCNZ forwarded the application to ACEM for assessment, the College will:

- acknowledge receipt of the application to the AMC/MCNZ
- forward to the applicant a package including a document detailing the process, and a questionnaire addressing the training, experience and current practice of the overseas trained specialist

- invite the applicant to a structured interview to be conducted by the College at which the applicant may put their case in person
- for AMC applicant, the assessment fee, the quantum of which will be determined by Council from time to time, is required from the applicant prior to the commencement of the process
- for MCNZ, an invoice for the assessment fee is forwarded to the MCNZ

The structured interview will:

- be undertaken by three (3) senior Fellows of the College who will form the assessment panel;
- be conducted at College Headquarters in Melbourne for AMC applicants, and at a convenient place for the applicant and interview panel in New Zealand for MCNZ applicants. In some circumstances, AMC applicants may choose to have their structured interview via videoconference. This is at the discretion of the Chair of the Overseas Credentials Committee.
- the format of the structured interview is described in the document *G04 Guidelines on the Format of the Structured Interview for Overseas Trained Specialists*

The structured interview will address at least the following:

- basic qualifications
- advanced qualifications
- experience
- research and publications
- education and teaching
- emergency medicine administration
- topical issues in emergency medicine
- knowledge of, and attitude towards the College

At the conclusion of the interview the applicant will be given time to make any comments or enquiries in relation to their own application or about the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment process needs to balance equity for the applicant with the need of the community to be confident that medical practitioners holding themselves out to be specialists are practicing at an appropriate standard. ACEM does not believe that it is reasonable in every case to require overseas trained specialists to sit the College's examinations. It is known that specialist emergency medicine is practised to a standard consistent with that in Australasia, in some other countries or in regions of other countries including the USA, United Kingdom, Canada and in some parts of Asia and Western Europe. However, even in these places, not all doctors practising predominantly in emergency medicine have training, experience and a standard of current practice similar to that of an Australasian trained specialist. In some cases an overseas trained specialist may have had sound training but may only have experience in an emergency medical system with significantly different casemix and organisation to Australasia, making it less probable that they could function at a specialist standard in the local environment.

The key assessment tools are:

- the applicant's curriculum vitae
- the applicant's response to the ACEM Consultant Post questionnaire
- referees' reports
- the applicant's response at the structured interview

It is at the structured interview that all relevant information will be available for assessment by a panel of three (3) senior Fellows.

It is not possible for ACEM to visit or accredit overseas training programs. Therefore the outcome of the assessment process will be a recommendation based on the level of confidence of the assessment panel about the credentials of the overseas trained specialist.

Where the level of confidence is extremely high that the overseas trained specialist is indeed a qualified specialist in emergency medicine capable of practicing at a standard consistent with that of an Australasian trained specialist, then the panel will recommend to College Council that the individual be recognised as a specialist in emergency medicine. In these circumstances, College Council will advise the AMC/MCNZ and may offer Fellowship without further requirements to the overseas trained specialist.

Where the level of confidence of the assessment panel is less, the recommendation may be that a variable period of additional training, with or without examination, and other requirements be undertaken.

The scales below may provide broad assistance to the assessment panel in considering the level of confidence in the credentials of the overseas trained specialist.

LEVEL OF ASSESSMENT CONFIDENCE

UNDERGRADUATE

Low

- Unfamiliar university
- Low performance

High

- Major universities
- High academic performance

Low _____ High
 Δ

BASIC TRAINING

Low

- Low relevance rotations in small unfamiliar hospital

High

- Quality rotations in familiar major hospital

Low _____ High
 Δ

ADVANCED TRAINING

Low

- No defined specialist training program
- Low relevance rotations with key rotations (eg paediatrics) inadequate or not completed
- Unfamiliar or no specialist exit examinations

High

- Completion of familiar specialist training program, including quality compulsory rotations (Paediatrics etc.)

Low _____ High
 Δ

POSTGRADUATE EXPERIENCE**Low**

- Brief experience in small, unfamiliar ED
- Atypical casemix and different EMS

High

- Significant experience in familiar, major ED in an EMS similar to Australasia (casemix, organisation etc.)

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION**Low**

- No publications
- Would not comply with Reg. 4.10

High

- Well known academic with many quality publications

Low _____ High

**EDUCATION & TRAINING****Low**

- No evidence of involvement in teaching

High

- Evidence of extensive involvement in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, EMS teaching etc.

Low _____ High

**EMERGENCY MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION****Low**

- No administration experience

High

- Director of major well known ED in similar EMS
- Overseas collegiate involvement etc.

Low _____ High

**TOPICAL ISSUES IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE****Low**

- Little/no knowledge of topical issues relevant to Australasian EM practice

High

- Expert response on topical issues in clinical EM, admin, research etc. relevant to the Australasian environment

Low _____ High



REFEREES REPORTS

Low

- Brief equivocal references from unknown referees

High

- Outstanding references from well known referees

Low _____ High
 Δ

REPORT

The structured interview panel will provide a written report to the Censor-in-Chief within 28 days of the date of the interview. The report will include a consensus recommendation to College Council. The report will also be provided to the Board of Censors who will review all documentation and who may make a supporting or dissenting recommendation to College Council. The decision making process, commencing with the review of the recommendation of the interview panel the Board of Censors to the final decision of the Council must be minuted in detail by the Board of Censors and the Council.

FEES

The College will set and charge a reasonable fee for this assessment. College Council will not consider an application where fees are outstanding.

APPEALS

The College's decision and recommendation to the AMC or MCNZ will only be reviewed on the written request of one of the abovementioned organisations and where one of the following can be demonstrated:

- A breach of the College process has occurred
- The applicant was not afforded natural justice
- Significant new information about the applicant has become available

In these circumstances, the College's appeals process will apply.

RESUBMISSION

An applicant may not resubmit to ACEM for recognition within three (3) years of the date of submission of an unsuccessful application, unless otherwise permitted by the AMC or MCNZ.

